

# Brief 2:

## Positive Connections

How might we support young people to use technology responsibly in ways that develop positive relationships?

### Background

- The digital world is more important than ever. Young people, in particular, now communicate through a range of digital channels, which allow them to connect with new people, express themselves, and support each other. Young people themselves play an important role in ensuring their online environments are based on trust, respect and consent.
- For the younger generation, being online means feeling part of a larger community. Research from the UK Safer Internet Centre shows that 65% of young people say they would feel disconnected from the world if they couldn't be online, with 13-17 year olds (72%) much more likely to feel this way than 8-12 year olds (57%).<sup>1</sup>
- However, these new norms of communication can bring with them pressures and expectations to look or act in particular ways, to buy certain things, or to always be online so you don't miss out on anything. Online bullying is common, with around half of young people surveyed by the UK Safer Internet Centre saying they had experienced it in the last year.<sup>2</sup>
- We need to support young people to take control of their digital wellbeing. By understanding the effects that digital technologies have on self-esteem and mood, young people can work towards achieving a healthy relationship with technology. It is also important that young people feel supported by friends, family and at school, so that they feel confident to speak up about any worries they have.

### How should you approach this brief?

Your design brief is to: **Design a proposal which supports young people to use technology responsibly in ways that develop positive relationships.**

- Conduct some research to find out about the benefits and potential risks of communicating online. You could start by looking at the website for the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#).
- Think about how much time you spend online. Do you notice changes in how you feel as a result of using particular apps or spending a lot of time online?

What might cause these changes?

- Speak to your teacher to decide the best way to find out about other people's experiences and views of communicating online. For example, you could prepare questions and hold a discussion group supported by your teacher, or you could speak to members of your family.
- What are the positive things about being online and using digital technologies? How can you promote these positive things while making sure people are informed about the risks of being online?

**Here are some examples of proposals that could meet this design brief:**

- a. A toolkit designed by young people for young people, to help them make better decisions online.
- b. A service that offers workshops run by young people for young people to regularly talk about online wellbeing, friendship and digital responsibility.
- c. A product that provides reminders and ways of asking for support from peers, parents and carers.

### References

1. [Internet Matters](#) (2019). Accessed September 2019
2. [UK Safer Internet Centre](#). (2018). Digital Friendships: the role of technology in young people. Accessed September 2019

