

Second evaluation of the BIK+ strategy: Protocol for consultations with children and young people

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Background information

Overall objectives of the targeted consultations

The targeted consultations aim to collect children's and young people's views on their online experiences and the support they need to feel safe, confident and listened to in the digital environment. The consultations form part of the second evaluation of the [European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids](#), also known as the BIK+ strategy.

More specifically, the consultations will help to understand:

- Children and young people's perspectives on the main online opportunities, risks and needs they face today, including those experienced by children in vulnerable or disadvantaged situations.
- Whether children and young people feel that online spaces are becoming safer and more age-appropriate, where protection gaps remain, and what kinds of support, advice, reporting tools or services are known, accessible and useful in practice.
- Children and young people's experiences of digital confidence and empowerment, including the factors that help them identify and respond to online risks, the impact of advice and education on their online behaviour, and the accessibility and usefulness of available support.
- Whether children and young people feel they have meaningful opportunities to express their views and influence decisions about the digital environment.

The focus groups are **not** intended to test children's knowledge of the BIK+ strategy or to ask them to assess policy objectives in abstract terms. Instead, the activities use age-appropriate and child-centred methods to understand children's lived experiences and priorities.

The findings from these consultations will contribute evidence on the relevance and effectiveness of BIK+, including what is working well, what is not working well enough, which groups may need more support, what emerging online issues adults

should pay attention to, and what children and young people think should be improved.

Methodology

The methodology for targeted consultations is child-centred and rights-based and has been informed by a range of existing benchmarks for meaningful child participation, including recent international and EU experiences with consulting children and young people about key issues, opportunities and priorities for their rights in the digital age. These initiatives and experiences have been mapped and integrated into a good practice guideline, '[Children's rights in the digital environment: Moving from theory to practice](#)'.

More specifically, the below protocol builds upon the following set of methodological principles:

BPG	Principle	Description
BPG 1	Transparent and informative	Children should be provided with all relevant information and offered adequate support.
BPG 2	Voluntary	Children should be informed about their right not to participate, sign a consent form, be able to withdraw consent at any time.
BPG 3	Child-centred, age-appropriate, child-friendly	The working methods, the means of expression children can choose from, and the format of the consultations should be adapted to the participating children's capacities.
BPG 4	Respectful	Children's views should be treated with respect and they should be given opportunities to initiate their own ideas and activities.
BPG 5	Relevant	Children should be asked to participate in relation to issues that are of real relevance to their lives. There should be room for them to highlight and

BPG	Principle	Description
		address the issues that they themselves identify as relevant and important.
BPG 6	Non-discriminatory, inclusive	Participation must be inclusive, and all children should be treated equally.
BPG 7	Training and support	Train facilitators of the consultations (e.g., information package, online conferences where they can ask questions and provide tips on how to facilitate sessions).
BPG 8	Safe and sensitive to risk	Facilitators should create a safe and relaxed environment in which children can choose to speak or not and which supports their well-being.
BPG 9	Accountable	A commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. Children must be informed about how their views have been considered and used, and should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities.

To ensure the quality of data generated, all facilitators must comply with the minimum requirements in this protocol. It has been designed to facilitate approximately 90 minutes of consultation with young people. The activities were designed for three different age ranges:

- Age 12 and below,
- Age 13 to 15,
- Age 16 to 18.

Facilitators should adapt the delivery of the activities to the age, needs, abilities and circumstances of the children and young people taking part, while ensuring that the core topics and mandatory prompts in the protocol are covered. This may

include adapting language, pacing, examples, formats or support arrangements to make the consultation accessible and meaningful for the group.

Protocol for targeted consultations

The present protocol is structured along several consecutive steps. **All facilitators must go through Step 1 to Step 7 in the given order.** The amount of time allocated for the consultation is 90 minutes, including a 10-minute break. The table below indicates the average amount of time to be spent on each step. Facilitators may adapt timings to foster a more in-depth discussion and enrich consultation results, provided that all activities and prompts are covered within the overall session time.

Steps		Timing
Step 1	Informing and sensitising.	Before consultation
Step 2	Start of the consultation session.	5 minutes
Step 3	Ice-breaker	10 minutes
Step 4	Digital Journey Mapping	30 minutes
Break		10 mins
Step 5	The BIK+ Strategy: safe, confident and listened to online	30 minutes
Step 6	End of the consultation session	5 minutes
Step 7	Data collection by the facilitator based on the provided reporting template in English.	To be submitted max. 1 week after the consultation session and by Friday, 16 October 2026 at the latest.

Consultation materials package

All facilitators will receive a package of information and consultation materials, including the present consultation protocol and the following annexes:

- Annex 1 – **Information sheet for children and young people**, setting out the minimum information to be provided to participants before the

consultation. A version translated to your national language is included in your materials package;

- Annex 2 – **Parent/caregiver information and consent form**, provided as a suggested template only. Facilitators may use this template or their own organisation's consent and assent procedures, provided these meet applicable legal, child protection and data protection requirements;
- Annex 3 – **Activity materials**, including printable materials for the main activities (ice-breaker, digital journey mapping and BIK+ strategy). A version translated to your national language is included in your materials package;
- Annex 4 – **Reporting template**, while consultation sessions can take place in the participants' own language, summary reports must be completed in English.
- Annex 5 – **Participant information template**, an Excel file to record basic anonymised participant information, with each participant labelled using a non-identifying code such as Child 1, Child 2, Child 3, and so on.

As part of Step 7, all facilitators must complete and submit **Annex 4 – Reporting Template** and the completed **Annex 5 – Participant information template** to European Schoolnet within one week of the consultation session and no later than Friday, 16 October 2026.

Facilitators are fully responsible for managing the consent and assent process, including collection, storage, and retention of consent documentation, in line with their own organisational procedures and applicable legal requirements. This includes collecting consent from the children's legal guardians in case any personal data are processed, documenting the consent properly and keeping clear records of all processing activities related to the consultations. **Facilitators must not submit to European Schoolnet consent forms, names, contact details, usernames, photos, recordings or any other identifiable personal data to European Schoolnet.** To support familiarisation with the information and material package, a one-time information session for facilitators will be organised.

Step 1: Informing and sensitising (before the focus group)

Objective

The main objective of step 1 is to provide children and young people with sufficient information about the consultation process, the topics that will be discussed during the session, the objectives, and the personal data that will be processed. This will enable them to make an informed decision about participating in the consultation session.

Note for facilitators

Information, consent and data protection

Before taking part in the consultation, children and young people must be provided with **clear, age-appropriate information** to enable them to make an informed decision about their participation and to develop their own views on the subject matter.

At a minimum, this information should include:

- the purpose of the consultation and the main topics to be discussed;
- the voluntary nature of participation, including the right not to participate, to skip questions, or to withdraw at any time without consequence;
- how the session will be conducted and the scope and limitations of their participation;
- how their views will be used, who will have access to the results, and the expected outcomes;
- how their personal data (if any) will be processed, for what purposes, and who to contact in case of questions;
- how and when feedback on the consultation results will be shared.

This information will be provided using **Annex 1 – Information sheet for children and young people**, adapted as needed to the age, language and needs

of the participants. Facilitators will use the translated version provided as part of the consultation package.

Parental or caregiver consent must be obtained before children take part in the consultation, alongside the child's own informed assent. **Annex 2 – Parent/caregiver information and consent form** is provided as a suggested template only. Facilitators may use their organisation's consent/assent forms, provided these meet applicable legal, child protection and data protection requirements.

Facilitators are fully responsible for collecting, checking, storing and retaining consent and assent documentation, and for securely deleting or disposing of it when it is no longer needed. Consent and assent forms must be kept locally by the facilitator and must not be submitted to European Schoolnet. The facilitator should ensure that all consent forms of the participants have been collected and stored safely before the consultation takes place.

If facilitators use Annex 2, they are responsible for adapting it as needed to their local legal, organisational and linguistic context before use.

