

# BEHAVIOUR CHANGES: A guide for caregivers

While children and young people often display observable behaviour and emotional changes when something is amiss, sometimes they don't. Here are some indicators or signs they may be exposed to harmful content online.



## Changes in behaviour, including:

- increasingly distant, withdrawn or secretive
- decreased interest in school and learning
- irritable, frustrated, mood swings or experiencing angry outbursts
- noticeable drop in self-esteem and more tired than usual
- unexpected weight gain or loss
- evidence of substance abuse
- exhibiting signs of self-harm and suicide ideation
- engagement in high risk, sexualised behaviour

## Changes in conversation topics, questions asked and vocabulary used, including:

- adult themed topics for example sexual content, new names for body parts
- age-inappropriate vocabulary especially around sex, body parts and relationships
- expressing self-loathing and talking about self-harm
- talking about people you don't know or haven't heard about before



## Increased device use, including:

- having their device with them constantly
- overreacting when asked to put their device away
- being secretive about online engagement

## Where to go for help ...

**Netsafe** help New Zealanders keep safe by providing free support and advice for young people, parents and organisations.

If you're in danger or a crime is being committed, call 111 immediately or 105 for non emergency.



### Netsafe Helpline

Email [help@netsafe.org.nz](mailto:help@netsafe.org.nz)

Phone 0508 638 723

Text 'Netsafe' to 4282

Contact centre available from 8am – 8pm weekdays and 9am – 5pm weekends and public holidays.

[www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz)

