

WHEN **CHILDREN** ARE EXPOSED TO DIGITAL VIOLATIONS

Children and young people's exposure
to digital violations and other unpleasant
experiences online

September 2026

TrygFonden



Red Barnet

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Printing: PartnerPrint

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INTRODUCTION

Far too many children and young people are exposed to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online. They encounter violent content, images being shared without consent, hate speech, threats and sexual extortion. Such cases can be serious and have far-reaching consequences.

The figures in this survey paint a deeply troubling picture of children and young people's digital safety. Two out of three children and young people are exposed to digital violations and unpleasant experiences online. Children and young people who feel lonely or struggle with poor well-being are particularly affected.

These findings are deeply concerning and call for action. It is particularly concerning that the figures remain at the same high level as two years ago, when we last conducted the survey. This is despite increased political focus on the negative aspects of children's online lives.

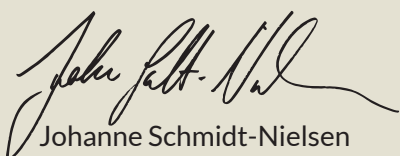
New and tougher measures are needed. First and foremost, we must regulate the tech giants and their business models. It is their responsibility to ensure that their platforms are safe for children and young people to use. When 9–12-year-olds are exposed to digital violations on platforms with a minimum age of 13, this calls for effective age verification and content moderation.

As AI chatbots make their way into children and young people's pockets, we need clear requirements governing how they may interact with children. For the past 20 years, we as a society have failed to set the necessary limits on social media companies' access to our children. Children and young people are paying a high price for that today. We are now at the beginning of the AI era, and we must not make the same mistake again.

Regulation alone, however, will not solve the problem. We also need to strengthen digital literacy in schools so that all children and young people are well equipped to navigate the online world. We need to support teachers and educators in their work to prevent and respond to digital violations and abuse. And we need to take an open and curious interest in children's online lives so that they feel safe turning to an adult for help and support.

Ensuring that all children and young people can safely participate in digital communities and are not harmed online is a responsibility that we as adults cannot ignore. This requires collective action.

Thank you to TrygFonden for making it possible to conduct this comprehensive survey as part of the Digital First Aid partnership.



Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen
Secretary General, Save the Children Denmark

10 main findings

This report presents the findings of a representative survey of children and young people aged 9–17 in Denmark. It is based on 2,142 survey responses and 14 interviews. This opening section provides an overview of 10 main findings from the survey. The following chapters take a closer look at the figures and explore each finding in more detail.

- 1: Two out of three children and young people are exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online
- 2: Girls together with children and young people who feel lonely or struggle with poor well-being are the most vulnerable
- 3: More than one in five are contacted by an adult they do not know
- 4: One in 20 children and young people have been subjected to digital abuse
- 5: Most digital violations occur on Snapchat, TikTok and Roblox
- 6: Most 9–12-year-olds use platforms with a minimum age of 13
- 7: Children and young people who feel lonely are particularly likely to use an AI chatbot as someone to confide in
- 8: Only one in five turn to an adult about unpleasant experiences online
- 9: Many children and young people do not know what to do when others are subjected to digital violations online
- 10: Children and young people normalise digital violations on online platforms

Save the Children Denmark's recommendations

Read more about the report and find
Save the Children Denmark's recommendations here



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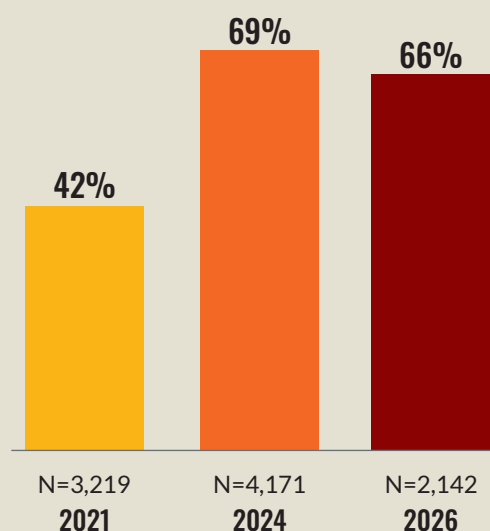


1: Two out of three children and young people are exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online – loneliness and poor well-being increase the risk of exposure

As many as **66%** of children and young people have been exposed to at least one digital violation or other unpleasant experience online over the past year. This means that in an average school class of 20 children, 13 will have been exposed to a digital violation or unpleasant experience online at least once.

In 2021, 42% of children and young people were exposed to a digital violation or other unpleasant experience online. The figure was 69% in 2024 and is 66% in 2026. The proportion of children and young people exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online thus increased significantly from 2021 to 2024 and remains at a high level in 2026.

Proportion of children and young people who have been exposed to at least one digital violation or other unpleasant experience online over the past year in 2021, 2024 and 2026, %



A direct comparison with the 2021 figures is not possible because new questions were added in 2024. The decline from 2024 to 2026 is not statistically significant, meaning that the proportion of children and young people exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online remains at the same high level as in 2024.

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

In 2026, the most common digital violations and unpleasant experiences online are:

- Being contacted by someone the child or young person did not want to talk to (31%)
- Seeing violent images or videos that the child or young person did not want to see (29%)
- Being photographed, filmed or screenshotted without consent (28%).

Half of the children and young people who have been exposed to a digital violation or other unpleasant experience online report that they were affected by the experience. For example, they had a stomach ache or felt humiliated or afraid. Children and young people who feel lonely, as well as the youngest children, are particularly affected by their experiences. The experiences that affect the largest number of children and young people are those where they are excluded from a social group or where they perceive the violation as a breach of trust by friends or people they know.

Proportion of children and young people who have been exposed to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online over the past year in 2021, 2024 and 2026, %



N=3,219 (2021), 4,171 (2024) and 2,142 (2026). A direct comparison with the 2021 figures is not possible because new questions were added in 2024.

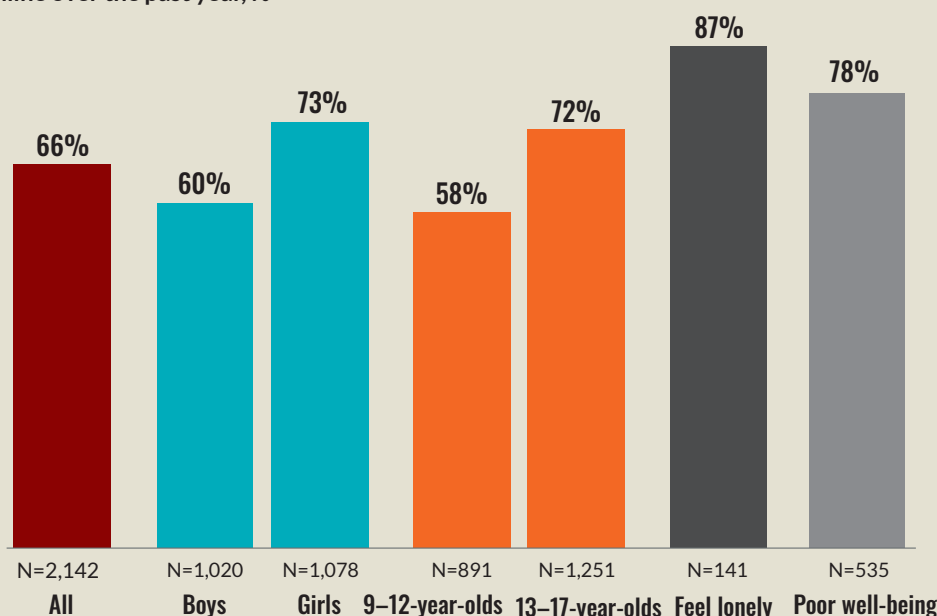
Statistically significant changes from 2024 to 2026 are marked with an *

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

2: Girls together with children and young people who feel lonely or struggle with poor well-being are the most vulnerable

Some groups are more likely to be exposed than others: Children and young people who feel lonely or struggle with poor well-being are the most vulnerable. Girls experience more digital violations and unpleasant experiences online than boys, while 13–17-year-olds experience more digital violations and unpleasant experiences online than 9–12-year-olds.

Proportion of children and young people who have been exposed to at least one digital violation or other unpleasant experience online over the past year, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: "Have you had any of these unpleasant experiences online (referring to 12 response options) over the past year?"

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

3: More than one in five are contacted by an adult they do not know

More than one in five children and young people (22%) have been contacted online by an adult they did not know over the past year. Children and young people who feel lonely are the most vulnerable (34%). One in ten of the children and young people contacted by an adult they did not know report that the adult wanted them to do things they did not want to do (e.g. send photos of their body). For some children and young people, the contact with the adult continues, and one in ten report that the adult wanted to meet them in person.



I thought it was probably because he knew I hadn't had sex yet. (...) I'd never had that much attention from boys before, so when I suddenly started getting it, I was like, OMG, he really likes me. When I found out that the boy was actually a 21-year-old man, I got a bit scared and had a stomach ache. I felt really nauseous too. Girl, 14



4: One in 20 children and young people have been subjected to digital abuse

Five percent of children and young people have been subjected to digital abuse over the past year. This means that in every school class, there is one child who has experienced at least one of the following:

- Extortion for intimate material or financial gain
- Sharing of intimate material without consent
- Signs of grooming

What is digital abuse?

Digital abuse consists of one or more digital acts directed at a child, in which an adult, another child or a young person exploits the child in a way that causes harm or violates their personal boundaries, for example by grooming the child, recording or sharing intimate material or extorting the child for financial or sexual purposes.

Digital abuse can put a child's development and health at risk and can harm their self-image and ability to form trusting relationships.

Digital abuse can be perpetrated by strangers as well as by people close to the child. The child often does not know how many people have witnessed the abuse or who they are, because the image or video material may have been shared with many people.

Digital abuse can also take hybrid forms, for example beginning online and later developing into physical sexual abuse, or vice versa.

Source: Kommunale beredskaber til forebyggelse, opsporing og håndtering af overgreb mod børn og unge - En guide til kommuner, Social- og Boligstyrelsen 2025.

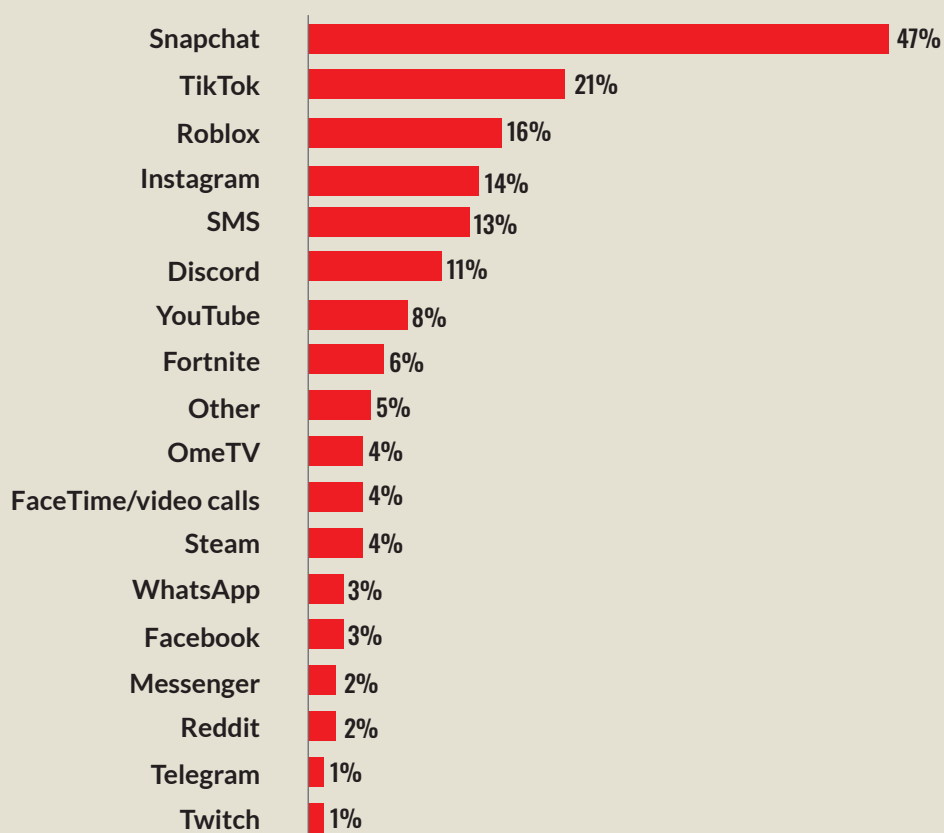


5: Most digital violations occur on Snapchat, TikTok and Roblox

Snapchat is the platform where the largest proportion of children and young people experience digital violations and unpleasant behaviour (47%), followed by TikTok (21%) and Roblox (16%).

Among 13–17-year-olds, most digital violations occur on Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram, while 9–12-year-olds are particularly likely to be exposed to digital violations and unpleasant experiences on the gaming platform Roblox.

Children and young people's experiences of digital violations by platform, %



N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the question: "On which social media, websites or games have you experienced (the digital violation or unpleasant experience online) over the past year? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

6: Most 9–12-year-olds use platforms with a minimum age of 13

99% of all children and young people aged 9–17 use online platforms. 65% of 9–12-year-olds use platforms that have set a minimum age of 13.

Just under half of 9–12-year-olds (42%) use Instagram, TikTok or Snapchat. All of these platforms have themselves set a minimum age of 13 and feature problematic content, use engagement mechanisms, collect data, display advertising and pose a risk of contact with strangers. This represents a small decrease, with the proportion of younger children using these platforms falling from 56% in 2024. This suggests greater awareness of social media use among children and young people, as well as among their parents.

However, more of the younger children have started using the gaming platform Roblox since 2024, and unpleasant experiences also occur there. This means that, overall, the proportion of children and young people exposed to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online remains at the same high level as in 2024.

What is a digital violation?

The term 'digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online' covers a wide range of online experiences that cross children and young people's personal boundaries. In the survey, we asked about the following 12 types of digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online:

- Receiving rude (hateful or hurtful) comments online
- Others spreading rumours about me online
- Others threatening or extorting me online
- Receiving private/intimate photos or videos that I did not want to see
- Others having shared private/intimate photos or videos of me without my permission
- Being bullied with something posted of me online (e.g. photos or videos)
- Being excluded on social media or in online games
- Being contacted by someone I did not want to talk or write to
- Being photographed/filmed/screenshotted against my will
- Others altering an image or video of me and using it in a way I did not like, e.g. by putting my head on someone else's body
- Seeing violent images or videos that I did not want to see
- Others pretending to be me online



7: Children and young people who feel lonely are particularly likely to use an AI chatbot as someone to confide in

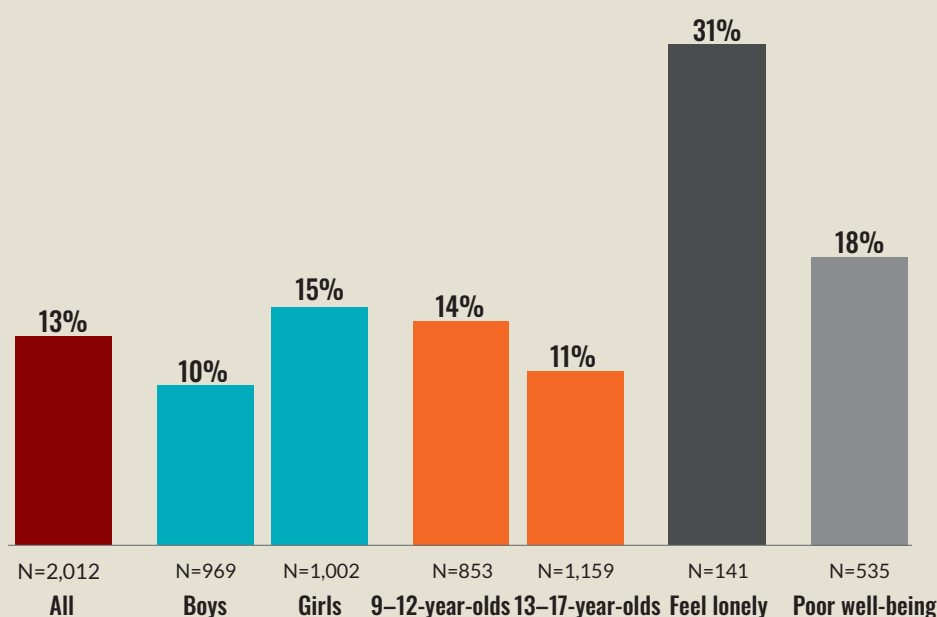
Three out of four children and young people (77%) have tried using AI chatbots. In the interviews, young people describe chatbots as appealing tools for seeking information and advice.