Role of facilitators

Facilitators are responsible for ensuring that appropriate data protection and safeguarding requirements are respected throughout the consultation process. This includes:

- collecting only the **minimum personal data** necessary for the specific purpose of the consultation;
- ensuring that any personal data, including consent and assent forms, are handled, stored and disposed of securely and **in accordance with relevant policies** and legal requirements;
- **ensuring that no consent forms, contact details or any other identifiable personal data** are shared with European Schoolnet;
- acting as the data controller and processor for any personal data collected at local/national level;

- ensuring that reports and submitted materials contain only anonymised or non-identifying information.

Where data is collected for reporting purposes, facilitators must ensure that it is **anonymised**. Participants should be identified only through non-identifiable codes (e.g. Child 1, Child 2, Child 3), and any background information (such as age, gender, country, or vulnerability status) should be collected and reported in an anonymised manner. The same codes should be used consistently in **Annex 4 – Reporting template** and **Annex 5 – Participant information template**, where relevant.

Annex 5 should include only basic anonymised participant information needed for analysis, such as age group, gender and vulnerability category, where applicable and where this can be reported without identifying the child. Facilitators should avoid collecting or reporting unnecessary personal data.

Participants and parents/caregivers should be informed that anonymised consultation findings will be analysed and reviewed by European Schoolnet. They should also be informed that European Schoolnet will not any identifiable personal data about individual participants.

Preparation for reporting

Ahead of the consultation, facilitators should familiarise themselves with the consultation protocol, the activity descriptions, **Annex 3 – Activity materials**, **Annex 4 – Reporting template**, and **Annex 5 – Participant information template**. Where activity materials are provided in the national language, facilitators should use those translated materials with participants.

All facilitators should capture and report the results following the structure provided in **Annex 4 – Reporting template**. Facilitators should only report on aspects that were addressed during the discussion and should write “N/A” for aspects that were not discussed. When completing **Annex 4 – Reporting template** and **Annex 5 – Participant information**, children should be referred to **anonymously** (e.g. Child 1, Child 2), using the same code consistently across both reporting template where individual-level references are needed.

Facilitators are encouraged to use children's and young people's own wording, including **short, anonymised quotations where possible**. Quotes must **not** contain any identifying information.

Facilitators are encouraged to share scans of notes, drawings, post-its, worksheets and other materials. However, these must be checked and anonymised before submission to European Schoolnet. Any names, usernames, contact details, locations, faces, specific incidents or identifying information relating to a participant or other individuals must be removed or blacked out.

Step 2: Start of the consultation session (5 minutes)

Objective

Step 2 focuses on setting the scene and starting the session by reminding participants about the purpose of the consultation and all relevant background information in line with the information sheet (Annex 1).

Note to facilitators:

To start the focus group, facilitators should make sure to address the following points:

- Ensuring the young people know that there are not right or wrong answers, but there are only opinions that matter.
- Ensuring young people that they are in a safe and trusted space.
- Reminding the young people to being respectful of the others' opinions.
- Empowering the youth in providing their honest opinion to identify what key opportunities, challenges, priorities and expectations children and young people have when it comes to being online.
- Reminding the young people that it is not needed to share a personal story, and if they only are comfortable with it. In this case, the facilitator should not prompt the conversation forward and to push for more details but instead should center the approach on the well-being of the participant if they share something deeply personal or concerning.

Below a suggested script:

"Hi everyone, and welcome! Before we get started, I would like to briefly remind you why we are here today and what this session is about. As you may have seen in the information we shared earlier, this consultation is about your online life and experiences: what you do online, what feels positive, what can be difficult, where children and young people get support, and what could be improved. We are really interested in hearing your views and experiences. First, I want to check: did you have a chance to read the information we sent? And does everything make sense,

or is there anything you would like me to explain again? It is also very important to remember that taking part is completely your choice. You can decide not to answer any question, take a break, or leave the session at any time, that's absolutely okay, and there will be no consequences. Our goal is to create a space where you feel comfortable sharing what you think, but only if and when you want to."

Step 3: Ice-breaker (10 minutes)

Objective

The purpose of step 3 is to create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere where participants feel comfortable engaging with one another, while introducing the topic of children's online experiences in an accessible way and preparing participants to confidently take part in the digital journey mapping exercise that follows.

Note to facilitators

For this session, facilitators should prepare the following materials:

- Printing scenarios
- Printing emoji – only for age group target "12 and below"
- Printing categories – only for age group target "13 to 15" and "16 to 18"
- White papers
- Colour pencils and pens of different colours

The facilitator will start the session with the icebreaker designed for the target age group of their participants. Facilitators are also welcome to adapt the icebreaker to their space and needs **as long as it does not take up more than 10 minutes**. Facilitators should ensure that all participants are active and involved in the conversation.

Facilitators should ask one or two short follow-up questions and only if time allows. The aim is to help participants start thinking about online moments that can feel positive, safe, risky, confusing or where support might be needed. Deeper and longer discussion should take place in Steps 4 and 5.

Age-targeted activity 1: Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Age	Activity	Methodology
12 and below	"Emoji corners: How	1. Give each youth 4 emoji posters: happy, worried, upset/angry, confused (see Annex 3.1)

Age	Activity	Methodology
	would this feel?"	2. Read out scenarios or put it on a wall/board (one by one) (see Annex 3.1):
	Objective: Help younger children express feelings about online experiences, using simple visual choices.	"Someone you don't know sends you a message or friend request." "A game asks for your personal information – like your name, photo, age or location." "You learn something new online that helps you with school, a hobby, or something you love." "Someone is mean to you or another kid in a game or chat." "You see something online and you are not sure if it's true or if you can trust it." "You make something online and share it with others" "You see something online that feels just like you – it's relatable." "You join an online community and meet new people who like the same things as you." "A friend recommends something to you online." "You watch a funny video that makes you laugh out loud." "You are not sure how to use a new app or game, so you ask someone for help." "Someone asks you to keep a secret about something that happened online." "A pop-up asks you to buy something in a game." "Your parent or teacher asks what you have been doing online." "You see an advert that seems too good to be true."

Age	Activity	Methodology
		3. For each scenario, ask children to select an emoji and put it face down. 4. After everyone selected their emoji, ask to the youth to reveal them all together. 5. Follow-up prompts (if time allows): • Why did you choose that emoji? • What would you/another child need to feel safer/better in that situation? • Where could something like this happen in your online day?
13 - 15	“Risk or OK?” Card Game Objective: Encourage children to discuss everyday online situations and introduce the idea that some situations might require support.	1. Divide the group in pairs or smaller groups and give each pair/group a stack of cards with online situations (see Annex 3.2): <i>“Sharing your live location with friends.”</i> <i>“Being added to a group chat with people you do not know.”</i> <i>“You make a new friend online who shares your interests.”</i> <i>“Someone asks to move your conversation from a public platform to a private chat app.”</i> <i>“Your friend asked for someone’s picture without their permission.”</i> <i>“Reporting harmful behaviour in a game.”</i> 2. Ask them to sort into four categories. They can place a card between two categories if they disagree or think “it depends”. • “Safe” → The situation seems generally good, positive or manageable

Age	Activity	Methodology
		• "Not Sure" → The situation could be good or risky depending on the context (e.g. who is involved, what info is shared...) • "Risky" → The situation could expose the young person to harm, manipulation, scams, harmful content, unwanted contact, etc. • "Needs help" → The situation is difficult, upsetting, unsafe or too serious for the young person to deal with alone 3.Follow-up prompts: Groups must justify at least one choice to the room. • What made this card difficult to place? • What would make this situation safer or easier to deal with? • What would you or other young people do in this situation? • Who or what could help? • Where might this appear in a normal online day?
16-18	Online Dilemmas Debate Line Objective: Explore opinions and grey areas in online safety, support, digital confidence and participation	1.Create a line across the room: "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" 2.Read statements (see Annex 3.3): <i>"Young people have more control over their online experiences than adults think."</i> <i>"Most online risks depend on the context, not only on the app or platform."</i> <i>"Young people are often asked for their views about online issues, but not always listened to."</i>

Age	Activity	Methodology
		<i>"New technologies, such as AI, algorithms or deepfakes, are changing young people's online experiences faster than adults realise."</i> <i>"The design of digital platforms influences the type and extent of risks young people face."</i> <i>"Young people do not feel comfortable to reach out to adults and helplines for online support."</i> 3. Participants stand along the line based on their opinion. Participants can also stand in the middle as a neutral position. 4. Follow-up prompts Invite a few participants to explain their position. Allow people to move if their opinion changes. • What makes you agree or disagree? • Can you give an example (without naming anyone)? • What support do young people need? • Does this affect all young people in the same way?

Step 4: Digital journey mapping (30 minutes)

Objective

The goal of step 4 is to understand a typical day for young people while navigating the internet, social media, online apps, etc. Participants are invited to map a typical online activities in day, a typical online activities in a week, or a recent online experience. The activity explores what they do online, what they enjoy or value, where difficult, risky or confusing situations arise, what they usually do in response, where they might look for support, and where they may have opportunities to express their views.

The digital journey maps will provide concrete examples for the next activity, where participants will reflect on what these experiences tell us about feeling safe online, knowing what to do online, and being listened to about the digital world.

Note to facilitators:

To transition from Step 3 to Step 4, facilitators can use the following script:

"We have talked about different situations that young people may experience online. Some of these can be positive, some can be challenging, and many depend on the context. They can happen at different moments throughout the day while gaming, watching videos, chatting with friends, learning, scrolling through social media, or sharing content. In the next activity, we will map these experiences onto a typical day to explore when and where they are most likely to happen. This will help us better understand how online experiences fit into young people's everyday digital lives".

Facilitators should provide to the young people the following materials to draw and create their digital journey map:

- White papers (possibly A3) - essential
- Colour pencils and pens of different colours – essential
- Post it – optional
- Stickers – optional

For the age 12 and below, facilitators should also print the Annex 3.4.

Participants should not be asked to disclose personal harmful experiences. They shall speak generally and use personal experiences only if they feel like sharing them. Facilitators should remind participants that they do not need to include anything private (e.g., they should not write real names, usernames or details that could identify someone).

Facilitators should ensure that the activity helps participants map:

- online spaces and activities that are part of their day, week or selected online experience;
- positive, useful or enjoyable online moments;
- difficult, risky, confusing or uncomfortable online moments;
- what children or young people usually do in response to difficult moments;
- where children or young people might look for help or support;
- moments where asking for help or reporting may be difficult;
- skills or strategies children and young people use in the journey;
- moments or situations that may be harder for some children or young people than others;
- places, if any, where children or young people can express their views or be heard.

Activity

Age	Activity	Methodology
12 and below	My experiences in the digital world	Step 1: The facilitator should print the coloured activity table provided in Annex 3.4. Where possible, the table should be printed in A3. Children will work individually to better explore their digital experience. Step 2: The facilitator should explain the activity in simple language. For example:

Age	Activity	Methodology
		"Now we are going to think about what children do online during a normal day or week. You can write, draw or use symbols. You do not need to share anything private. You can talk about what children your age might do online." Step 3: The facilitator should show the table and explain that each colour represents a different type of online moment. The facilitator may give one simple example before children start. • Green: something good, fun, useful or important. • Red: something worrying, confusing, uncomfortable or not right. • Pink: a place where a child might get help or support. • Blue: something children know or do to deal with that online situation. • Orange: a place where children can say what they think or be heard. Step 4: Ask children to insert in the table their typical activities online according to the categories. Children can include, for example: videogames, videos, messaging, schoolwork, calls, apps, searches, online communities, any other online activity they use or know about. Young people can also draw the activities in the boxes of the categories. Step 5: When children have completed the table, discuss it using the following prompts: • What are the best or most useful parts of being online?

Age

Activity

Methodology

- Where can something online feel worrying, confusing, uncomfortable or not right?
- What might a child do if something went wrong?
- Where on the map could a child get help, and from whom?
- Are there places on the map where it might be hard for a child to ask for help?
- What do children know or do in these situations?
- Looking at this map, are there any moments that might be harder for some children?
- Is there any place on the map where children can say what they think?

Facilitators should avoid asking children directly to describe harmful personal experiences. Instead of asking "Has anything online ever made you upset?", use general wording such as "Can something online ever make children feel upset, worried or confused?"

Step 6: Ask participants to choose a few moments from the map that they want to discuss further in the next activity, which will be about what helps children feeling safe, know what to do, and have a say online.

The group can select:

- A positive moment online
- A difficult, worrying, or confusing moment
- A moment where a child might get help
- A moment where children can say what they think or where they should be heard more

Step 6: Close the activity.

Age	Activity	Methodology
13 - 15	Mapping my digital experiences	Step 1: Introduce the activity and explain that participants can map one of the following: • a typical online day; • a typical online week; • or a recent online situation that many young people might recognise. Step 2: Participants can work individually, in pairs or in small groups. They should create a timeline, a diagram or written map. The map should include: • online spaces and platforms used; • who young people interact with, such as friends, classmates, strangers, influencers, communities or adults; • positive experiences, such as entertainment, belonging, creativity, learning or support; • difficult experiences, such as conflict, exclusion, pressure, unwanted contact, scams, harmful content, misinformation or feeling overwhelmed; • what young people usually do in response; • where young people might look for help or support; • whether there are places where young people can express their views or be heard. Step 3: Ask participants to mark: • one moment where young people feel safe or supported; • one moment where something could go wrong;

Age	Activity	Methodology
		• one moment where young people need knowledge or skills; • one moment where support might be needed; • one moment where asking for help or reporting might be difficult; • one moment where young people are heard, or could have a chance to be heard. Step 4: Use the following prompts: • What are the most positive or useful online moments? • What makes an online space feel safe or unsafe? • In which online spaces or situations can young people feel unsafe, uncomfortable, pressured, confused or not protected enough? • What do young people usually do when something goes wrong? • Where on the map do young people look for help or support? • When do you deem it is necessary to reach out for help in negative situations? • Where might asking for help or reporting be difficult? • What would you like adults to do to help you in uncomfortable situations? • What skills or strategies do young people use in these situations? • Are there moments on the map that might be harder for some young people than others?

Age	Activity	Methodology
		- Where, if anywhere, do young people have a chance to express their views or be heard? - What should adults understand better about young people's online lives? The facilitator should encourage participants to use examples from their maps. Differences of opinion should be noted. Step 5: Ask each group or participant to identify a few moments from the map that should be discussed further in the next activity. Each group or participant should identify: - a positive online experience; - a risk, difficulty or uncomfortable moment; - a moment where support might be needed; - a moment where asking for help or reporting might be difficult; - a skill or coping strategy young people use; - a moment where young people are heard, or could have a chance to be heard; - a moment or situation that may be harder for some young people than others. Step 6: Close the activity and explain that the maps will be used in the next activity.
16-18	My digital experiences and what shapes them	Step 1: Explain that participants can map one of the following: - a typical digital routine across platforms; - a recent online experience;

Age	Activity	Methodology
		• or a journey through a specific issue, such as seeing harmful content, reporting a problem, dealing with misinformation, using AI tools, participating in an online community, experiencing pressure online, or seeking support. Step 2: Participants should work in small groups to encourage discussion. They can create a written, visual or hybrid map. The map should cover the following elements, where relevant to the selected journey or issue: • platforms and online spaces; • emotional highs and lows • positive experiences (e.g. learning, creativity, belonging, activism, entertainment, identity expression, support) • risks, harms or uncomfortable moments • interaction with peers, communities, influencers, strangers, institutions or adults • platform features, algorithms, design choices that influence behaviour, social or commercial pressures • help-seeking and reporting pathways • barriers and facilitators to getting support • opportunities to express views or influence decisions • who may be excluded, less protected or less supported Step 3: Each group should present their digital journey map. Facilitators should use the following prompts to