The survey shows that 13% of children and young people use an AI chatbot as someone to confide in when they need emotional support. Among other things, they use chatbots to have conversations similar to those they have with their friends. They tell chatbots about things they find difficult to talk to others about and use them for company when they feel alone.

Among 9–12-year-olds, 14% use AI for emotional support. Among children and young people who feel lonely, the figure is one in three (31%). The higher-than-average use of chatbots among the youngest children is partly because they are more likely to use them for conversations similar to those they have with their friends. Children and young people who feel lonely are also more likely to use chatbots to talk about things they find difficult to discuss with others or to keep them company when they feel alone.

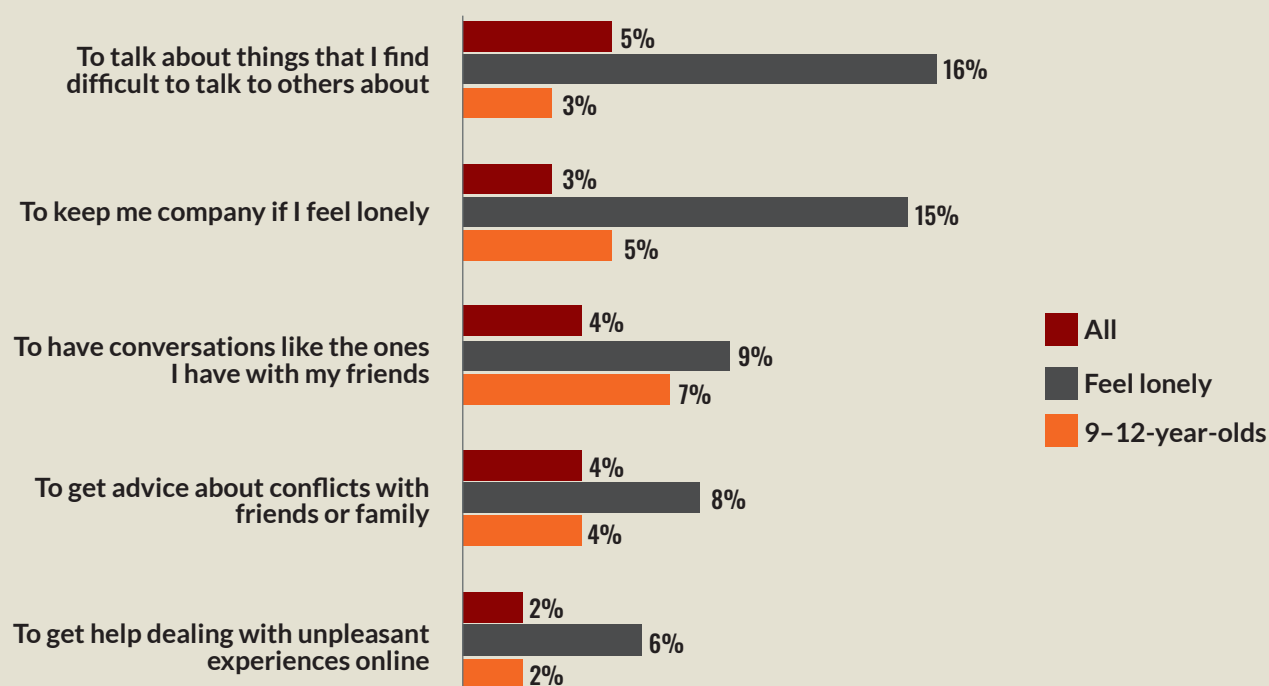
In the interviews, young people say that they seek advice from chatbots because they do not want to disturb or worry their parents. Finally, some young people see AI chatbots as an alternative to turning to the adults closest to them because they want to avoid being told off or facing consequences.

Proportion of all children and young people who use chatbots for emotional support, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: "What do you use the chatbot for? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

Proportion of all children and young people who use chatbots for emotional support, by type of use, %



N=2,012. The figure is based on responses to the question: "What do you use the chatbot for? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

8: Only one in five turn to an adult about unpleasant experiences online

Just over half (54%) of children and young people who experience digital violations or other unpleasant experiences on online platforms take action. The most common action is to block the person responsible. Only 4% turn to a teacher or educator. 17% tell a parent or another adult in their family. Taken together, this means that only one in five children and young people turn to an adult they know when they are exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online.

In the interviews, young people say that it can often be easier to share the experience with someone their own age than with an adult. Among other things, they are afraid that adults will respond by forbidding them to use a particular platform, and they generally feel that adults do not understand the digital world they are part of.



If a teacher finds out that a child has been through something, I think it would be really helpful if the teacher made it clear that you can actually come and talk to them. So you don't feel like your parents are the only people you can turn to. There are other adults you can talk to as well. The teacher could maybe take the child aside and say, 'Hey, do you want to come out and have a chat?' Don't do it in front of the other children, but ask them more discreetly or in private. Girl, 15



9: Many do not know what to do when others are subjected to digital violations online

Young people are unsure what to do if they witness the unlawful sharing of intimate material or online bullying.

More than half (52%) of young people who receive an intimate photo or video of another person that has been shared without consent take no action. Among the reasons they give are that they do not know the person in the photo or video or do not believe that taking action would make a difference. The most common actions are to report the content to the platform (12%) or tell a friend or sibling (11%).

More take action when they witness someone else being bullied online. In these cases, just under half (46%) choose to talk to the person being bullied. However, one in four (26%) take no action.

SletDet (Delete-It) helpline

The SletDet (Delete-It) helpline, run by Save the Children Denmark, is Denmark's only professional helpline providing support and assistance to children and young people who have been exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online. The SletDet helpline also helps professionals and parents, as well as children and young people who have themselves subjected others to digital violations.

The SletDet helpline provides support and guidance when an image is shared without consent, when children and young people see violent or harmful content, are bullied online, are extorted into sharing sexual and intimate material or are groomed.

Over the past ten years, the SletDet helpline has built up unique expertise and is now a specialist knowledge centre that conducts surveys and analyses, raises awareness and educates children and young people about digital literacy. It also has extensive expertise in children and young people's digital lives and online activities.

The SletDet helpline offers confidential counselling by telephone, email and chat. The helpline's special status as an official trusted flagger also means that, under EU law, online platforms are required to give priority to Save the Children Denmark's notices of illegal content and process and decide upon them without undue delay.



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10: Children and young people normalise digital violations on online platforms

The survey suggests that children and young people see digital violations and unpleasant experiences as something they simply have to accept when using online platforms. In the interviews, young people emphasise that this is something you just have to brush off because it is an inevitable part of being online.

The survey survey also shows signs of this type of normalisation. Half of the children and young people who have experienced digital violations and unpleasant content over the past year say that they were not affected by it.



One of the pictures showed a woman lying on a bathroom floor with her body cut into pieces, and it said LEGO at the top. Like a joke. As if it was a building set. Yeah, and then there are executions too, and a video of a cat being cut open. They're these little videos that can be anything from a second to half a minute long. Yeah, I get sent stuff like that. It doesn't really upset me, but then it's just there on my computer. And that's kind of... not great. Boy, 14



How we conducted the survey

The report comprises a survey survey that is representative of children and young people aged 9–17 in Denmark. A total of 2,012 children and young people completed the entire survey, while 130 completed parts of it.

The surveys were distributed to all primary and lower secondary schools, special schools, independent schools, continuation schools and upper secondary and vocational education institutions throughout Denmark. Children and young people completed the survey as part of their lessons. Rambøll Management Consulting was responsible for collecting the survey responses, while Save the Children Denmark was responsible for the analysis and reporting.

In addition, Save the Children Denmark conducted qualitative interviews with 14 young people aged 13–17.

The findings of the report are supplemented by insights from Save the Children Denmark's SletDet helpline. This is the third time Save the Children Denmark has conducted a report of children and young people's exposure to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online.



PART 1

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S USE OF ONLINE PLATFORMS



CHAPTER 1

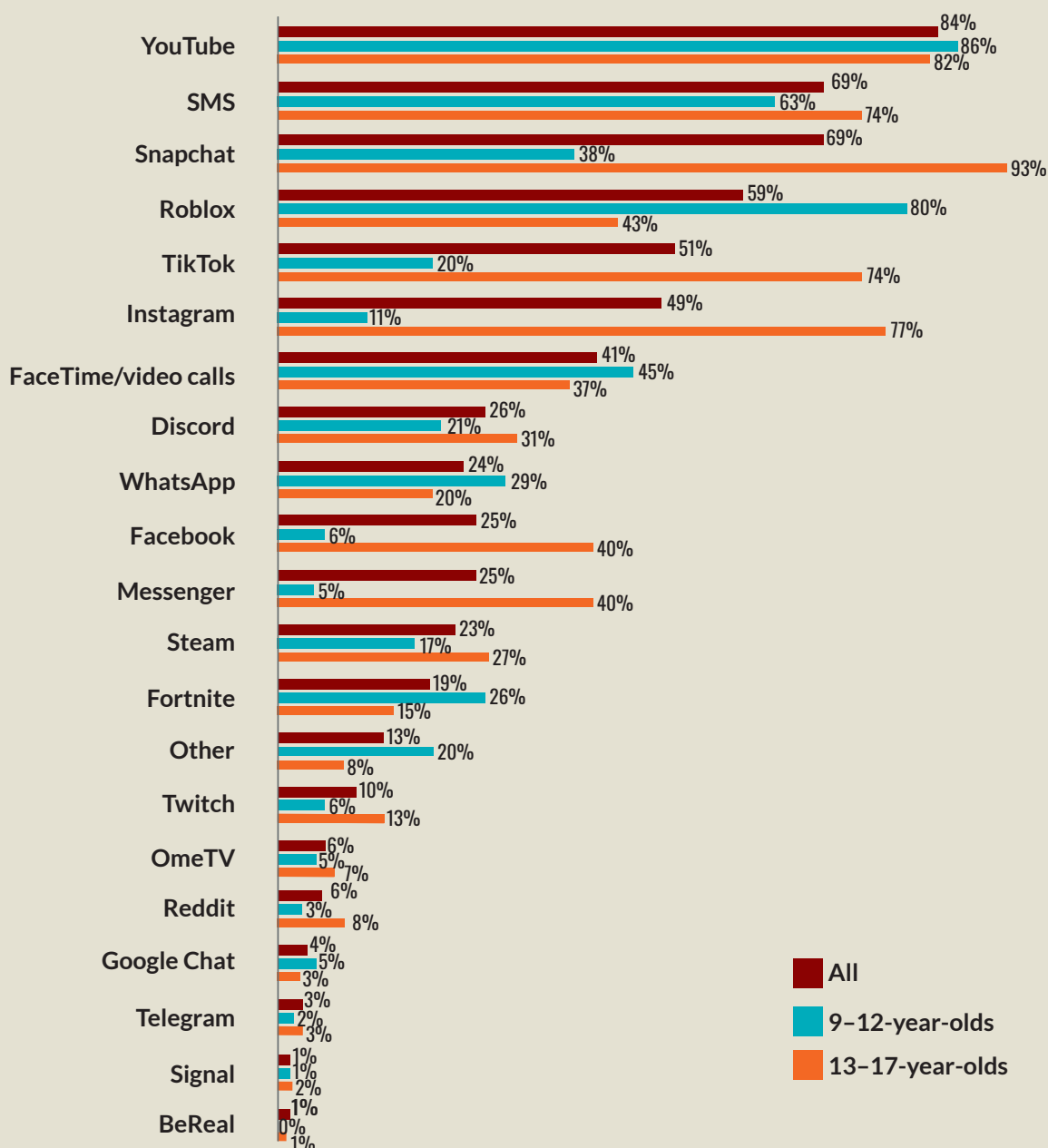
Almost all children and young people use online platforms

Online platforms have long been an integral part of children and young people's lives. 99% of all children and young people use online platforms, and most 9–12-year-olds use at least one digital platform with a minimum age of 13.

99% of children and young people aged 9–17 use a digital platform. Overall, the platforms used by the largest proportions of children and young people are YouTube, Snapchat and SMS. However, the platforms children and young people use vary by age (Figure 1). The vast majority of 9–12-year-olds use YouTube (86%) and Roblox (80%). By contrast, almost all 13–17-year-olds use Snapchat (93%).

Figure 1:

Proportion of children and young people who use different online platforms, %



N=2,142. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Which of these social media, platforms or games do you use? Tick all that you use."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

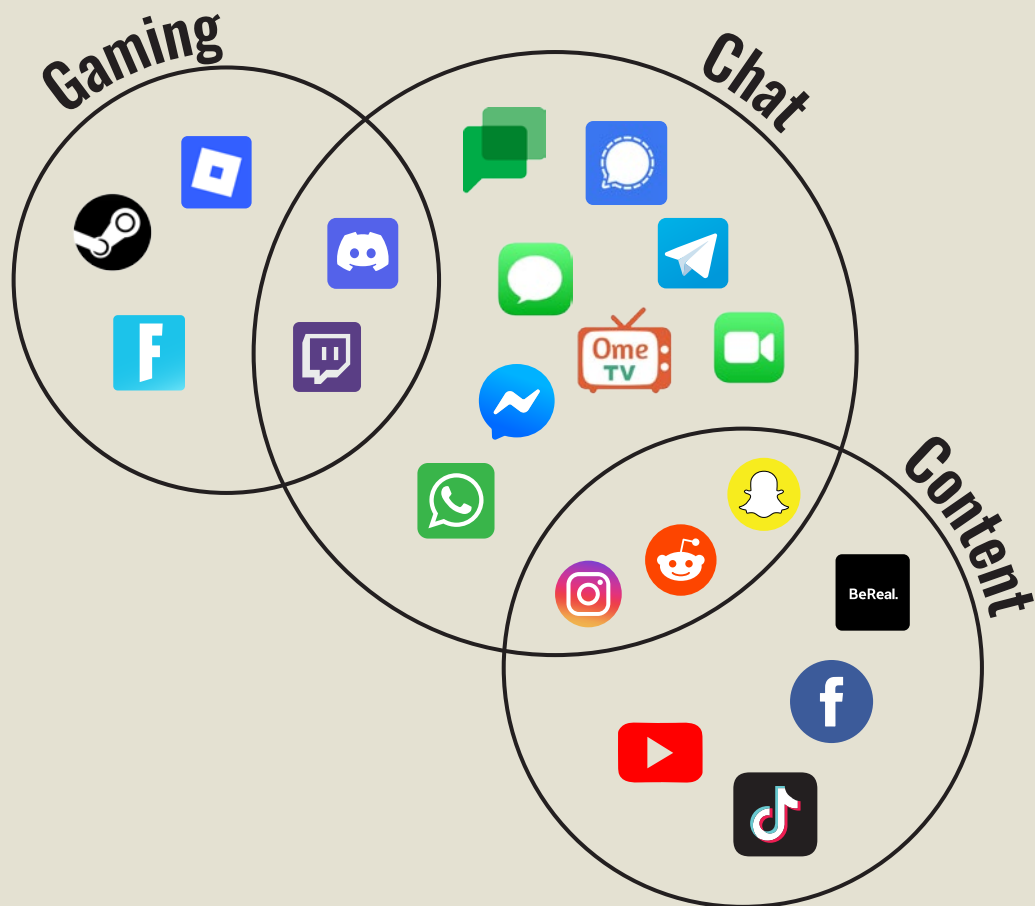
Digital media are used for gaming, chat and content

Online platforms cover a wide range of functions. Some are hybrid platforms with multiple functions. For example, Discord is placed between gaming and chat, while Instagram and Snapchat is placed between chat and content.

The illustration is not exhaustive, but includes the platforms covered by the survey. FaceTime is included under chat, although it is used for talking rather than writing.