Age	Activity	Methodology
		promote discussion, adapting them to discussion. If there is not enough time, facilitators can select some of the prompts. • Where do platforms, algorithms, recommendation systems or design features influence what happens? • Where do young people feel in control, and where do they not? • Where do young people encounter pressure, manipulation, exclusion, harmful content, unwanted contact, scams, misinformation or other risks? • What do young people usually do when something online feels wrong? • Where and when do young people seek support, and what support routes appear in the map? • In which situations is seeking help or using reporting tools difficult? • What would you like adults to do to help you in uncomfortable situations? (optional) • What skills or strategies do young people use in these situations? (optional) • Which moments or situations in the map may affect some young people more than others? • Where, if anywhere, do young people have opportunities to give views or influence decisions? • What future developments may affect young people's online experiences? (optional)

Age	Activity	Methodology
		While each group is sharing the main points of their maps, the facilitator should also ask other participants whether they recognise the experience being showed, and if others have different views. Different opinions should be noted. Step 4: Explain the maps will be used in the next activity. Each group should identify the main points from its map that should be discussed further in the next activity. • A positive online experience • A risk, difficult moment or protection gap • A moment where support might be needed • A moment where seeking help or reporting might be difficult • a skill or coping strategy • a opportunity or gap around giving views or influencing decisions • a moment or situation that may affect some young people more than others • an emerging or future issue that adults should understand better

Step 5 – The BIK+ Strategy: safe, confident and listened to online (30 minutes)

Objective

The goal of step 5 is to reflect on children's online experiences through the three main areas of BIK+ - children are not expected to know the BIK+ strategy or assess its objectives.

Note to facilitators

To transition from Step 4 to Step 5, facilitators can use the following script:

"Let's move on to the next part of our discussion.

Up to now, we've been exploring the online journeys children take: what you do, where you go, and the kinds of experiences you have.

Now, we'd like to take a step back and reflect on those journeys together.

We're going to focus on three key things:

- *what helps children feel safe when they're online,*
- *what helps them understand what to do or how to respond in different situations,*
- *and whether children feel they have a say in how the internet could be improved for them.*

There are no right or wrong answers here. We are really interested in your experiences, opinions, and ideas. Please feel free to share openly, and build on each other's thoughts if you'd like.

Let's start by thinking about what makes children feel safe online..."

Facilitators should provide to the young people the following materials:

- White papers
- Colour pencils and pens of different colours
- Post it

- Stickers

For the age groups “13 to 15” facilitators should also print:

- Annex 3.5
- Annex 3.6

For the age groups “16 to 18” facilitators should also print:

- Annex 3.5.
- Annex 3.7

Facilitators should use the discussion to understand what children and young people think is working well, what is not working well, who may be left out or less supported, and what should change. Facilitators should also capture, where discussed:

- whether children and young people feel that online experiences have become safer/less safe;
- which form of support (reporting tools, information, advice, etc.) they have seen or used, and whether these were useful, accessible, easy to use;
- what makes children and young people use, trust, or avoid support, helplines, school advice, campaigns, websites, etc.;
- whether children and young people think adults, schools, platforms or policymakers are focusing on the right online issues, or whether important issues are being missed;
- any new or changing online issues that children and young people think adults should understand better;
- whether children and young people feel they have meaningful opportunities to express their views and influence decisions about the digital environment.

Activity

Age	Activity	Methodology
12 and below	What helps children online?	Step 1: Introduce the activity, explaining that the group will now look back at the online journeys and think about what helps children feel safe online, what helps children know what to do online, and whether children get to say what would make the internet better. Step 2: Introduce the three areas – feeling safe online, knowing what to do online, having a say – using simple words; use three posters/cards placed where all children can see them (format can be adapted to the setting). Step 3: Discuss each area separately. For each area, present the examples below and ask children whether each example: • Works well • Needs to be better • Or they are not sure Children can answer by raising hands, placing stickers, moving to a side of the room, or using coloured cards. Children do not need to reach agreement. Differences between children's views should be noted. Area 1: Feeling safe (Safe digital experiences) • "Children can block or report someone who is mean online" • "Apps and games have rules that protect children" • "If needed, there is an adult, helpline or service that children can ask for help" After discussing the examples, ask: • What makes this work well or not work well?

Age	Activity	Methodology
-----	----------	-------------

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would make children feel safer and why it is important to feel safe online? • Where would you go for help if something online made you feel worried, unsafe or upset? • Are there some children who might find this harder, for example younger children, children with disabilities, children who do not speak the language well, children who do not have much money, children who are new in a country, or children who do not have an adult they trust? • Where did this appear in your online journey map? <i>(optional)</i> |
|--|--|---|

Area 2: Knowing what to do online (Digital empowerment):

- "Children know what to do if something online feels wrong."
- "Children know where they can go if they don't know whether something is wrong."
- "Children know how to check if something they see or read online is true."
- "Children know about the different ways they are protected online."

After discussing the examples, facilitators should use the following prompts to promote discussion, adapting them to discussion. If there is not enough time, facilitators can select some of the prompts:

- Do children usually know what to do in this situation?
- Who or what helps children know what to do in this situation?

Age	Activity	Methodology
-----	----------	-------------

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tips or advice help children know what to do in this situation? (<i>optional</i>) • Do children learn about staying safe or dealing with problems online at school or somewhere else? What do they learn? Does it help children know what to do online Did it change anything children actually do online? • Has anything children learned from school, parents, friends, websites, campaigns or their own experience changed what they do online? • Have children seen or used anything that helps them online, such as a lesson, video, website, helpline, reporting button, school activity or advice from an adult? (<i>optional</i>) • What would make children more likely to use this kind of help? |
|--|--|---|

Area 3: Having a say (Active participation)

- "Adults want to hear what children have to say about online safety"
- "Children have ways to communicate what would make apps, games or the internet better"
- "When children share their ideas, adults tell them what happens next."

After discussing the questions, ask:

- How often should adults and children discuss online experiences and online world? (*optional*)
- Are children asked what they think about online safety, apps, games or school rules?
- Do adults listen to children's ideas?

Age	Activity	Methodology
		• When children share ideas, do adults tell them what happens next? • What would make children feel more listened to? • Who gets asked and who might be left out? Step 4: Now ask children about new or changing online issues. Give each child a few sticky notes and ask them to write or draw things happening online that adults might not understand but should know about (e.g. new apps, games, trends, scams). Place all notes on a wall or table, then go through them together and invite children to explain their ideas, using these to spark discussion. The facilitator can then ask: • Is there anything important about children's online lives that adults are missing? • Are adults trying to fix the right problems, or are there other things they should pay more attention to? Step 5: Ask children to choose up to three things that adults, online platforms, schools, helplines or policymakers should improve to make the internet better for children. The facilitator should record the top priority, and any other important priorities raised by the group. Step 6: Close the activity by briefly summarising the main points of the discussion.
13 - 15	Safe, confident, listened to: what is working	Step 1: Introduce the activity and link it to the digital journey map. Explain that the group will now look back at the digital journey maps and discuss what they tell us about three areas: • feeling safe online • knowing what to do online, and

Age	Activity	Methodology
	and what isn't?	- being listened to about the digital world. Participants do not need to know the BIK+ strategy. The facilitator can briefly explain that these three areas reflect what BIK+ is trying to support. Step 2: Divide participants into 3 groups, each assigned one area: - Group 1: feeling safe online - Group 2: Knowing what to do online - Group 3: Being listened to online If the focus group is small, the same group can discuss all three areas together. Each group should use examples from the digital journey maps where possible. Step 3: Give each group the same task. Ask each group to discuss four questions for its assigned area. A grid to fill in will be provided for the group to complete (see Annex 3.5): What works well? What already helps young people in this area? What does not work well enough? In which online spaces or situations do young people still face problems, risks, confusion or barriers? Who may be left out or less supported? Are some young people less protected, less confident or less listened to? What should change? What is one practical improvement that adults, platforms, schools, helplines or policymakers should make?