Figure 2:

Online platforms grouped by their primary functions: gaming, chat and content



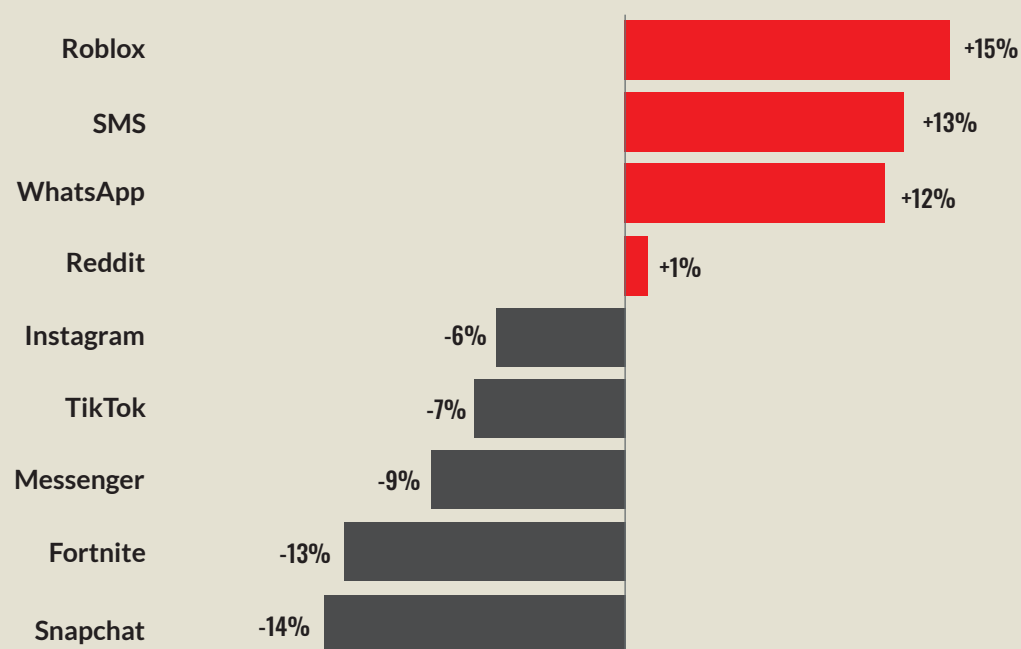
Inspired by Tech-giganternes hemmeligheder [Secrets of the Tech Giants], Analyse & Tal, 2025

Many younger children have moved from Snapchat and Fortnite to WhatsApp and Roblox

There have been significant shifts in the online platforms used by 9–12-year-olds in particular compared with two years ago (Figure 3). Fewer younger children now use Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram. These are among the platforms most often associated with digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online (see Chapter 4), and all have a minimum age of 13. This suggests that children, perhaps guided by their parents, have become more reluctant to use these platforms. Instead, younger children are increasingly using SMS and WhatsApp to communicate. At the same time, fewer use Fortnite and more use Roblox.

Figure 3:

Change in the proportion of 9–12-year-olds using different online platforms, percentage points



N=2,142 in 2026. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Which of these social media, platforms or games do you use? Tick all that you use." The figure only includes platforms where statistically significant changes have occurred.

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

CHAPTER 2

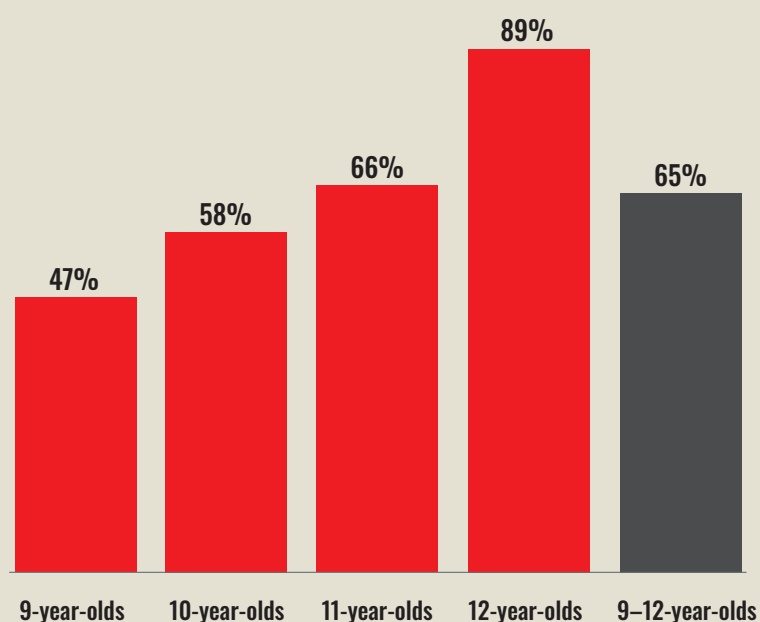
Most 9–12-year-olds use platforms with a minimum age of 13

It is still common for the youngest children to use online platforms for which they are too young according to the platforms' own minimum age requirements. Four out of ten 9–12-year-olds use Instagram, TikTok or Snapchat.

As described in Chapter 1, almost all children and young people aged 9–17 (99%) use online platforms. 86% of 9–12-year-olds use YouTube and 80% use Roblox. Excluding YouTube and Roblox, both of which have child versions with a minimum age below 13,¹ 65% use a platform with a minimum age of 13. Almost half of all 9-year-olds use at least one platform with a minimum age of 13, and this proportion increases with age.

Figure 4:

Proportion of children and young people who use at least one digital platform with a minimum age of 13, %



N=2,142. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Which of these social media, platforms or games do you use? Tick all that you use." The following platforms are included: Discord, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitch, Reddit, BeReal, Telegram, WhatsApp, OmeTV, Messenger and Steam.
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

¹Roblox has launched Roblox Kids (ages 5–8) and Roblox Select (ages 9–15), which are profile settings designed to provide age-appropriate content for the respective age groups. YouTube has launched a standalone app, YouTube Kids, which provides content aimed at children under 13.

These platforms have a minimum age of 13

Discord, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitch, Reddit, BeReal, Telegram (18 for users in the EU), WhatsApp, OmeTV (18), Messenger and Steam.

Roblox and YouTube are not included because both platforms have children's versions that allow parents to create profiles for children under 13. As we did not ask whether children use these versions, we have chosen not to include these platforms in the figures for platforms with a minimum age of 13.



Four out of ten 9–12-year-olds use Instagram, TikTok or Snapchat

According to Platformsguiden (Platform Guide), developed by the Media Council for Children and Young People, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat all feature problematic content and engagement mechanisms, collect data, display advertising and allow contact with strangers.

Four out of ten 9–12-year-olds (42%) use at least one of these three platforms. The proportion of 9–12-year-olds who use Instagram, TikTok or Snapchat remains high, although it has fallen from 56% in 2024.

Insights from the SletDet helpline: Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram

Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat are the three platforms most frequently involved in cases where children and young people contact the SletDet helpline for guidance on dealing with digital violations and unpleasant experiences online. The SletDet helpline also reports illegal content directly to the platforms in its role as official trusted flaggers for children. The illegal content reported by the SletDet helpline to platforms on behalf of children and young people most often concerns Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram (Red Barnet (2026): Et år som børnenes officielle digitale vagthund).

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CHAPTER 3

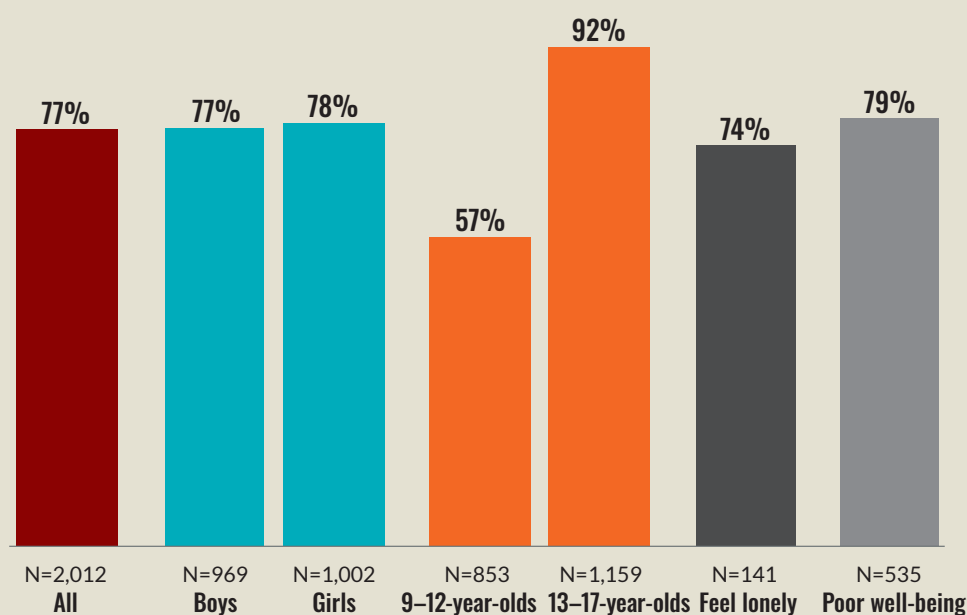
Children and young people who feel lonely are particularly likely to use AI chatbots as someone to confide in

Three out of four children and young people have tried using AI chatbots. Some use chatbots for emotional support, for example for company or for advice about conflicts. Among children and young people who feel lonely, one in three use AI chatbots for this purpose. In the interviews, young people say that they use chatbots to seek information and get help dealing with different dilemmas – sometimes as an alternative to turning to the adults closest to them.

The survey shows that three out of four children and young people (77%) have tried using AI chatbots. Virtually all 13–17-year-olds have tried chatting with a chatbot. The same is true of more than half of 9–12-year-olds (Figure 5).

Figure 5:

Proportion of children and young people who have tried using a chatbot, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: “Have you ever chatted with a chatbot, e.g. ChatGPT or Snapchat’s My AI?”
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

Across the interviews, young people describe chatbots as appealing tools. They find chatbots useful in many different situations. For example, they use them to set boundaries in a new romantic relationship, get advice on resolving conflicts and deal with difficult situations.

What is an AI chatbot?

There are now a number of AI chatbots with different purposes and functions. According to VIVE, chatbots can broadly be divided into two types: social chatbots and general-purpose chatbots. Social chatbots such as Replika, Character.AI and Snapchat My AI are designed primarily to provide companionship and, for many young people, may feel like someone they can confide in. General-purpose chatbots such as ChatGPT are designed to answer questions across a wide range of topics without specialising in social relationships or emotional support.

(VIVE (2026): Chatten som fortrolig – En kvalitativ undersøgelse af unges brug af ChatGPT til social og følelsesmæssig støtte).

There are also other chatbots. For example, the Centre for Educational Resources (CFU) and University College Copenhagen have developed SkoleGPT as a learning tool. In this survey, we took a broad approach to examining how children and young people use chatbots, giving both ChatGPT and Snapchat My AI as examples.



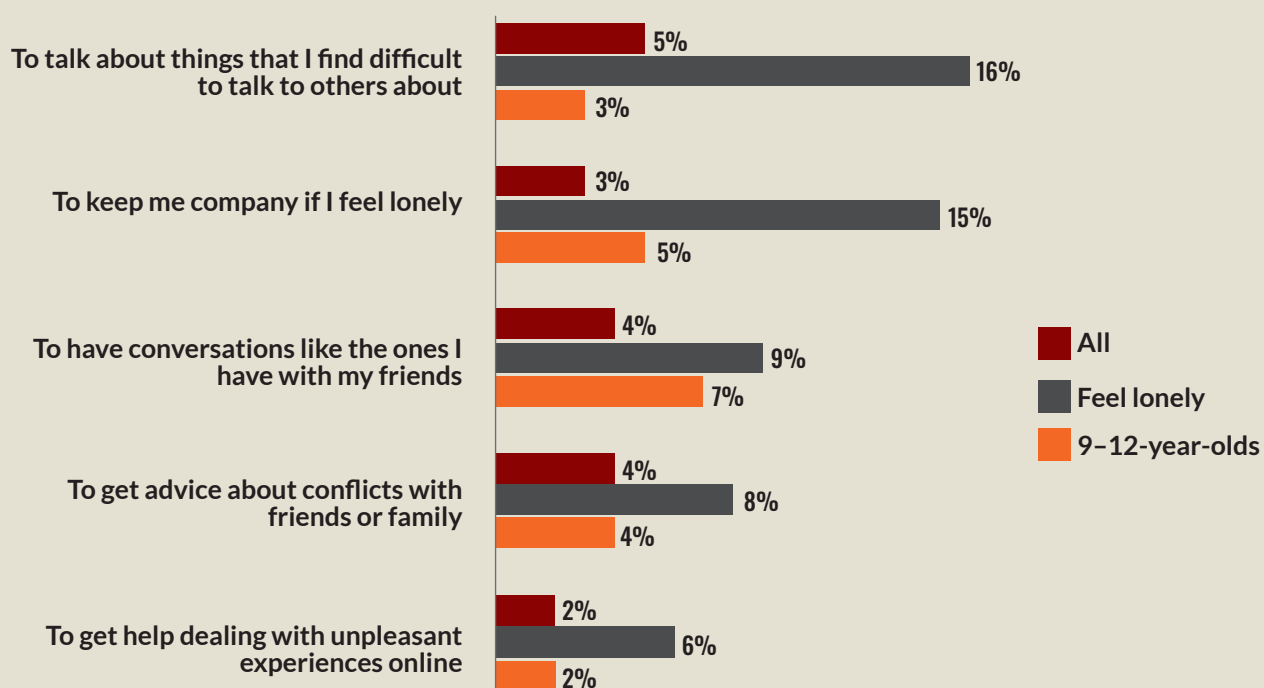
Children and young people who feel lonely are particularly likely to use chatbots as someone to confide in

Children and young people who feel lonely use chatbots more than their peers. This applies to all the forms of emotional support we asked about (Figure 6). Children and young people who feel lonely are particularly likely to use chatbots to talk about things they find difficult to discuss with others and for company when they feel alone.

The higher-than-average use of chatbots among the youngest children is because they are more likely to use them for conversations similar to those they have with their friends or for company when they feel alone (Figure 6).

Figure 6:

Proportion of all children and young people who use chatbots for emotional support, by type of use, %

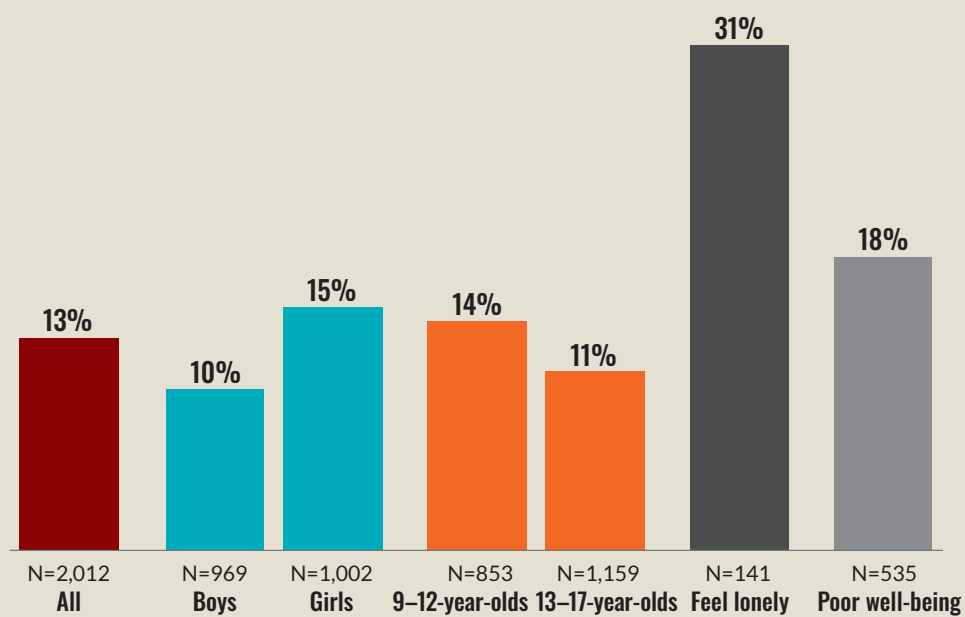


N=2,012. The figure is based on responses to the question: "What do you use the chatbot for? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

Overall, 13% of all children and young people use an AI chatbot as someone to confide in when they need emotional support (Figure 7). Among 9–12-year-olds, 14% use AI for emotional support. Among children and young people who feel lonely, the figure is one in three (31%).

Figure 7:

Proportion of all children and young people who use chatbots for emotional support, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: "What do you use the chatbot for? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026.

Young people use chatbots to deal with situations where they do not want to worry their parents

Young people say that they chat with a chatbot in situations where they do not want to involve their parents. This may be because the issue is something they do not want their parents to know about for fear of being judged, or because they do not want to worry them.