Age	Activity	Methodology
		The facilitator should ensure that each group covers most of the following prompts (connected to the 4 main questions above), depending on the area they are discussing. Some of the questions are optional. To support groups, facilitators should print out the following prompt questions to give to each group (Annex 3.6): • Feeling safe online (group 1): ○ What makes an app, game, chat, website or online space feel safe? What are the signs that an online space does not feel safe to young people, for example pressure to share, unwanted contact, harmful content, bullying, scams, unclear rules or fear that reporting will not help? ○ Where would you go for help if something online made you feel worried, unsafe or upset? ○ Do reporting, blocking, privacy settings, age settings or platform rules help? (<i>optional</i>) ○ What happens when something is reported? (<i>optional</i>) ○ Are online spaces more age-appropriate than before, or do problems remain? ○ Compared with one or two years ago, does being online feel safer, less safe or about the same for young people? What has changed? ○ Are some young people (for example younger children, children with disabilities, children who do not speak the language well, children who do not have much money, children who are new in a country) more exposed to risks or less able to get help?

Age	Activity	Methodology
		- Knowing what to do online (group 2) - What helps young people understand online risks? - How do young people recognise scams, fake information, harmful content, pressure to share, unwanted contact or people behaving badly online? (<i>optional</i>) - What do young people usually do when something online feels wrong? - Have young people seen or used anything that helps them online, such as a school lesson, campaign, website, helpline, reporting tool, youth activity or video? - Which of these, if any, helped most? - What made it useful or not useful? - Was it easy to find, understand and use? - Was it appropriate for young people of your age and background? - Did it change anything young people actually do online? - What makes young people use, trust, ignore or avoid this kind of support? - What advice or support is helpful (or isn't)? (<i>optional</i>) - Do adults, parents, caregivers, teachers or educators usually understand enough to help young people with online problems? (<i>optional</i>) - Being listened to about the digital world (group 3)

Age	Activity	Methodology
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- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are young people ever asked what they think about online safety, apps, games, school rules, reporting tools or digital policy? ○ Who usually gets asked? (optional) ○ Who might be left out? ○ Does it feel like adults, schools, platforms or policymakers act on what young people say? ○ What would make participation feel real rather than symbolic? ○ What should adults ask young people more often? ○ What do young people think meaningful participation is? |
|--|--|---|

Step 4: Before groups prepare their feedback, give each group a few sticky notes and ask them to write situations happening online that adults might not understand but should know about (e.g. new apps, games, trends, scams). The youth will place all notes on a wall or table, then go through them together during the feedback session.

Step 5: Each group should prepare a short feedback to share with the wider group.

- What works well?
- What does not work well (enough)?
- Which group(s) of young people may need more support?
- What new or changing online issue adults should pay more attention to?
- What practical recommendation would you like to share?

Age	Activity	Methodology
		Finally, facilitators should also ask participants whether adults (including schools, policymakers) are focusing on the right online problems, and whether there is anything important they (the adults) are missing. Step 6: Invite each group to present their points. After each group presents, the facilitator may ask some follow-up questions: • Was this also visible in your digital journey maps? • Do others agree, or do you see it differently? • What would make the biggest difference? • Who should be responsible for improving this? The facilitator should not try to force agreement – differences between participants should be noted. Step 7: Ask the full group to discuss and vote on up to three priority improvements that policymakers, platforms, schools, helplines or other adults should address to improve young people’s online experiences. Participants can vote by raising hands, using stickers, or agreeing through discussion. The facilitator should record the top three priorities and any important differences of opinion. Step 8: Close the activity and briefly summarise the main points.
16-18	BIK+ strategy: what is working and what isn’t?	Step 1: Introduce the activity and link it to the digital journey maps. Explain that participants will now use their digital journey maps to take a step back and assess what these experiences suggest about the three main areas of BIK+ strategy (online safety, digital empowerment, active participation).

Age	Activity	Methodology
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Step 2: Briefly introduce the 3 areas in a friendly language (keep it short):

- Online safety: whether online spaces, services, rules and support help young people feel protected;
- Digital empowerment: whether young people know how to recognise and manage risks, and whether advice or learning helps in practice.
- Active participation: whether young people have real opportunities to express their views and influence decisions about the digital environment.

Step 3: Divide participants into small groups. Give each group a worksheet/flipchart (see Annex 3.5).

Step 4: Each group should discuss all three areas and complete the grid. The facilitator should ensure that all groups cover the prompts below.

Ask them to focus on practical examples rather than general statements, and to use concrete examples from their digital journey maps where possible. For example:

- a reporting tool that works or does not work;
- advice that young people find useful or unrealistic;
- a platform feature that creates pressure;
- a type of content or contact that feels unsafe;
- a group of young people who may be less supported;
- an example of youth consultation that feels meaningful or symbolic.

The facilitator should ensure that each group covers most of the following prompts depending on the area they are discussing. Some of the questions can be optional. To support

Age	Activity	Methodology
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groups, facilitators should print out the following prompt questions to give to each group (**Annex 3.7**):

- Online safety
 - What makes online spaces feel safe or unsafe for young people?
 - Are reporting tools, blocking tools, privacy settings, age settings or platform rules useful in practice?
 - Where would you go for help if something online made you feel worried, unsafe or upset?
 - In which online spaces or situations do young people still feel unsafe, uncomfortable, pressured, confused or not protected enough? (*optional*)
 - What happens when something is reported? (*optional*)
 - Compared with one or two years ago, does being online feel safer, less safe or about the same?
 - Are online services and spaces becoming more age-appropriate for young people, or do problems remain? Where? (*optional*)
 - What protection gaps remain?
 - Which young people may be more exposed to risks or less able to get help?
- Digital empowerment
 - What helps young people recognise risks such as scams, fake information, harmful content, unwanted contact, pressure to share, or manipulation?

Age Activity Methodology

- What do young people actually do when something online feels wrong? (*optional*)
- Have young people seen or used anything that helps them online, such as a school lesson, campaign, website, helpline, reporting tool, youth activity or video?
- What makes this kind of support useful, accessible and easy to use?
- What makes young people use, trust, ignore or avoid support such as school lessons, campaigns, websites, helplines, reporting tools, youth activities or videos?
- Are these resources understandable and relevant for different groups of young people, including younger children and young people in vulnerable situations? (*optional*)
- Active participation
 - Are young people asked for their views about online safety, apps, games, school rules, reporting tools, etc.?
 - Who tends to be included in these conversations?
 - Who may be left out? Are opportunities to participate accessible to different groups of young people, including younger children, young people with disabilities, young people who do not speak the language well, young people with fewer resources, or young people in vulnerable situations?
 - Does participation feel meaningful, or does it feel rather symbolic?

Age Activity Methodology

- Do adults, platforms, schools or policymakers act on what young people say? (*optional*)
- What would make young people feel that adults, platforms or policymakers are really listening?

Step 5: When the main grid has been completed, each group should discuss the following questions:

- What new online issues should adults and policymakers pay more attention to in the next few years?
- How are AI tools, algorithms, recommendation systems, deepfakes, scams, influencers, in-game purchases, addictive design or commercial pressure changing young people's online experiences?
- Are adults and policymakers focusing on the right problems, or are they missing something important?
- Looking at these new or changing issues, what should be given more priority in the next few years?
- What feels outdated in the way adults talk about online safety?

Step 6: Each group should prepare feedback for the wider group. The feedback should include:

- What works well?
- What does not work well (enough)?
- Which group(s) of young people may need more support?
- What new or changing online issue adults should pay more attention to?
- What practical recommendation would you like to share?

Age	Activity	Methodology
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Step 7: Invite each group to present its feedback. After each group presents, the facilitator should ask:

- Was this also visible in your digital journey maps?
- Do others agree, or do you see it differently?
- What would make the biggest difference?
- Who should be responsible for improving this?

Differences of opinion should be noted. The facilitator should not force consensus.

Step 8: Ask the full group to briefly discuss and vote on up to three priority improvements that policymakers, platforms, schools, helplines or other actors should address to improve young people's online experiences. Participants can vote by raising hands, using stickers, or agreeing through discussion. The facilitator should record the top three priorities and any important differences of opinion.

Step 9: Close the activity and briefly summarise the main points.

Step 6: End of the consultation session (5 minutes)

Objective

In this step, facilitators should thank all participants for their time and input. Facilitators should explain, in age-appropriate language, that participants' views will be summarised anonymously and used as part of the evaluation of the BIK+ strategy.

Note to facilitators

If time permits, facilitators are encouraged to ask children to evaluate the consultation process (e.g., the focus group, content, activities, materials used etc.). Such insights could inform existing practices of child participation in policymaking, including actions in Pillar 3.

Step 7: Data collection by the facilitator

Facilitators should take notes during the consultation session. Where possible, two facilitators should be present: one to guide the discussion and one to take notes.

Immediately after the session, facilitators should review their notes and complete **Annex 4 – Reporting template** in English. Facilitators must also complete **Annex 5 – Participant information template** in English with basic anonymised participant information, using non-identifying participant codes such as Child 1, Child 2, Child 3, and so on.

The completed reporting template and participant information template must be submitted to European Schoolnet within one week of the consultation session and no later than **Friday, 16 October 2026**.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Information sheet for children and young people

Youth voices wanted!

Children and young people across Europe are being invited to share their views on what they do online, what works well, what can be difficult, and what could make the internet better for people their age.

What?

The European Commission has a strategy called the **Better Internet for Kids+ strategy**. Its aim is to help make the digital world safer, more useful and more respectful of children and young people.

Now, we want to hear from young people directly. Your views will help us understand what online life is like for children and young people today, what support they need, and what could be improved in the future.

You do not need to know anything about the strategy before taking part.

How?

During the group session, an adult will guide the discussion. You may be asked to take part in short activities, such as talking about a normal online day, discussing different online situations, or sharing ideas about what could make the internet better for young people. Among other things, we would like to know:

The ways in which you use technology and what you do online in a normal day.

What you care about most when it comes to being online, but also which challenges or risks concern you.

What could make the digital world a better place in the future.

There are no right or wrong answers, and this is not a test or experiment. We just want to find out what's important to you. Anything you tell us will be kept private and safe – we won't share your personal details or use anything that you tell us to single you out. You can choose not to answer a question. You can take a break. You can stop taking part at any time. You do not have to explain why.

You also do not need to share anything private or upsetting. You can speak generally, or talk about what young people your age might experience online.

What next?

The views shared by children and young people will be combined with views from other groups, including parents, carers, teachers and experts. Together, this will help the European Commission understand what is working well, what needs to improve, and what should be prioritised in the coming years.

Want to know more?

The adult leading the group session should be able to answer any questions you have, and can help you if you are worried about any of the topics you discuss. If you still need further help, you can contact the project organisers at bikevaluation@betterinternetforkids.eu.

Annex 2 – Parent/caregiver information and consent template

Important note for facilitators: Facilitators must obtain informed consent/assent before the consultation. Facilitators are asked to use their own organisation's forms to obtain informed consent/assent for this consultation activity. EUN shares the below model consent form for facilitators to align their own forms with the contents and objectives and cross-check regarding the minimum requirements.

Facilitators must collect and store consent forms at the local level for a limited amount of time and **should not** share any filled-out and signed informed consent/assent forms, nor any other personal data or identifying participant information with EUN. After the limited data retaining period, the facilitators must

ensure that all forms, including personal data and further data collected in the context of the consultation activity, are safely disposed of according to their format.

The facilitator acts as both the controller and processor of personal data that may be collected!

The facilitator will process and store such data in compliance with the requirements of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD! Help us assess the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids (BIK+ strategy)

Dear parent or caregiver!

On behalf of European Schoolnet and the European Commission, we kindly invite your child to participate in a consultation activity to assess **the progress and success of the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Kids+ (BIK+ strategy)**.

In preparation for this activity, your child has received a flyer explaining the consultation in a child-friendly manner. We include the flyer attached to this email for your information. For more detailed information, please visit [the dedicated page on the BIK portal](#). You can also contact the organisers at: bikevaluation@betterinternetforkids.eu.

We kindly ask you to take a look at the flyer attached and then return the filled and signed consent forms attached to this email to the facilitator of the consultation activity.

Thanks in advance!

Consultation session facilitator: **Please add the name of the facilitator.**

Contact: **Please add the name of the facilitator's contact details**

→ ATTACH INFO FLYER – ANNEX 1

→ ATTACH YOUR ORGANISATION'S INFORMED CONSENT/ASSENT FORM(S)

Guidance on minimum requirements – informed consent of parent or caregiver

Please read the statements below and return the completed form to the facilitator of the consultation activity:

1. I am authorised to sign for the child's participation in the indicated consultation activity.
2. I have been clearly informed about the nature and method of the consultation activity, as described in the flyer.
3. I understand that the child's participation is voluntary.
4. I understand that the child can withdraw at any time without adverse consequences.
5. I understand that the information gathered and any additional materials (e.g., drawings or note sheets used during the consultation session) will be used to report on and communicate the views of children and young people, assess the progress and success of the BIK+ strategy, and suggest ways to improve the digital world.
6. If results relating to the child for whom I am authorised to sign are used in publications or are made public in another way, this will be done in such a way that the child's anonymity is fully safeguarded.
7. The child's personal data will not be passed on to third parties without my express permission.
8. I understand that neither the child nor myself will receive any payment for participating in the consultation.
9. I agree, fully and voluntarily, to the child's participation in this consultation.

	YES	NO
I have read the statements above and give consent to the child's participation in the consultation activity.	☐	☐

I agree that the results of this consultation activity can be used by European Schoolnet and the European Commission to report on and communicate the views of children and young people about the progress and success of the BIK+ strategy and on how to further improve the digital world for children and young people.

☐
☐

Name of child

Date

Name of authorised person (parent/caregiver)

Signature

Guidance on minimum requirements – Consent/assent of child

Depending on your child's age and your national legislation, the child might not have attained the legal age of consent. Still, we would like to gather the child's positive consent/assent to participate in our consultation.

Therefore, please read the statements below together with the child and ask them to tick the boxes as appropriate:

	YES	NO
I have been told and I understand, in general terms, what this consultation activity is about.	☐	☐
I know what I will be expected to do in the consultation activity.	☐	☐
I know that I can stop taking part at any time without any problem.	☐	☐

I agree to take part in the consultation activity.

☐☐

Name of child

Date

Child's signature

Annex 3 – Activity materials

Annex 3.1 – Ice breaker materials (12 and below)



BIK+ YAG

Icebreaker Cards — Age 12 and Below

"Emoji Corners: How Would This Feel?"

Step 3 • 10 minutes

Put up 4 emoji corners around the room. Read out a scenario. Children move to the corner that matches how they'd feel.

There are no right or wrong answers!



European Commission

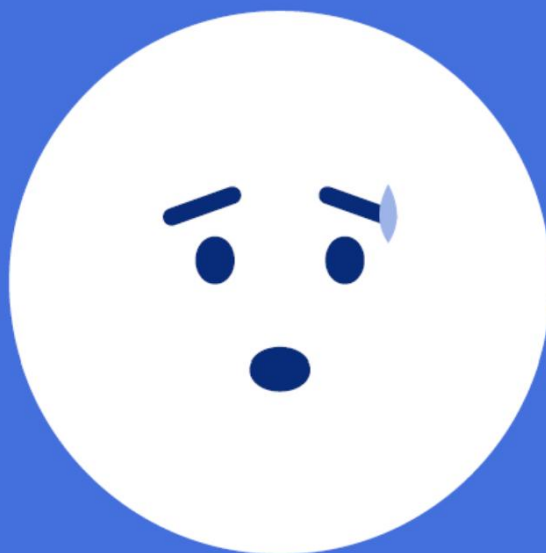
Better Internet for Kids

EMOJI CORNER



HAPPY

EMOJI CORNER



WORRIED

EMOJI CORNER



UPSET / ANGRY

EMOJI CORNER



CONFUSED

Card 1 of 15

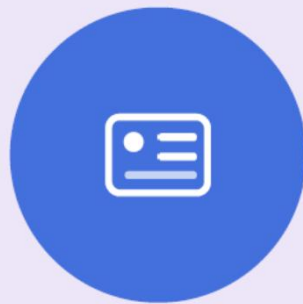
★ Priority



**"Someone you don't know
sends you a message or
friend request."**

How would this feel?