A 15-year-old girl explains that she uses a chatbot, among other things, when she does not want to worry her parents:



I've used the chatbot to find out whether I had a broken arm because I'd been having really bad pain in my shoulders. (...) I know my parents have a lot of things they need to get done. And if I can take one thing off their plate that they don't need to worry about until I find out whether it's actually a problem, I think that would be good. I suppose it's because I don't want to burden them. Girl, 15

Young people have different views on whether they get the best answer from a chatbot or a person

The young people we interviewed generally trust answers from a real person more than answers from a chatbot. A 17-year-old girl explains that she is sceptical about the accuracy of the chatbot's answers:

I just think the chatbot will give me the answer it thinks I want to hear. If you've got some kind of problem, I just feel like the chatbot will give you the most obvious answer. That's why I'd rather talk to someone about it than use a chatbot. (...) If, for example, I asked whether I should be worried about something, it would say, no, you don't need to worry, it'll be fine. That's how I expect it would answer. Girl, 17



The interviews also include an example of a young person who feels that she gets a more accurate answer from a chatbot:



I feel like if you ask a chatbot, it gives you a slightly more accurate and realistic answer. If you ask your parents or your friends, they just give you the answer you want to hear. Because sometimes they're just trying to be nice. (...) My parents don't take it quite as seriously. They might just give a shorter answer and not explain it in as much detail. Girl, 15

Chatbots replace conversations with parents when young people are afraid of consequences

Young people also chat with chatbots when they are afraid of consequences from their parents. A 13-year-old boy explains that he sought advice from a chatbot when his friend attempted suicide. He says that he received a video from his friend on Snapchat during the night. The video showed his friend taking a large number of painkillers:

My friend said he didn't have a reason to live any more. I wrote loads about how lovely he was and managed to persuade him to throw up. Then I told him he needed to go to hospital. (...) I used ChatGPT to check whether I was doing the right thing. I thought about waking my parents, but I just knew how much I'd get told off for being on my phone. Because I was on my 'last chance', if you know what I mean. And I was nervous about how they would react to me having received a video like that. But ChatGPT said it didn't matter what time it was. I just had to wake my parents and then call 112. Boy, 13



The example shows how young people may use a chatbot to avoid involving their parents when they are afraid of the consequences. This can happen even in serious situations. In this case, however, the chatbot gave good advice about involving his parents and seeking help.

PART 2

EXPERIENCES OF DIGITAL ABUSE, DIGITAL VIOLATIONS AND OTHER UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES ONLINE



CHAPTER 4

Two out of three are exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online

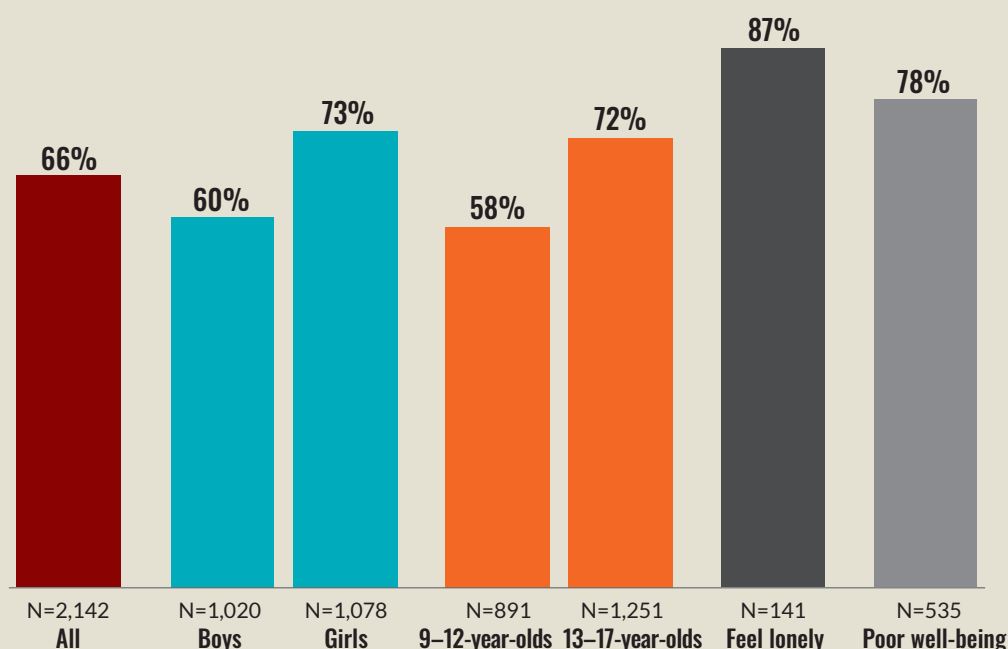
66% of children and young people have been exposed to at least one digital violation or other unpleasant experience online over the past year. Children and young people who feel lonely or struggle with poor well-being are particularly vulnerable. Young people aged 13–17 are more vulnerable than 9–12-year-olds. Girls are more vulnerable than boys. In the interviews, young people describe digital violations as an inevitable part of being on social media.

The majority of children and young people have been exposed to at least one digital violation or unpleasant experience online over the past year (Figure 8). This means that in an average school class of 20 children, 13 will have been exposed to at least one digital violation or unpleasant experience online in the course of a year.

Although some groups are particularly vulnerable, the figures show that all children and young people, across gender and age groups and regardless of levels of loneliness and well-being, are at risk of digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online.

Figure 8:

Proportion of children and young people who have been exposed to at least one digital violation or other unpleasant experience online over the past year, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: “Have you had any of these unpleasant experiences online [referring to 12 response options] over the past year? For example, this could be an unpleasant experience you had when writing to or talking to others via social media, websites or games.”

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

The same proportion of children and young people experience digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online in 2026 as in 2024

This is the third survey in a series in which Save the Children Denmark examines the extent of digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online. In 2021, 42% of children and young people had experienced digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online. In 2024, Save the Children Denmark's survey found that 69% had experienced digital violations or other unpleasant experiences. In 2026, the proportion of children and young people who have been exposed to at least one digital violation or other unpleasant experience online is 66%.

The small difference between 2024 and 2026 is not statistically significant. This means that the difference may be due to chance. The same is true when we look more closely at gender, age, loneliness and well-being. The proportion of children and young people exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online thus increased significantly from 2021 to 2024² and remains at the same high level in 2026 as two years earlier.

Although there has been no significant change from 2024 to 2026 in the overall proportion of children and young people experiencing digital violations, some types of violation have decreased significantly over the two-year period. This applies to receiving unwanted image and video material, having images or videos manipulated without consent, seeing violent images or videos they did not want to see and being contacted by someone they did not want to talk or write to (Figure 9). By contrast, significantly more children and young people are being photographed or screenshotted against their will.

In 2026, the most common digital violations and unpleasant experiences online are:

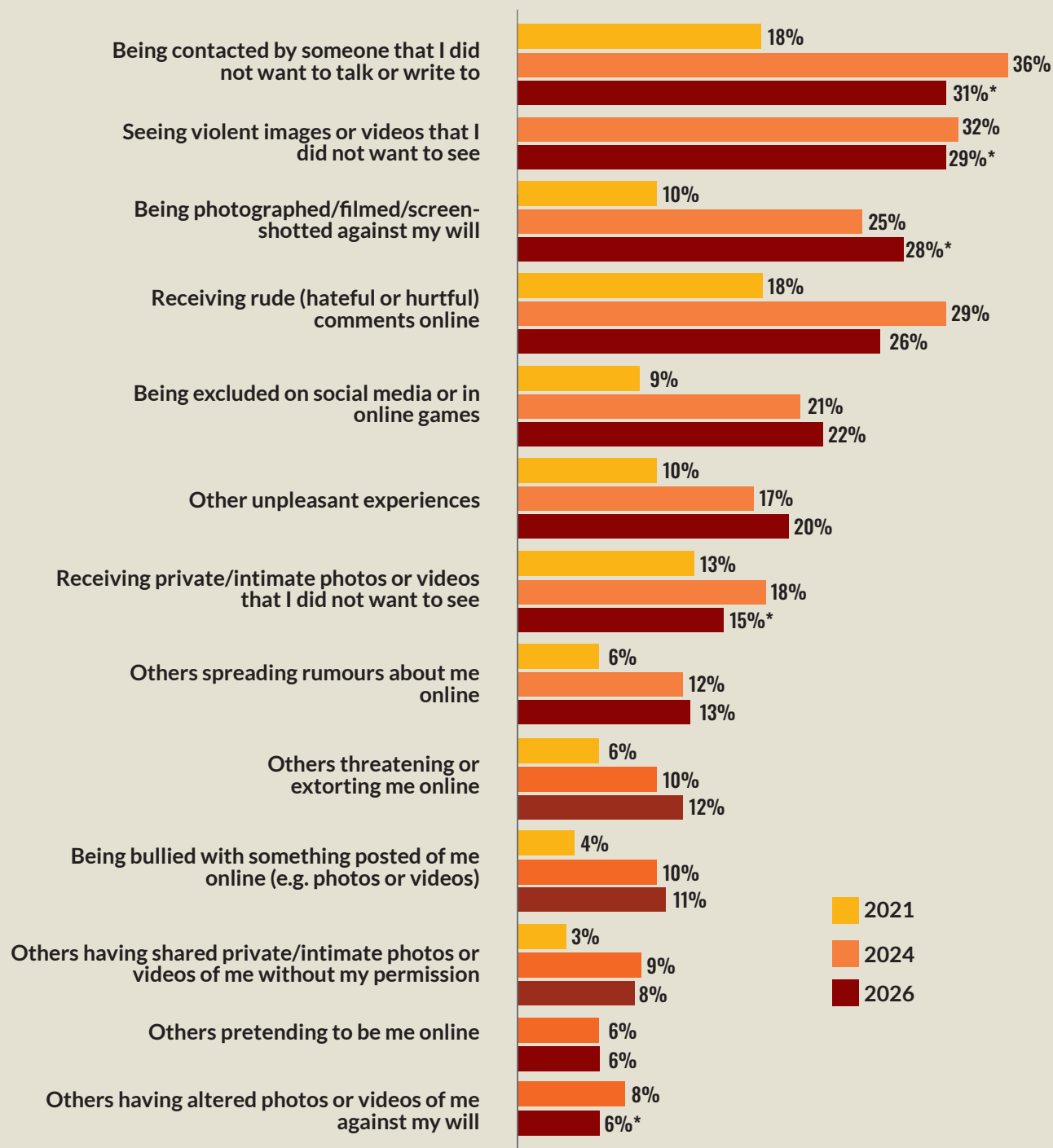
- Being contacted by someone the child or young person did not want to talk or write to
- Seeing violent images or videos that the child or young person did not want to see
- Being photographed or screenshotted without consent.



²It is not possible to make a direct comparison between the overall number of digital violations and unpleasant experiences in 2021 and 2024 because additional categories and response options were added in 2024. Nevertheless, there was a clear increase from 2021 to 2024 in all the types of digital violations and unpleasant experiences that were included in both surveys.

Figure 9:

Proportion of children and young people who have been exposed to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online in 2021, 2024 and 2026, %



N=3,219 (2021), 4,171 (2024) and 2,142 (2026). The figure is based on responses to the question: "Have you had any of these unpleasant experiences online over the past year? For example, this could be an unpleasant experience you had when writing to or talking to others via social media, websites or games." A direct comparison with the 2021 figures is not possible because new questions were added in 2024. Statistically significant changes from 2024 to 2026 are marked with an *.

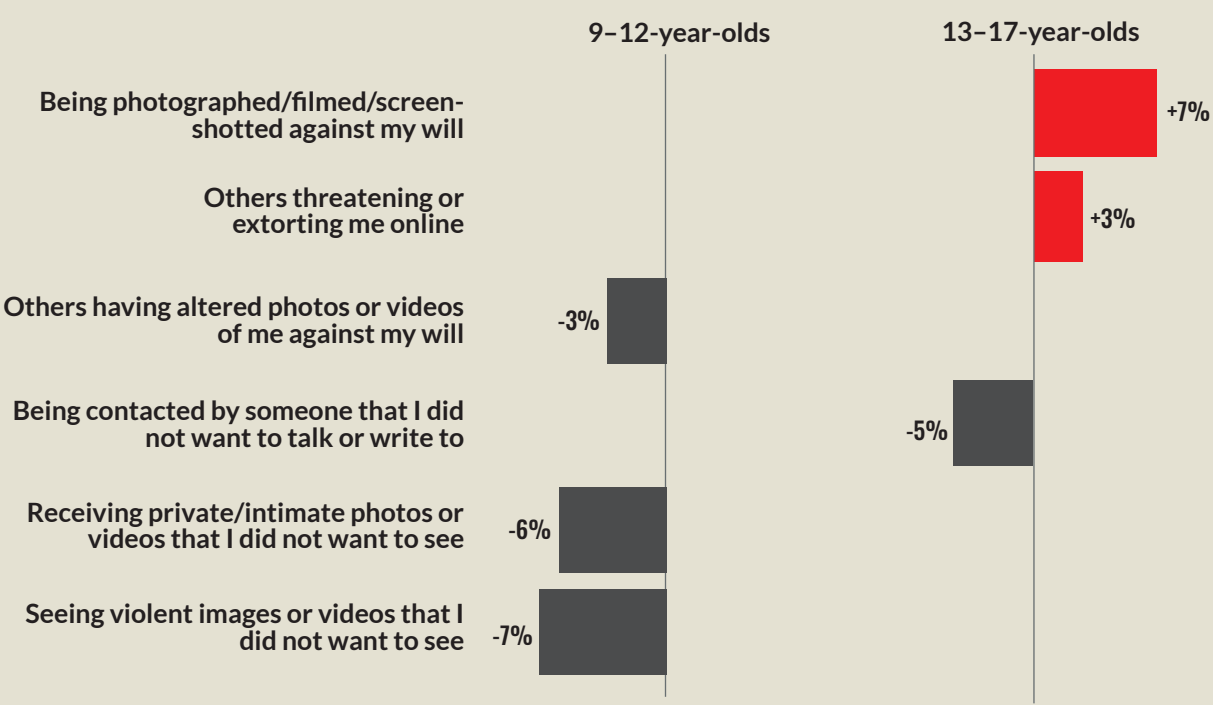
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

A focus on images, video and consent has helped the youngest children – but not the oldest

Compared with 2024, significantly fewer children aged 9–12 now report seeing violent images or videos they did not want to see, receiving private/intimate photos or videos they did not want to see or having images or videos of themselves altered without consent (Figure 10). This may be linked to lower use of Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram among 9–12-year-olds, as these are platforms where young people often encounter digital violations and unpleasant content (see Chapter 5).

By contrast, significantly more 13–17-year-olds report being photographed, filmed or screen-shotted without consent than in 2024.

Figure 10:
Statistically significant changes in the proportion of children and young people exposed to digital violations or unpleasant experiences online over the course of a year, percentage points



N=2,142 in 2026. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Have you had any of these unpleasant experiences online over the past year? For example, this could be an unpleasant experience you had when writing to or talking to others via social media, websites or games."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

The extent of digital violations and unpleasant experiences involving images and video has therefore decreased primarily among the youngest children, but has remained unchanged or increased among young people.

Children and young people who feel lonely and teenage girls are particularly likely to be exposed to digital violations and unpleasant experiences

Although the figures show that all children are at risk of unpleasant experiences online, two groups stand out as particularly vulnerable across all types of digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online: children and young people who feel lonely and girls aged 13–17 (Figure 11).