Card 2 of 15



"A game asks for your personal information – like your name, photo, age, or location."

How would this feel?

Card 3 of 15

★ Priority



**"You learn something new
online that helps you with
school, a hobby, or
something you love."**

How would this feel?

Card 4 of 15

★ Priority



**"Someone is mean to you or
another kid in a game or
chat."**

How would this feel?

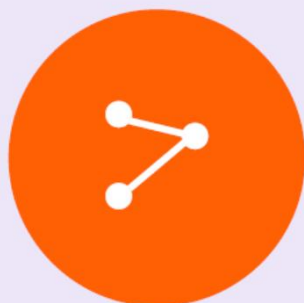
Card 5 of 15



**"You see something online
and you're not sure if it's
true or if you can trust it."**

How would this feel?

Card 6 of 15



**"You make something
online and share it with
others."**

How would this feel?

Card 7 of 15

★ Priority



**"You see something online
that feels just like you – it's
relatable."**

How would this feel?

Card 8 of 15



**"You join an online
community and meet new
people who like the same
things as you."**

How would this feel?

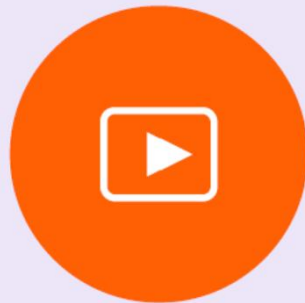
Card 9 of 15



"A friend recommends something to you online."

How would this feel?

Card 10 of 15



**"You watch a funny video
that makes you laugh out
loud."**

How would this feel?

Card 11 of 15



**"You're not sure how to use
a new app or game, so you
ask someone for help."**

How would this feel?

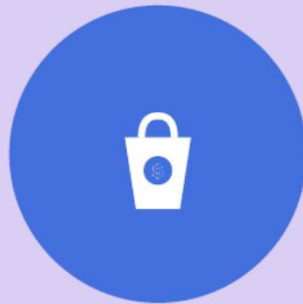
Card 12 of 15



**"Someone asks you to keep
a secret about something
that happened online."**

How would this feel?

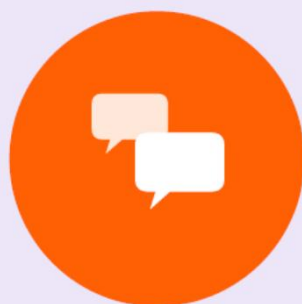
Card 13 of 15



"A pop-up asks you to buy something in a game."

How would this feel?

Card 14 of 15



**"Your parent or teacher
asks what you've been
doing online."**

How would this feel?

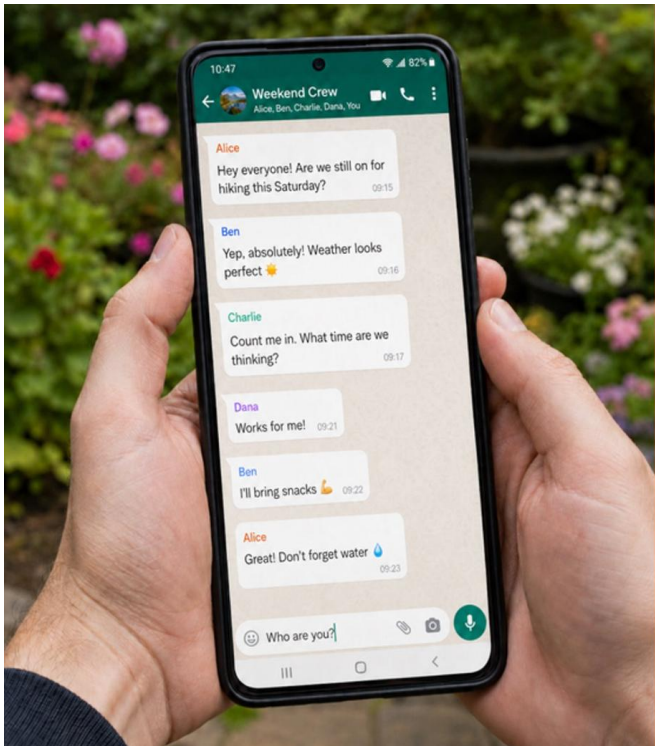
Card 15 of 15



**"You see an advert that
seems too good to be true."**

How would this feel?

Annex 3.2 – Ice breaker materials (13 to 15)



Better Internet for Kids



Being added to a group chat with people you don't know



Better Internet for Kids

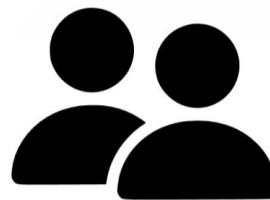


Sharing your live location with friends





Better Internet for Kids



You make a new friend online who shares your interest

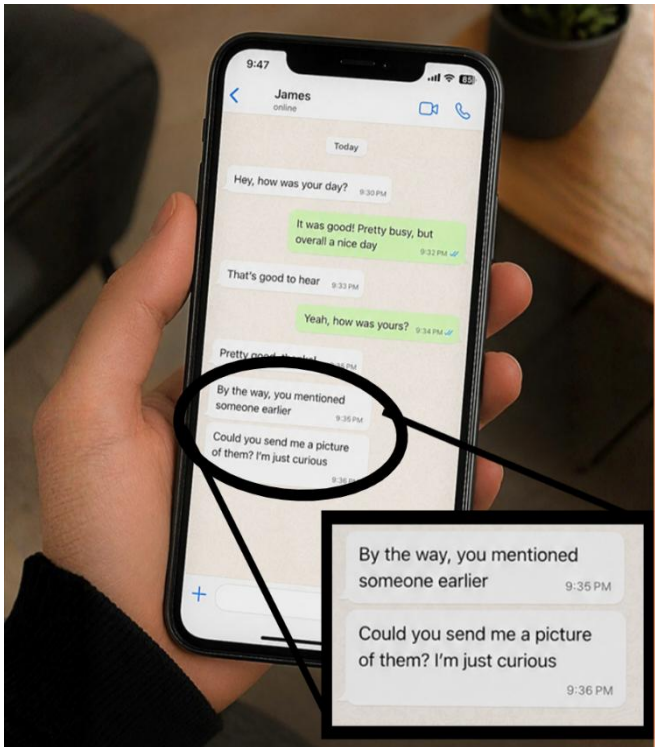


Better Internet for Kids



Someone asks to move your conversation from a public platform to a private chat app





Better Internet for Kids



Your friend asked for someone's picture without their permission



Better Internet for Kids



Reporting harmful behaviour in a game



Annex 3.3 – Ice breaker materials (16 to 18)



**Young people
have more control
over their online
experiences than
adults think.**



Better Internet for Kids



**Most online risks
depend on the
context, not only
on the app or
platform.**



Better Internet for Kids



Young people are often asked for their views about online issues, but not always listened to.



Better Internet for Kids



New technologies, such as AI, algorithms or deepfakes, are changing young people's online experiences faster than adults realise.



Better Internet for Kids



The design of digital platforms influences the type and extent of risks young people face.



Better Internet for Kids



Young people do not feel comfortable to reach out to adults and helplines for online support.



Better Internet for Kids

Annex 3.4 – Digital journey mapping materials (12 and below)

Green: something good, fun, useful or important

Red: something worrying, confusing, uncomfortable or not right.