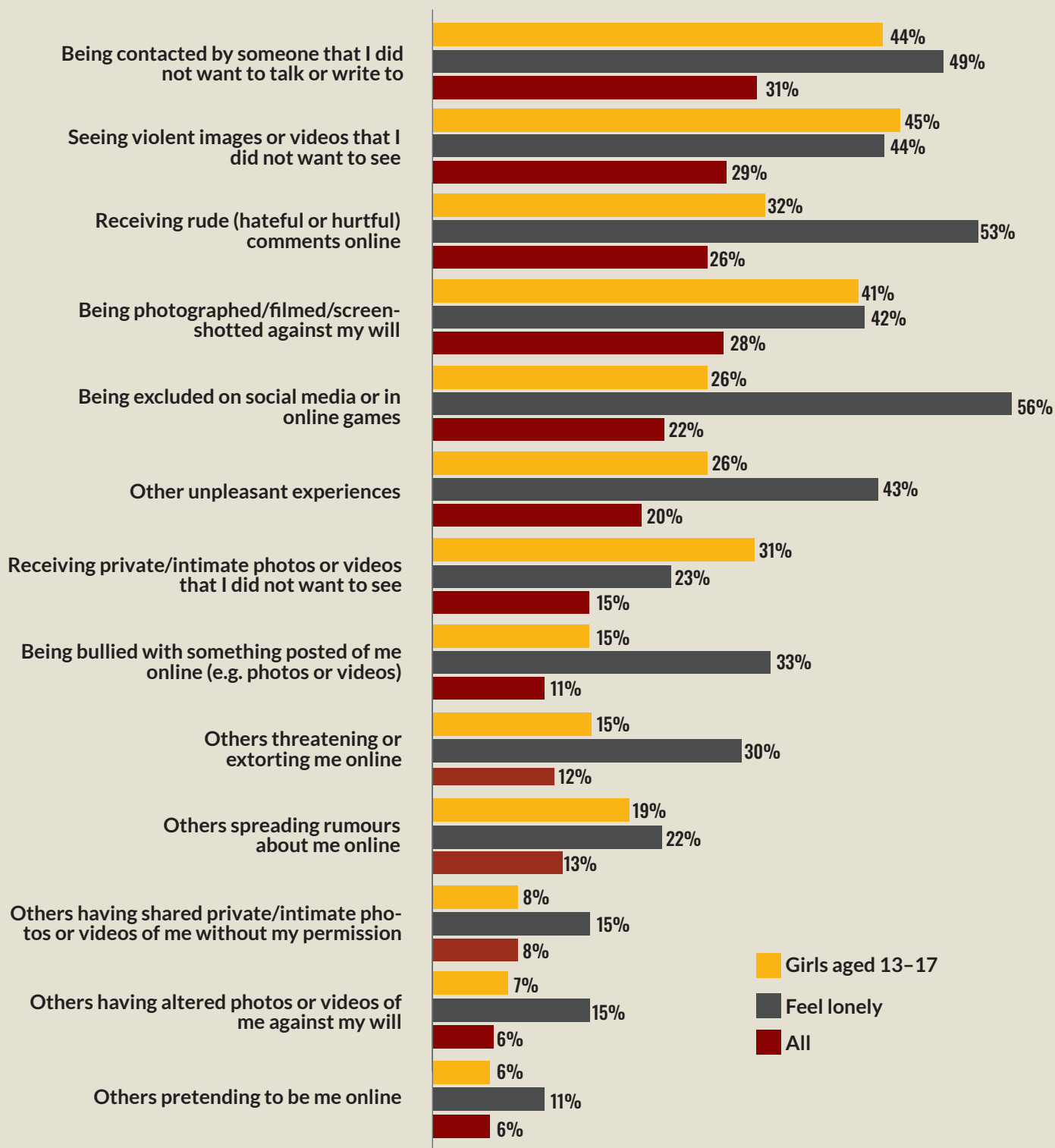
Across almost all types of digital violations and unpleasant experiences, children and young people who feel lonely are the most vulnerable. This is particularly true when it comes to receiving rude or hurtful comments, being excluded, being bullied with something posted online, receiving threats or being extorted, having intimate material shared without consent and having an image or video of themselves altered without consent.

Girls aged 13–17 are also particularly vulnerable (Figure 11). Nearly half have been contacted by someone they did not want to talk or write to, have seen violent images or videos they did not want to see and have been photographed or screenshotted without consent. Girls aged 13–17 also stand out as being considerably more likely to receive private or intimate photos and videos that they did not want to see (Figure 11).



Figure 11:

Proportion of children and young people exposed to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online among all children and young people aged 9–17, children and young people who feel lonely and girls aged 13–17, %



N=2,012. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Have you had any of these unpleasant experiences online over the past year? For example, this could be an unpleasant experience you had when writing to or talking to others via social media, websites or games."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Young girls feel that unpleasant experiences online are something they have to accept

All the girls who took part in the interviews have had unpleasant experiences online. They say that on several platforms, receiving intimate images and messages asking them to send intimate material is so common that it is difficult to avoid – particularly if you are a young girl.

In the interviews, girls say that it is common for the tone to become hostile if they refuse to share



If a boy asks if you want to send (intimate pictures, ed.) and you say no, you just get called a slut and all sorts of things, and they start going off on you. That's not nice either. Then you're kind of sitting there thinking, like, okay, hang on. I'm actually not the one who's done anything wrong. Girl, 16



CHAPTER 5

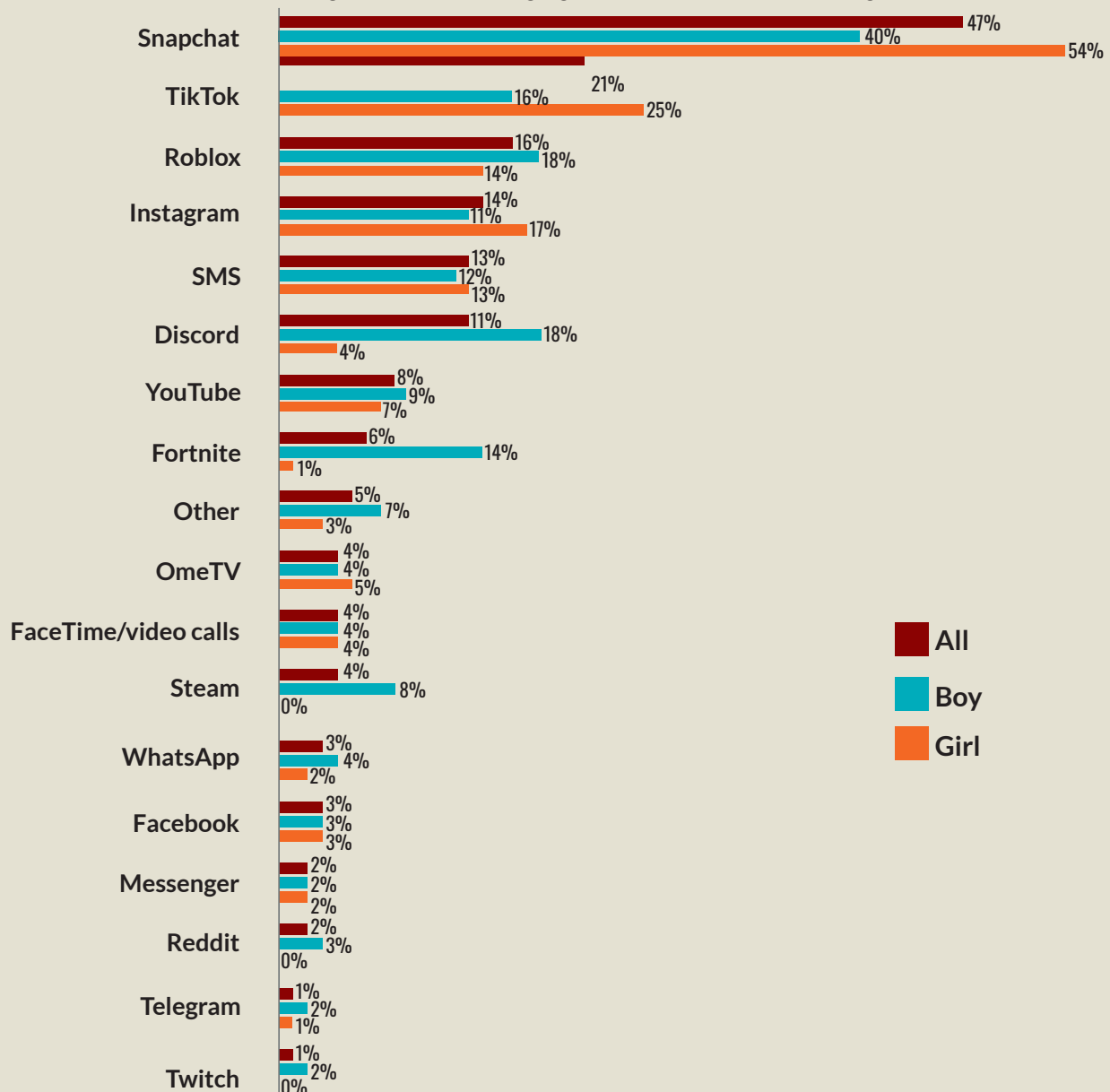
Most digital violations and unpleasant experiences occur on Snapchat

Snapchat is the platform where many children and young people experience digital violations and other unpleasant experiences. Young people also encounter digital violations and unpleasant experiences on TikTok and Instagram, while younger children are particularly likely to experience them on the gaming platform Roblox.

intimate material. A 16-year-old girl says that she has been called a slut because she would not send pictures of her body to a boy her own age: Snapchat is the platform where the largest proportion of children and young people experience digital violations and unpleasant behaviour – for both girls and boys (Figure 12). Girls are also more likely to encounter digital violations and unpleasant experiences on Instagram and TikTok, while gaming platforms such as Roblox, Discord and Fortnite feature more prominently among boys.

Figure 12:

Proportion of children and young people experiencing digital violations, by platform and gender, %



N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the question: "On which social media, websites or games have you experienced (the digital violation or unpleasant experience online) over the past year? You may tick multiple answers."

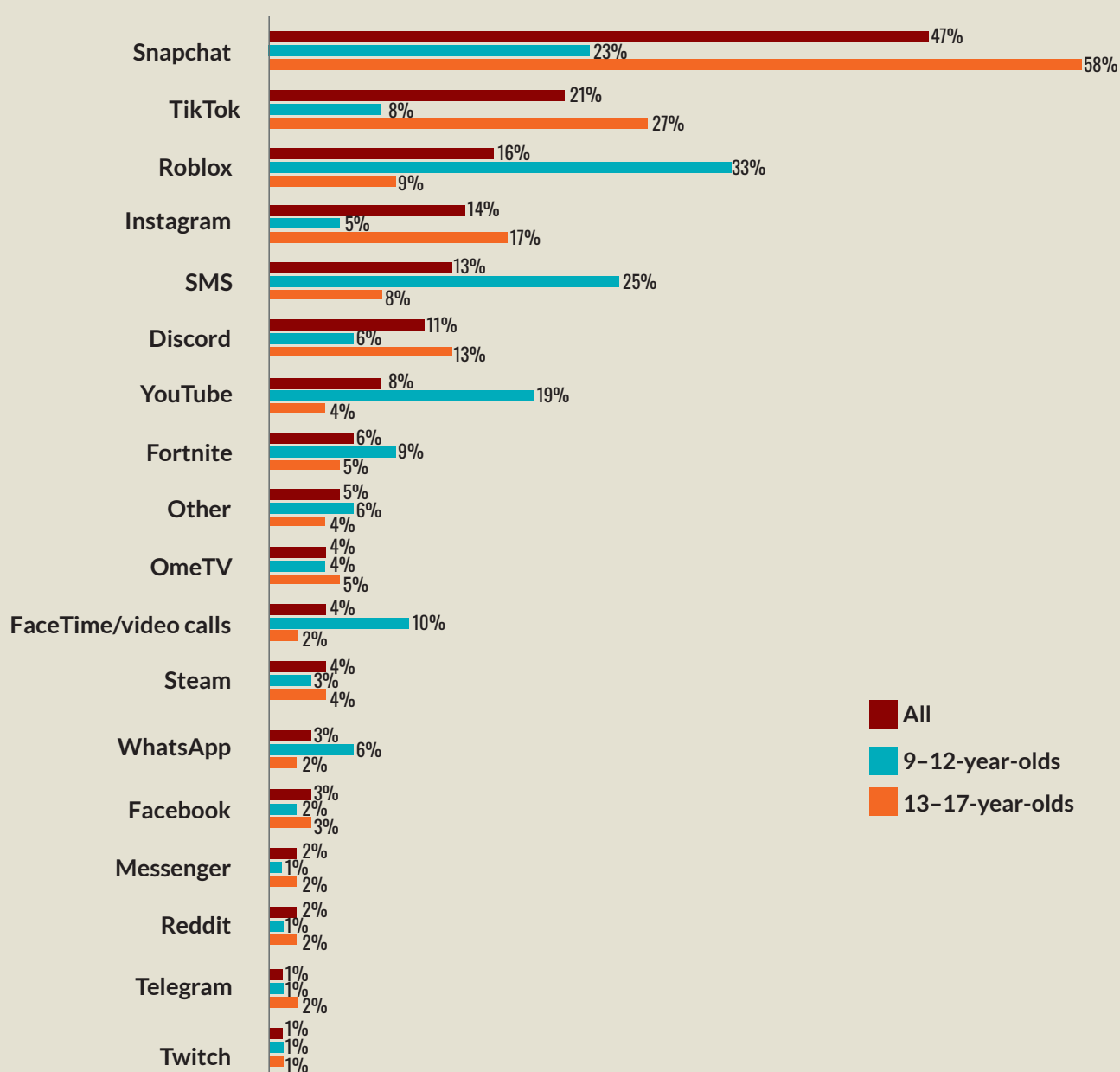
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

The youngest children are most likely to be exposed on Roblox

When 9–12-year-olds are exposed to digital violations and unpleasant experiences, this happens particularly on Roblox, SMS and Snapchat (Figure 13). Although only 38% of 9–12-year-olds use Snapchat, a relatively large proportion of this age group are exposed to digital violations and unpleasant behaviour there.

Figure 13:

Proportion of children and young people experiencing digital violations, by platform and age, %



N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the question: "On which social media, websites or games have you experienced (the digital violation or unpleasant experience online) over the past year? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Roblox features particularly prominently in cases involving exclusion or bullying, threats or someone pretending to be the child. 9–12-year-olds also encounter a wide range of unpleasant experiences on SMS and Snapchat, while YouTube stands out as the platform on which they most often encounter violent images and videos they do not want to see (see appendix report).

The oldest age group encounters the most unpleasant experiences on Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram

13–17-year-olds are most often exposed to digital violations and unpleasant experiences on Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram. Snapchat is the platform where most types of unpleasant experiences occur. The only exception is seeing violent images or videos that young people did not want to see, which occurs most often on TikTok (see appendix report).



CHAPTER 6

Young people consider encountering violent images and videos to be normal

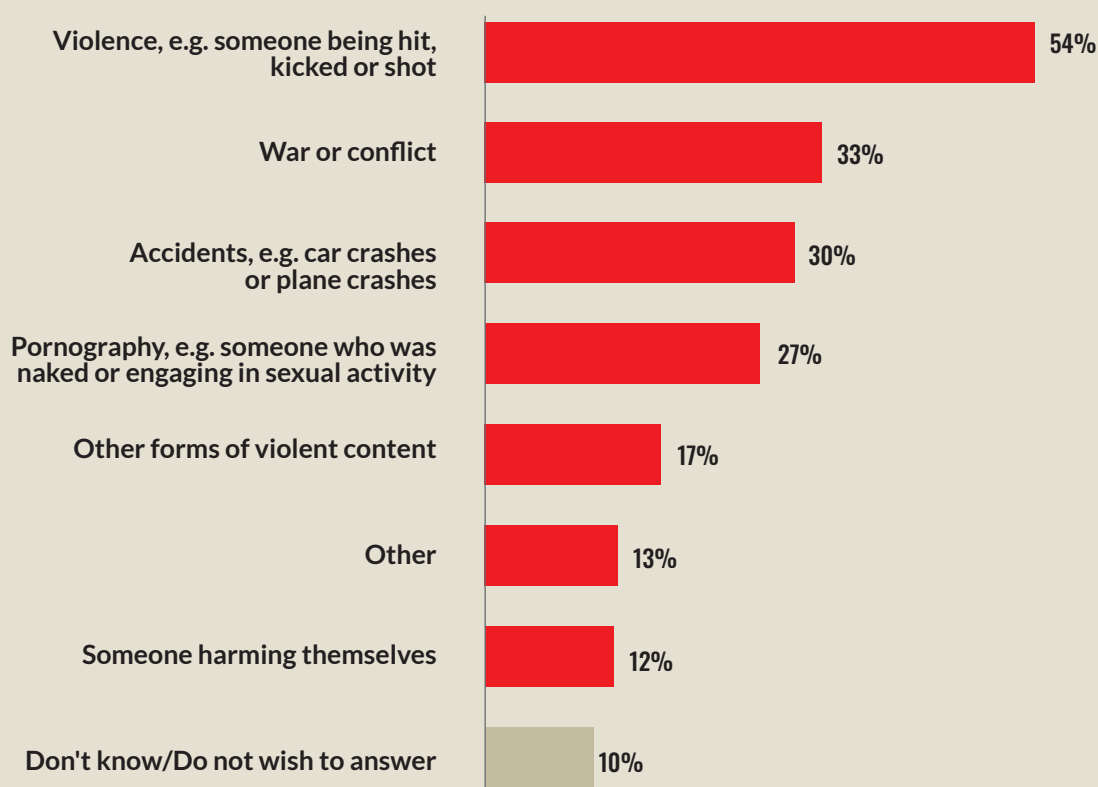
Children and young people often come across highly violent or pornographic content on online platforms without intending to. In the interviews, young people describe encountering both violent and pornographic material as normal and unavoidable.

When children and young people see or receive images or videos they do not want to see, the content most often depicts violence. This may involve someone being hit, kicked or shot (Figure 14). Of the children and young people who saw images or videos they did not want to see, 54% saw violent content.

War, conflict, accidents and pornographic content are also common. Among children and young people who saw images or videos they did not want to see, one third saw images or videos of war and conflict (33%), 30% saw images or videos of accidents and one in four saw pornographic content (27%).

Figure 14:

Content of the violent images and videos that children and young people did not want to see, %



N=269. The figure is based on responses to the question: "What was in the violent images or videos that you did not want to see? You may tick multiple answers." 9–12-year-olds were not asked about self-harm.

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Violence and abuse are part of the feed

In the interviews, young people also say that violent images and videos they do not want to see commonly appear in their feeds and class chats.

As an example, several young people mention a video showing the American political activist Charlie Kirk being shot:



He (Charlie Kirk, ed.) is at this college, and there's someone who's taken a sniper rifle up onto a roof and shoots him right in the neck. Blood just gushes out of him. Boy, 15

Seeing exposed genitals and men masturbating is normal – across many different platforms

Unwanted exposure to pornographic material also features prominently in the interviews. Young people say that seeing exposed genitals and men masturbating on screen is completely normal. They describe both seeing genitals and being asked to expose themselves on screen. OmeTV is among the platforms mentioned in the interviews as one where there is a high risk of encountering this type of content.

OmeTV was quite a big thing when we were younger. And one time we were sitting in class, and there was this really gross man who thought it was funny to touch himself while he was talking to us. And I just remember it being really uncomfortable. I was still in after-school care, so I think I must have been about nine or something... Yeah, I mean, I was too young for the app as well. You're not actually supposed to be that young. But you could just access it online, so... Girl, 17



Sending 'dick pics' without consent is illegal under section 232 of the Danish Criminal Code

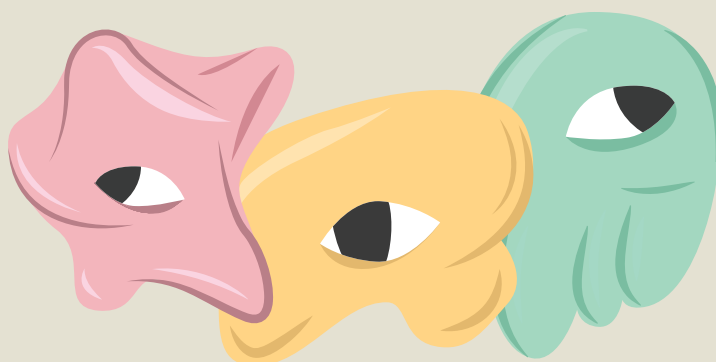


“Any person who, by indecent conduct, violates another person’s sense of decency is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or, if the offence is committed against a child under 15, to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding four years.”

Source: Retsinformation

Research shows that most children and young people are first exposed to pornography unintentionally and at a relatively early age, often before they have reached puberty and developed the maturity needed to understand and process what they are seeing. Being exposed to pornography before they are ready for it can feel overwhelming, disturbing and unpleasant (see, for example, Red Barnet (2026):

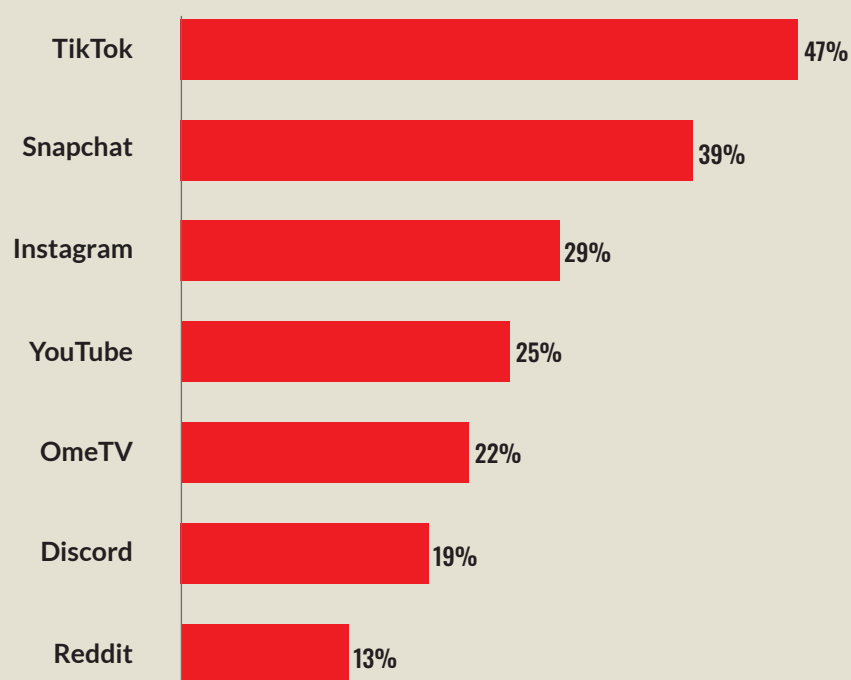
Et år med TalMedOs - Rådgivning for børn og unge, der er bekymrede over deres seksuelle tanker og handlinger).



The survey shows that children and young people encounter pornographic material on many different platforms. However, this is most common on TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram (Figure 15).

Figure 15:

Platforms on which children and young people reported seeing pornographic content they did not want to see, %



N=81. The figure is based on responses to the questions: "What was in the violent images or videos that you did not want to see? You may tick multiple answers." and "On which social media, websites or games have you seen violent images or videos that you did not want to see over the past year? You may tick multiple answers." The platforms are included only if at least ten of the 2,012 children and young people in the survey reported encountering pornographic content on them.

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Young people protect themselves by changing their behaviour online

The interviews show that young people make conscious choices about how they behave on online platforms. Most of the young people interviewed reflect on their use of social media, and several say that they have made changes or taken specific steps to protect themselves from unpleasant experiences. These include only accepting friend requests from people they know, keeping their profiles private rather than public and blocking people who send dick pics or other unpleasant content.

Young people also have strategies for looking out for one another when interacting online with people they do not know. A 14-year-old girl explains that while she and her friends chat with strangers, they stay in touch with one another so they can share what is happening:



I mean, normally, if we add random people we don't know, we do it when we're together. Otherwise, we at least message each other about what's happening. Yeah, both to feel safe, but also for the gossip. Girl, 14



Young people therefore use social media knowing that it may lead to unpleasant experiences and try to protect themselves in various ways.



CHAPTER 7

More than one in five are contacted by an adult they do not know

Some types of digital violations are most often committed by people the child knows, while others – such as receiving unsolicited intimate images – are most often committed by strangers. More than one in five children and young people are contacted online by an adult they do not know, and children and young people who feel lonely are particularly vulnerable. 13–17-year-olds are also contacted by adults they do not know far more often than 9–12-year-olds.

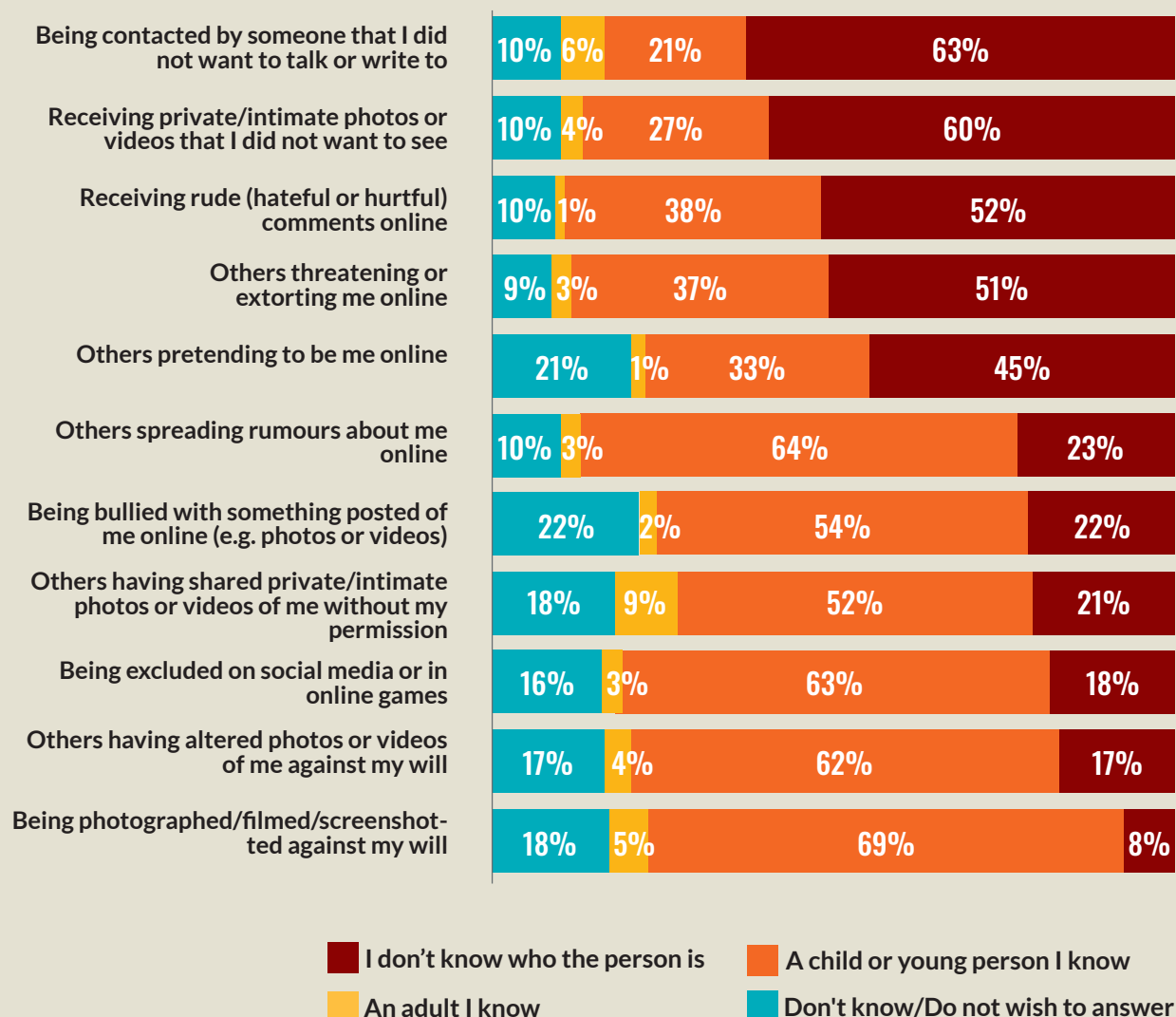
Some digital violations and unpleasant experiences most often involve someone the child knows, while others involve strangers (Figure 16).

Strangers are most often responsible when children and young people are contacted by someone they do not want to talk to or are sent private/intimate images they do not want to see. Several of the young people interviewed describe receiving sexually suggestive messages or dick pics from strangers.

Other types of digital violations and unpleasant experiences – including having images or videos of themselves altered, being filmed, photographed or screenshotted against their will and having intimate material shared – are most often committed by a child or young person they know.

Figure 16:

Digital violations and other unpleasant experiences, broken down by who was responsible, %



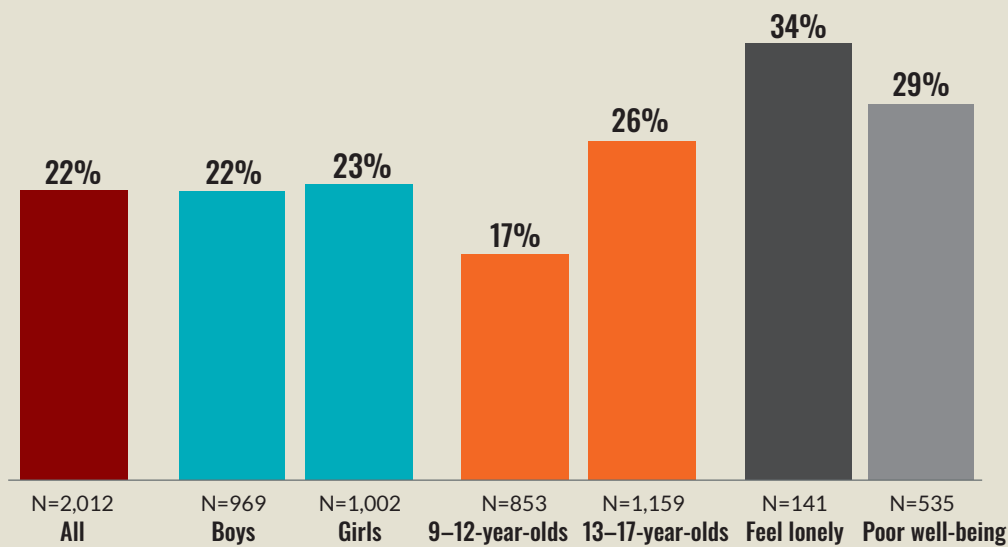
N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the questions: "Have you had any of these unpleasant experiences online over the past year? For example, this could be an unpleasant experience you had when writing to or talking to others via social media, websites or games." and "Who was responsible for [the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] over the past year? You may tick multiple answers." Recalculated to 100%.

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

More than one in five have been contacted online by an adult they do not know

More than one in five children and young people (22%) have been contacted online by an adult they did not know over the past year (Figure 17). The most vulnerable are 13–17-year-olds and children and young people who either feel lonely or struggle with poor well-being.

Figure 17:
Proportion of children and young people who have been contacted online by an adult they did not know over the past year, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: "Over the past year, have you been contacted online by an adult you did not know?"
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

When children and young people are contacted by an adult they do not know, they do not always know what the adult wants from them.

One in ten of those contacted report that the adult wanted them to do things they did not want to do, such as send photos of their body. Similarly, one in ten report that the adult wanted to meet them in person (Figure 18).

Figure 18:

What the adult they did not know wanted from the child or young person, %

	All	9-12-YEARS-OLDS	13-17-YEARS-OLDS
The adult wanted to talk/chat	32%	23%	37%
The adult sent me unpleasant things (e.g. photos)	11%	6%	13%
The adult wanted me to do things that I did not want to do (e.g. send photos of my body)	10%	9%	11%
The adult pretended to be a child or young person	9%	11%	8%
The adult wanted to meet in person	9%	8%	10%
Other	24%	36%	18%
I don't know. I just ignored it	34%	29%	36%
Don't know/Do not wish to answer	5%	7%	4%

N=456. The figure is based on responses to the question: "You said that you had been contacted online by an adult you did not know. What did the adult who contacted you want? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

For some children and young people, contact with the adult continues. Among 9–12-year-olds who have been contacted online by an adult they did not know, one in ten end up having extensive contact with the adult or exchanging many messages with them.

Although a large proportion of children and young people are contacted online by adults they do not know, there has been a small but statistically significant decline since 2024 (Figure 19). The decline has been particularly pronounced among girls and 9–12-year-olds, although girls are still more likely than boys to be contacted by adults they do not know.

Figure 19:

Change in the proportion of children and young people who have been contacted online by an adult they did not know, %

	2024	2026
All	25%	22%*
Boys	25%	22%
Girls	27%	23%*
9–12-year-olds	22%	17%*
13–17-year-olds	27%	26%
Feel lonely	37%	34%
Poor well-being	31%	29%

N=2,012. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Over the past year, have you been contacted online by an adult you did not know?" Statistically significant differences are marked with an *

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

CHAPTER 8

One in 20 children and young people have been subjected to digital abuse

Five percent of children and young people have been subjected to digital abuse, such as extortion, the sharing of intimate images without consent or signs of grooming. In the interviews, young people also describe experiences that suggest attempted grooming.

Five percent have been subjected to digital abuse over the past year (Figure 20). This means that in every school class, one child has been subjected to digital abuse over the past year.

What is digital abuse?

Digital abuse consists of one or more digital acts directed at a child, in which an adult, another child or a young person exploits the child in a way that causes harm or violates their personal boundaries, for example by grooming the child, recording or sharing intimate material or extorting the child for financial or sexual purposes. Digital abuse can put a child's development and health at risk and can harm their self-image and ability to form trusting relationships. Digital abuse can be perpetrated by strangers as well as by people close to the child. The child often does not know how many people have witnessed the abuse or who they are, because the image or video material may have been shared with many people. Digital abuse can also take hybrid forms, for example beginning online and later developing into physical sexual abuse, or vice versa.