Pink: a place where a child might get help or support.

Blue: something children know or do to deal with that online situation

Orange: a place where children can say what they think or be heard.

Any other

Annex 3.5 – BIK+ strategy materials (13 to 15 / 16 to 18)

BIK+ AREA	What is working?	What is not working well enough?	Who may be left out or most affected?	What should change?
Online safety				
Digital empowerment				
Active participation				

Annex 3.6 – group questions (13 to 15)

Feeling safe online (group 1):

- What makes an app, game, chat, website or online space feel safe? What are the signs that an online space does not feel safe to young people, for example pressure to share, unwanted contact, harmful content, bullying, scams, unclear rules or fear that reporting will not help?
- Where would you go for help if something online made you feel worried, unsafe or upset?
- Do reporting, blocking, privacy settings, age settings or platform rules help? *(optional)*
- What happens when something is reported? *(optional)*
- Are online spaces more age-appropriate than before, or do problems remain? *(optional)*
- Compared with one or two years ago, does being online feel safer, less safe or about the same for young people? What has changed?
- Are some young people (for example younger children, children with disabilities, children who do not speak the language well, children who do not have much money, children who are new in a country) more exposed to risks or less able to get help?

Knowing what to do online (group 2)

- What helps young people understand online risks? *(optional)*
- How do young people recognise scams, fake information, harmful content, pressure to share, unwanted contact or people behaving badly online?
- What do young people usually do when something online feels wrong?
- Have young people seen or used anything that helps them online, such as a school lesson, campaign, website, helpline, reporting tool, youth activity or video?
 - Which of these, if any, helped most?
 - What made it useful or not useful?
 - Was it easy to find, understand and use?

- Was it appropriate for young people of your age and background?
- Did it change anything young people actually do online?
- What makes young people use, trust, ignore or avoid this kind of support? *(optional)*
- What advice or support is useful? *(optional)*
- What advice or support does not really help? *(optional)*
- Do adults, parents, caregivers, teachers or educators usually understand enough to help young people with online problems?

Being listened to about the digital world (group 3)

- Are young people ever asked what they think about online safety, apps, games, school rules, reporting tools or digital policy?
- Who usually gets asked? *(optional)*
- Who might be left out?
- Does it feel like adults, schools, platforms or policymakers act on what young people say?
- What would make participation feel real rather than symbolic?
- What should adults ask young people more often?
- What do young people think meaningful participation is?

Annex 3.7 – group questions (16 to 18)

Online safety

- What makes online spaces feel safe or unsafe for young people?
- Are reporting tools, blocking tools, privacy settings, age settings or platform rules useful in practice?
- Where would you go for help if something online made you feel worried, unsafe or upset?
- In which online spaces or situations do young people still feel unsafe, uncomfortable, pressured, confused or not protected enough? *(optional)*
- What happens when something is reported? *(optional)*

- Compared with one or two years ago, does being online feel safer, less safe or about the same?
- Are online services and spaces becoming more age-appropriate for young people, or do problems remain? Where? (*optional*)
- What protection gaps remain?
- Which young people may be more exposed to risks or less able to get help?

Digital empowerment

- What helps young people recognise risks such as scams, fake information, harmful content, unwanted contact, pressure to share, or manipulation?
- What do young people actually do when something online feels wrong? (*optional*)
- Have young people seen or used anything that helps them online, such as a school lesson, campaign, website, helpline, reporting tool, youth activity or video?
- What makes this kind of support useful, accessible and easy to use?
- What makes young people use, trust, ignore or avoid support such as school lessons, campaigns, websites, helplines, reporting tools, youth activities or videos?
- Are these resources understandable and relevant for different groups of young people, including younger children and young people in vulnerable situations? (*optional*)

Active participation

- Are young people asked for their views about online safety, apps, games, school rules, reporting tools, etc.?
- Who tends to be included in these conversations?
- Who may be left out? Are opportunities to participate accessible to different groups of young people, including younger children, young people with disabilities, young people who do not speak the language well, young people with fewer resources, or young people in vulnerable situations?
- Does participation feel meaningful, or does it feel rather symbolic?

- Do adults, platforms, schools or policymakers act on what young people say? *(optional)*
- What would make young people feel that adults, platforms or policymakers are really listening?

Annex 4 – Reporting template

How to use this template

- Complete this template in English, from your notes, immediately after the session and submit within one week of the consultation (by Friday 16 October 2026 at the latest). Use one reporting template per focus group conducted.
- Work through the activities in the order they happened. Report only on what was actually discussed. Where a topic did not come up, tick “Not discussed” or write N/A.
- Report at group level. Refer to individual children only by code (Child 1, Child 2...), using the same codes as in Annex 5.
- Use children’s own words for quotes wherever you can. Remove any name, username, location, or other identifying detail.
- Do not record any personal or identifying information.

A. Session information

Facilitator / organisation reference	Name: Email:
Country	
Focus group identifier	<i>(If your organisation conducts more than one focus group, each focus group must have its own identifier- for instance, FG1, FG2, FG3. The same identifier must be used in Annex 5 – Participant information template)</i>
Age group	☐ 12 and below ☐ 13-15 ☐ 16-18
Number of participants	

Setting	☐ Onsite ☐ Online
Annex 5 (participant info) completed	☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

B. Step 3: Icebreaker

How the group engaged, and any early themes <i>Overall mood and engagement, which situations sparked most reaction, and any first signals about what feels positive, risky, or where help is needed.</i>
Quotes from participants <i>In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.</i>

C. Step 4: Digital journey mapping

Positive, useful or enjoyable online moments <i>What young people value or enjoy online.</i>
Difficult, risky, confusing or uncomfortable moments <i>The kinds of problems or worries raised (in general terms).</i>
What young people usually do in response <i>Skills, strategies or actions when something goes wrong.</i>
Where they look for help, and where that is hard <i>Who or what they turn to, and moments where asking for help or reporting felt difficult.</i>

Moments that may be harder for some young people than others *For example younger children, those with disabilities, weaker language, less money, new to a country, or without a trusted adult.*

Places where young people can express views or be heard *Any points on the map where young people felt they had, or lacked, a say.*

Quotes from participants *In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.*

D. Step 5: The BIK+ strategy: safe, confident and listened to

Area 1 – Feeling safe online

What works well *What already helps young people feel safe.*

What needs to be better, and any gaps *What is missing, and what would make them feel safer.*

Quotes from participants *In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.*

Area 2 – Knowing what to do online (confidence and skills)

What works well *How confident young people feel, and where they learn to stay safe*

What needs to be better, and any gaps *Where they are unsure what to do, or where advice does not reach them.*

Quotes from participants *In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.*

Area 3 – Having a say

Do young people feel heard? *Whether they have real chances to give views on online safety, and whether adults listen.*

What they would want *How they would like to be involved or listened to.*

Quotes from participants *In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.*

Support, tools and services mentioned during the discussion

What type of support are children aware of and/or have used? *The support, tools, services that came up during the discussion, and whether these are known and have been taken up. For instance: helpline, hotline, SIC, Better Internet for Kids website/resources, SID, online safety lessons/resources at school, safety tools on apps, games, platforms, others (please specify)*

What makes young people use, trust or avoid support *What draws them to a service, and what puts them off. Any barriers or gaps.*

Final remarks

Are adults, schools and platforms focusing on the right issues? *Whether important issues are being missed, and any new or emerging issues adults should understand better.*

Quotes from participants *In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.*

What should adults, online platforms, schools, helplines, policymakers improve to make the internet better for children? *Up to 3 suggestions*

Quotes from participants *In the young person's own words. Tag with a code (e.g. Child 1). Remove any name, username or identifying detail.*

E. Feedback (optional)

How children evaluated the session *If you asked them what they thought of the focus group, activities or materials.*

Overall engagement and group dynamics & what worked well and what was difficult in running the session *How the group worked together, who spoke, any notable dynamics & Practical notes on the activities, timing and materials.*

Annex 5 – Participant information template

See separate Excel file.



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