Source: Kommunale beredskaber til forebyggelse, opsporing og håndtering af overgreb mod børn og unge - En guide til kommuner, Social- og Boligstyrelsen 2025



How we assessed incidents of digital abuse

Extortion for intimate material or financial gain

The child or young person reported having been threatened or extorted online and answered yes to one of the following:

- I was pressured or threatened into sending photos/videos of my body, or
- I was pressured or threatened into sending money/online gift cards

Sharing of intimate material

The child or young person reported that others had shared private/intimate photos or videos of them without their permission and answered yes to:

- I was naked, wearing very little clothing or doing something intimate, such as kissing

The child or young person reported that others had altered an image or video of them and used it in a way they did not like, for example by putting their head on someone else's body, and answered yes to one of the following:

- It looked as though I was naked or wearing very little clothing
- It looked as though I was kissing, having sex or doing something similar

Signs of grooming

The child or young person reported having been contacted online by an adult they did not know and answered yes to one of the following:

- The adult wanted to meet in person or
- The adult wanted me to do things that I did not want to do (e.g. send photos of my body)

In addition, in many cases the adult had pretended to be someone the child's own age or had sent the child unpleasant things, such as images.

The contact between the child and the adult they did not know involved more than a single or brief interaction.

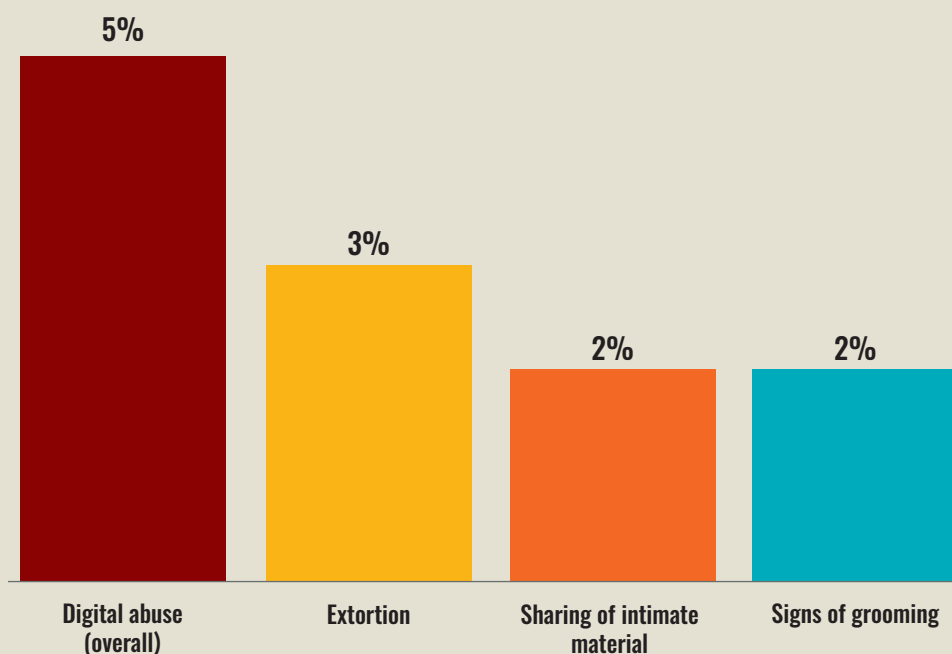
In this survey, we look at extortion for intimate material or financial gain, the sharing of intimate material without consent and grooming. All three forms of digital abuse are covered by provisions of the Danish Criminal Code and should be addressed in, and dealt with in accordance with, municipalities' statutory contingency plans on violence and abuse against children and young people.

In the survey, we asked children and young people to provide further details about what the threats or extortion concerned, what was shown in the images or videos that were shared or altered, what the adult they did not know wanted from them and how much contact they had with the adult.

As some children and young people had been subjected to more than one of the three types of digital abuse, the overall proportion is 5%.

Figure 20:

Proportion of children and young people who have been subjected to digital abuse over the past year, %



N=2,012. The figure is based on responses to the following questions: Extortion: "What were you threatened or extorted about online?" Sharing of intimate material: "What was in the image or video that was shared?" "How had the image or video of you been altered?" Signs of grooming: "You said that you had been contacted online by an adult you did not know. What did the adult who contacted you want?" "How much contact did you have with the adult?"

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Extortion for intimate material or financial gain

Three percent of children and young people aged 9–17 have been subjected to digital extortion (Figure 20). These children and young people were pressured or threatened into sending photos or videos of their bodies, or into sending money or online gift cards.

Extortion for financial gain is illegal under section 281 of the Danish Criminal Code

"Any person who (...) threatens another person with reporting or disclosing a criminal offence, or with making true allegations damaging to that person's reputation, in order thereby to obtain for themselves or another a gain that is not reasonably justified by the circumstances giving rise to the threat is liable to punishment for extortion."

Source: Retsinformation





Extortion for intimate material is illegal under section 260 of the Danish Criminal Code

“Any person who 1) by violence or by threatening another person with violence, substantial damage to property, deprivation of liberty, making a false accusation of criminal or dishonourable conduct, or disclosure of matters relating to private life, compels that person to do, submit to or refrain from doing something (...) is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years for unlawful coercion.”

Source: Retsinformation

Insights from the SletDet helpline: Extortion for intimate material or financial gain

Digital extortion and threats involve someone online pressuring a child or young person to do something against their will, typically by threatening to share private or intimate information with their friends and family. In many cases, the child or young person has been manipulated into sending an intimate image, which the perpetrator then uses to extort them. The extortionist may also use so-called nudify apps or other AI tools to turn ordinary, non-intimate images into intimate images.

The extortion may involve demands for money or gift cards, or pressure on the child to send further intimate material. Extortionists often create credible-looking fake profiles that appear to belong to someone of the child's own age. They frequently use an open platform such as TikTok or Instagram to make initial contact, before moving the conversation to a more private platform such as Telegram or WhatsApp. They begin by making flirtatious contact, but the tone can change abruptly once they have obtained an image or information they can use to make threats.

Boys are most often subjected to extortion for financial gain, while girls are typically pressured into sharing further intimate images or videos. The threats vary. Some children and young people are threatened with rumours being spread, secrets being disclosed or images being shared, while others receive threats of, for example, physical violence, sexual abuse or the disclosure of their personal information (doxing). What these cases have in common is that children and young people become afraid of the possible consequences of the threats and, in some cases, the perpetrator actually carries them out.

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Source: SletDet Rådgivningen - Bliver du afpresset?

Sharing of intimate material without consent

Two percent of children and young people have had intimate material shared without their consent (Figure 20).



Possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material are illegal under section 235 of the Danish Criminal Code

“Any person who distributes sexual material such as photographs, videos, other visual representations or similar material depicting persons under 18 years of age, or material that must be treated as equivalent, is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or, in particularly aggravating circumstances, imprisonment for a term not exceeding six years ...”

Source: Retsinformation

Insights from the SletDet helpline: Non-consensual sharing of intimate images

Sharing intimate material without consent involves private or intimate images or videos of a child or young person being shared with others without their consent. In many cases, these are nude images or sexual videos that the child or young person recorded themselves and shared in confidence, often with a friend, someone they were flirting with or a boyfriend or girlfriend, but which were subsequently shared with others without their permission. An image or video may also be manipulated using AI so that the person appears to be wearing little clothing, for example a bikini, or so that it appears to depict an intimate situation, such as kissing someone else. In some cases, the child or young person is not even aware that they have been filmed or that they appear in a manipulated video until the material appears online.

Non-consensual sharing of intimate images may also involve images of children and young people being shared in larger, often public groups made up of people they do not know. This particularly affects girls, who report that their images are shared in networks where they are also subjected to sexualised comments, degrading language and threats. For many, this leads to strong emotional reactions such as shame, anxiety, sadness, anger and helplessness. Some isolate themselves, stay home from school or need support from a psychologist.

Source: SletDet Rådgivningen - Er dit billede blevet delt?

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Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is illegal under section 264 of the Danish Criminal Code

“Any person who unlawfully discloses information or images concerning another person’s private affairs, or otherwise images of that person, in circumstances in which they may clearly be expected to be withheld from wider public disclosure, is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months. (...)”

Source: Retsinformation



Signs of grooming

The estimate that 2% of children and young people have been subjected to grooming is conservative. The actual figure is likely to be higher, as children and young people may not realise that they are being groomed. For example, they may not realise that the person they are chatting with is not their own age but is in fact an adult. In cases of grooming, the manipulation itself is unlawful and punishable by law.

The grooming process can unfold over a longer period, but the SletDet helpline is currently seeing a trend towards grooming escalating very rapidly. This means that there may be very little time between a friend request and the violation itself – sometimes only a few hours. It is also important to note that the grooming process may begin offline, which is not covered by this survey.

In one interview, a girl describes a situation she experienced at the age of 13 that showed signs of grooming. She had been messaging a boy on Snapchat who pretended to be her own age. The messages gradually became increasingly sexual, and the boy wanted to meet in person. The girl describes how flattered she felt by the attention he was giving her. She eventually found out through other means that the boy was in fact a 21-year-old man – eight years older than she was:



I mean, I get a bit scared. And I also think about how someone can live with themselves after lying to someone who's much younger than they are and asking them for things that just aren't okay when they're that young. Girl, 14



The girl blocked the man and told her mother about what had happened. However, she did not tell her mother his real age because she was afraid that her mother would become worried and forbid her to use Snapchat. Fortunately, in this example, the girl became suspicious that something was not right and blocked the man.

Another sign that grooming may be taking place is when an adult asks a child or young person to send intimate material. In one interview, another girl describes how she and her friends used OmeTV on a large screen at their after-school care centre when they were eight or nine years old. They were chatting with a man who suddenly began masturbating (see quote in Chapter 6). The girl explains that her friend continued communicating with the man on Instagram and that the contact developed to the point where he asked her friend to send intimate images of herself:



I remember my friend just thought it was funny, so she started messaging him a lot. I found it really uncomfortable. She ended up getting a bit upset because she felt it had gone a bit too far. He asked for pictures and things like that, but of course we didn't do any of it – we knew better than that. But it was still really uncomfortable thinking about some old man like that... Girl, 17



Grooming is illegal under section 231 of the Danish Criminal Code

“Any person who, systematically or through manipulation and by exploiting a position of superiority based on age and experience, establishes a relationship with a person under 18 with the intent of subjecting that person to a sexual offence is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years for grooming.”

Source: Retsinformation



Insights from the SletDet helpline: Grooming

Grooming is the term used for a process in which someone who is psychologically more mature or older than a child or young person makes contact with them in order to build a close and trusting relationship for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The grooming process often begins with an adult sending friendly messages and engaging in everyday small talk to build trust. The contact may then become more personal, with the adult showing an interest in the child's everyday life, problems and feelings in order to deepen the relationship. Once trust has been established, the perpetrator gradually begins to introduce sexual topics into the conversation. This may involve sexual messages or images, or pressure on the child to send intimate images or videos of themselves.

Some children are also persuaded or manipulated into performing sexual acts on camera. In some cases, the contact progresses from online interaction to meeting in person and physical sexual abuse. Grooming is a complex phenomenon and can create serious conflicts between children and young people and their parents. To the child or young person, the relationship may feel genuine, safe or meaningful, even though it is based on manipulation. Parents, by contrast, see the perpetrator as a threat and respond with concern and a desire to protect their child. Grooming can have very serious physical and psychological consequences for the child.

Source: SletDet Rådgivningen - Får du upassende beskeder fra en voksen?

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PART 3

HOW DO DIGITAL VIOLATIONS AFFECT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, AND WHAT DO THEY DO?



CHAPTER 9

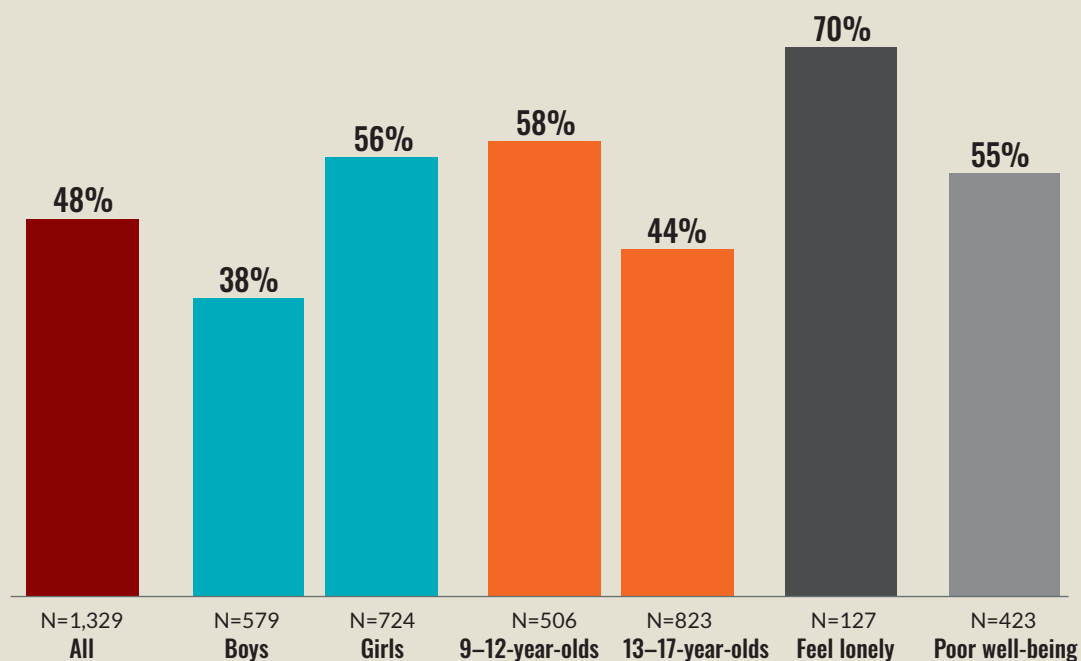
Many children and young people are deeply affected by what they experience

Just under half of children and young people are affected when they experience digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online. For example, they may have a stomach ache or feel afraid and alone. The experiences that affect the largest proportion of children and young people are being excluded from a social group, having rumours spread about them or being bullied with something posted online.

Half of all children and young people who are exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online are affected by the experience (Figure 21). Children and young people who feel lonely are particularly likely to be affected by their experiences. 9–12-year-olds are also more likely to be affected than 13–17-year-olds, and girls are more likely to be affected than boys.

Figure 21:

Proportion of children and young people who are affected when exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online, %



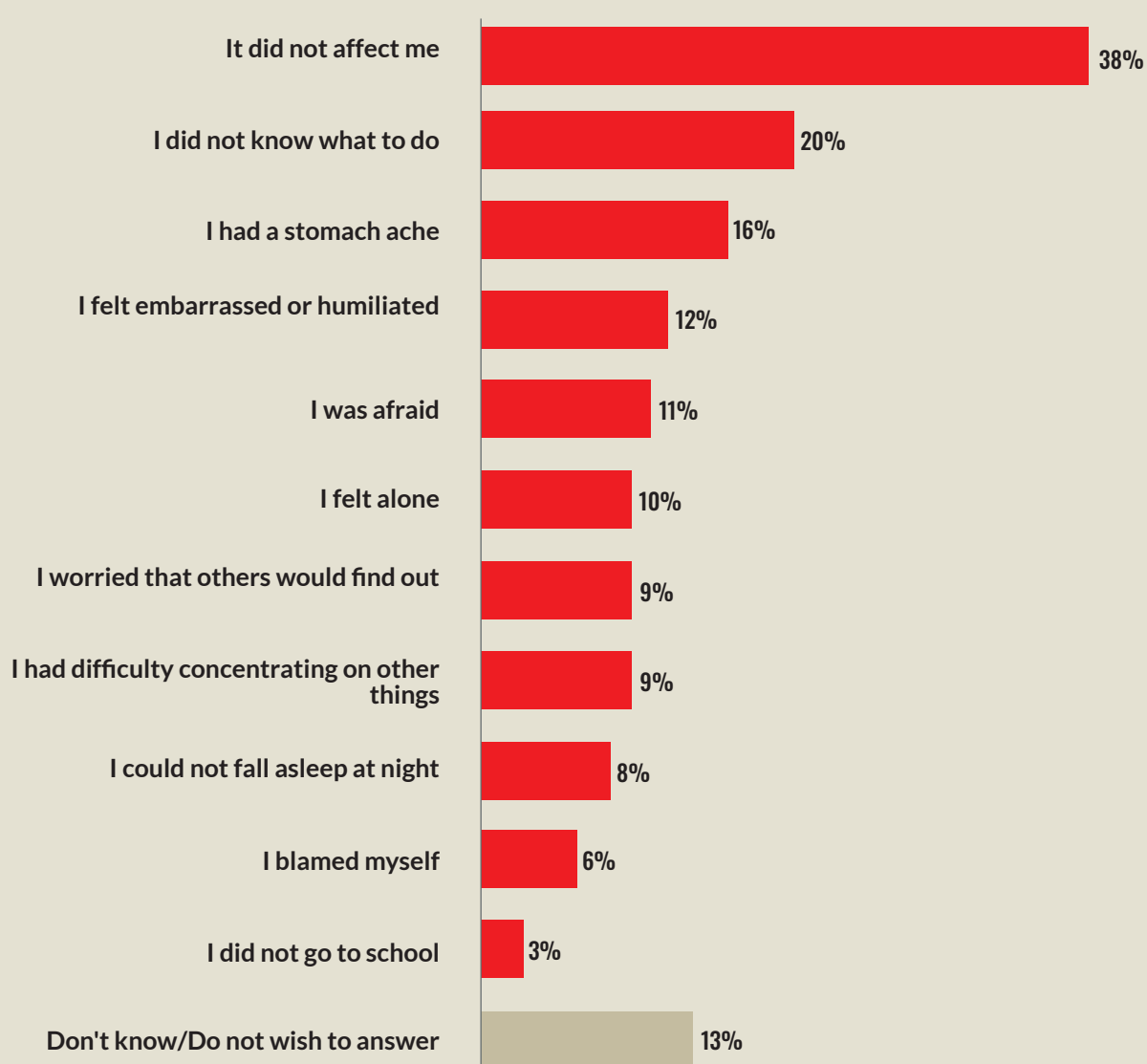
The figure is based on responses to the question: “How did (description of the digital violation or unpleasant experience online) affect you? You may tick multiple answers.”

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Among children and young people who are affected by a digital violation or unpleasant experience online, 16% report having a stomach ache, 12% feel embarrassed or humiliated, 11% feel afraid and 10% feel alone (Figure 22). For a smaller proportion, the experience has consequences serious enough that they have difficulty concentrating (9%), cannot fall asleep (8%) or do not go to school (3%). More than one third (38%) say that the experience did not affect them. There may be several reasons for this, including children and young people seeing such experiences as common and, for some, as an inevitable part of using online platforms.

Figure 22:

How children and young people are affected by digital violations and other unpleasant experiences, %



N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the question: "How did [description of the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] affect you? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

In one interview, a 14-year-old girl says that it felt as though her world had stopped when a boy took a screenshot of an image. She immediately regretted sending it and was afraid that it would be shared:



I'd been talking to a boy on Snapchat. Then all of a sudden I ended up sending him something I shouldn't have sent, and he saved it and took a screenshot of it. And I could really feel that my world just kind of stopped at that point. I mean, I didn't really know what to do. Girl, 14

The girl tried to persuade the boy to delete the image, but he refused. With help from her family, she was fortunately able to get him to delete it before it was shared.

A 14-year-old boy says that many young people feel guilt and shame when they have an unpleasant experience online. He believes that young people would feel less guilty if adults were good at talking to children and young people before they start using social media and encounter something unpleasant:

You need to have that conversation beforehand and say that if something like this happens, you need to talk to an adult about it, because it's not something you can deal with on your own as a child. Boy, 14

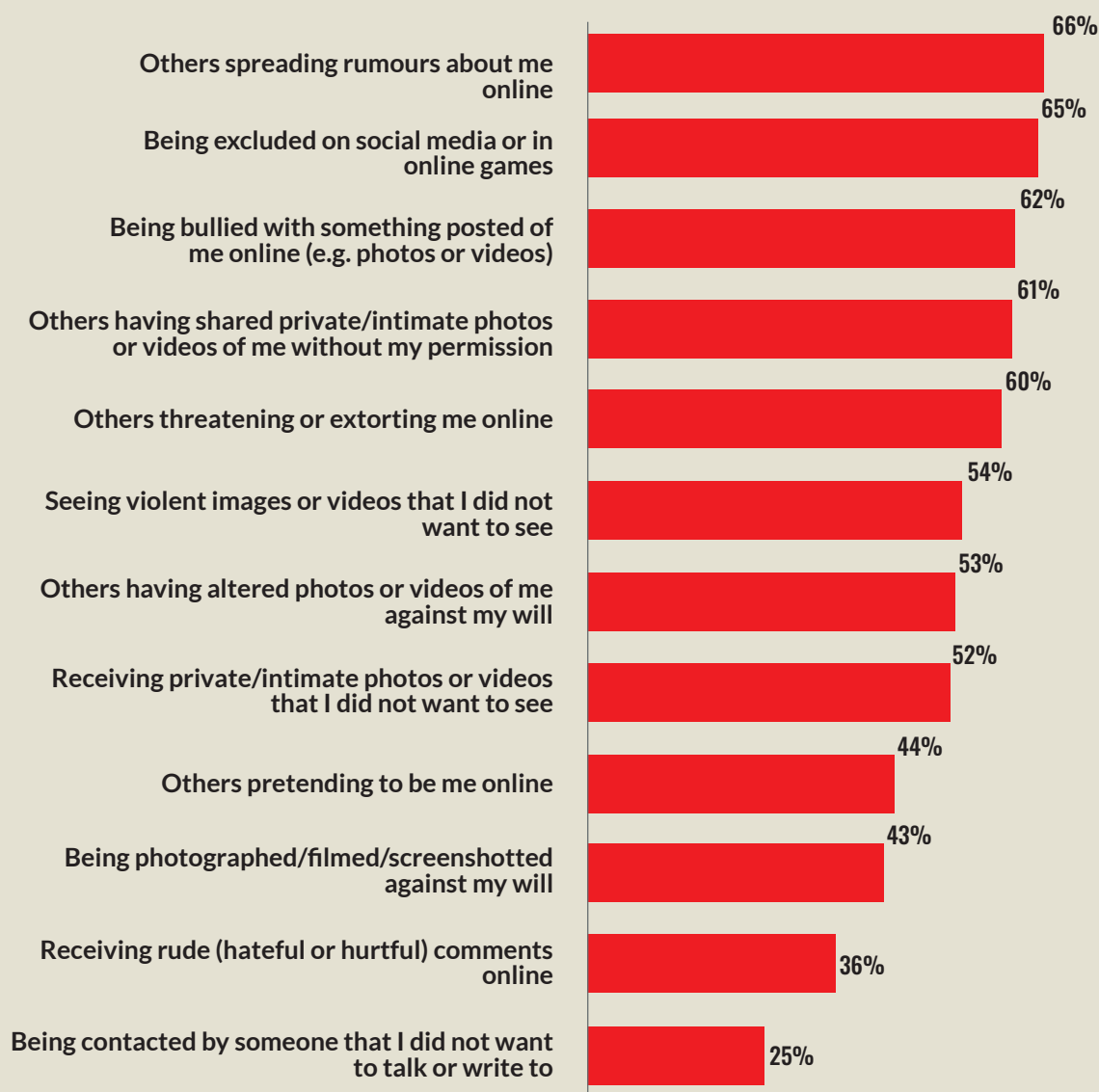


Children and young people are more likely to be affected when violations and unpleasant experiences are social in nature.

Children and young people are strongly affected by experiences in which they are excluded from a social group or in which they perceive the violation as a breach of trust by friends or people they know. Having rumours spread about them, being bullied with something posted online and being excluded on social media or in online games are therefore the three types of incident that affect the largest proportions of children and young people (Figure 23). The sharing of intimate images and videos without consent, as well as threats and extortion, also affects a large proportion of children and young people.

Figure 23:

Proportion of children and young people who are affected by digital violations and unpleasant experiences, broken down by type of violation, %



N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the question: "How did [description of the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] affect you? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

CHAPTER 10

Many accept unpleasant experiences as something they have to live with

In the interviews, young people downplay the seriousness of their online experiences, suggesting that such experiences have become normalised.

Four out of ten children and young people (38%) who have been exposed to a digital violation or other unpleasant experience say that “it did not affect me” (Figure 22). This suggests that unpleasant experiences online have become normalised among children and particularly young people, which is supported by the interviews.

Young people downplay the seriousness of their online experiences

In the interviews, young people describe receiving dick pics, seeing someone get their head shot off or having friends share intimate images of them. They downplay the seriousness of these experiences by describing them as “weird”, “strange” or “gross”, and even when they describe an experience as “unpleasant”, they often qualify it as “a bit unpleasant” to play down its seriousness.

Young people aged 14 and 15 describe various sexual approaches as “weird” and “a bit gross”:



I've got friends who've had a boy add them on Snapchat, and then they've added him back, and as soon as they do, he sends them a picture of his dick. And that's a bit unpleasant. It's kind of like, just don't do that. Girl, 14

And then there's someone who writes: "My bed is broken, can I sleep in yours?" Those are the kinds of weird comments you get. There's also someone who wrote in English: "Use my veiny arms and biceps as a necklace, while I eat your pussy." It's a bit gross. Girl, 15



Young people are aware that young people and adults view online experiences differently. They identify this as one reason why they are more likely to talk to people their own age than to adults about what they experience online.

Insights from the SletDet helpline: What happens online does not stay online

When children and young people say that they are used to encountering derogatory comments, vicious personal attacks, humiliation, harmful content or hateful communication online, it can be tempting to interpret this as a sign of resilience. From a psychological perspective, however, becoming accustomed to something does not mean that a child or young person is thriving.

Children and young people's understanding of themselves and others is shaped by the environments in which they spend time. This also applies to digital communities. When a child or young person is repeatedly exposed to belittling, aggressive communication or harmful content that, for example, portrays other people as inferior, this gradually shifts their perception of what is normal, acceptable and to be expected. This affects both how they see themselves and how they see others.

When children and young people come to regard hostile communication or behaviour that crosses their personal boundaries as simply part of participating in digital communities, they may also begin to feel that they should put up with more, speak up less and accept more than they actually want to. In this way, children and young people's sense of self-worth can be affected. Their experiences in digital communities become part of how they understand themselves, how they relate to others and what they come to see as acceptable ways for people to speak to and treat one another. In other words: What happens online does not stay online.

Source: Mia Lind Winther, psychologist and Head of the SletDet helpline

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CHAPTER 11

Only one in five young people seek help from an adult – and four out of ten take no action

Only half of the children and young people exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online take action in response – and boys are far less likely to do so than girls.

Only half of children and young people take action when they are exposed to a digital violation or unpleasant experience online (calculated on the basis of Figure 24). When they do take action, the most common response is to block the person responsible (Figure 24). In addition, 17% tell a parent or another adult in their family, while 16% tell a friend or sibling.

Only 4% of children and young people talk to a teacher or educator when they are exposed to a digital violation or unpleasant experience online. These findings are supported by previous studies (see, for example, Rambøll for Save the Children Denmark (2024): Barriers to seeking help among children and young people who experience digital violations).

A closer look at the figures shows that 9–12-year-olds are far more likely than 13–17-year-olds to talk to their parents. While one in three 9–12-year-olds talk to a parent or another adult in their family, only one in ten 13–17-year-olds do so (see appendix report).

Figure 24:

Proportion of children and young people who take action when exposed to a digital violation or other unpleasant experience online, %



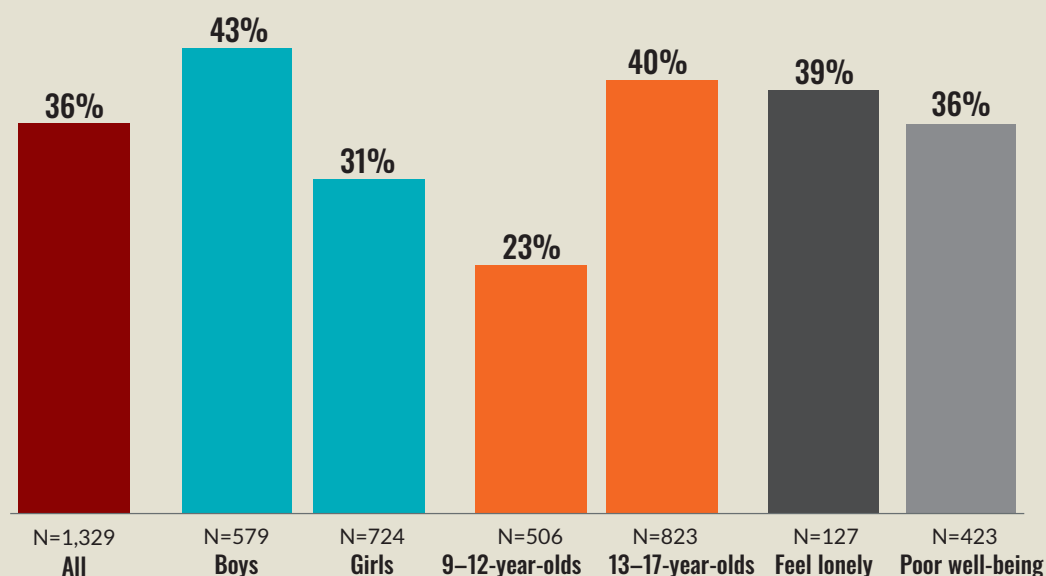
N=1,329. The figure is based on responses to the question: "What did you do when [description of the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] happened? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

9–12-year-olds are also more likely than 13–17-year-olds to take action when they are exposed to a digital violation or unpleasant experience. Four out of ten 13–17-year-olds take no action (Figure 25).

Figure 25:

Proportion of children and young people who take no action when exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online, %



The figure is based on responses to the question: “What did you do when [description of the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] happened? You may tick multiple answers.”

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Boys are less likely to take action when they are exposed to digital violations or unpleasant experiences (Figure 25). It is well established that boys and young men may find it difficult to ask for help, partly because of narrow norms surrounding masculinity (see, for example, Børns Vilkår (2023): Young men experiencing poor well-being – why don’t they seek help?). Girls are therefore more likely to block the person responsible or tell a parent, another adult in the family, a sibling or a friend (see appendix report).

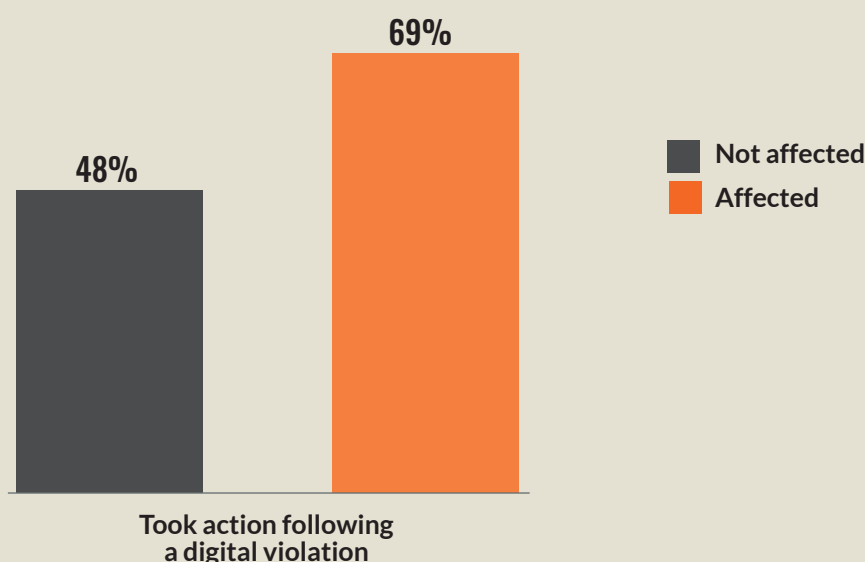
Children and young people are more likely to take action if they feel they have been affected by the incident

The fact that boys and 13–17-year-olds are less likely to take action than girls and younger children may be linked to whether they feel affected by what happened.

Children and young people who say that they were affected by digital violations and unpleasant experiences – for example, by having a stomach ache or feeling worried – are far more likely to take action than those who say that they were not affected by the incident (Figure 26). However, a substantial proportion (31%) take no action even though they say that they were affected.

Figure 26:

Proportion of children and young people who take action in response to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online, broken down by whether the child or young person was affected by the incident, %



N=881. The figure is based on responses to the questions: "What did you do when [description of the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] happened? You may tick multiple answers." and "How did [the digital violation or unpleasant experience online] affect you? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

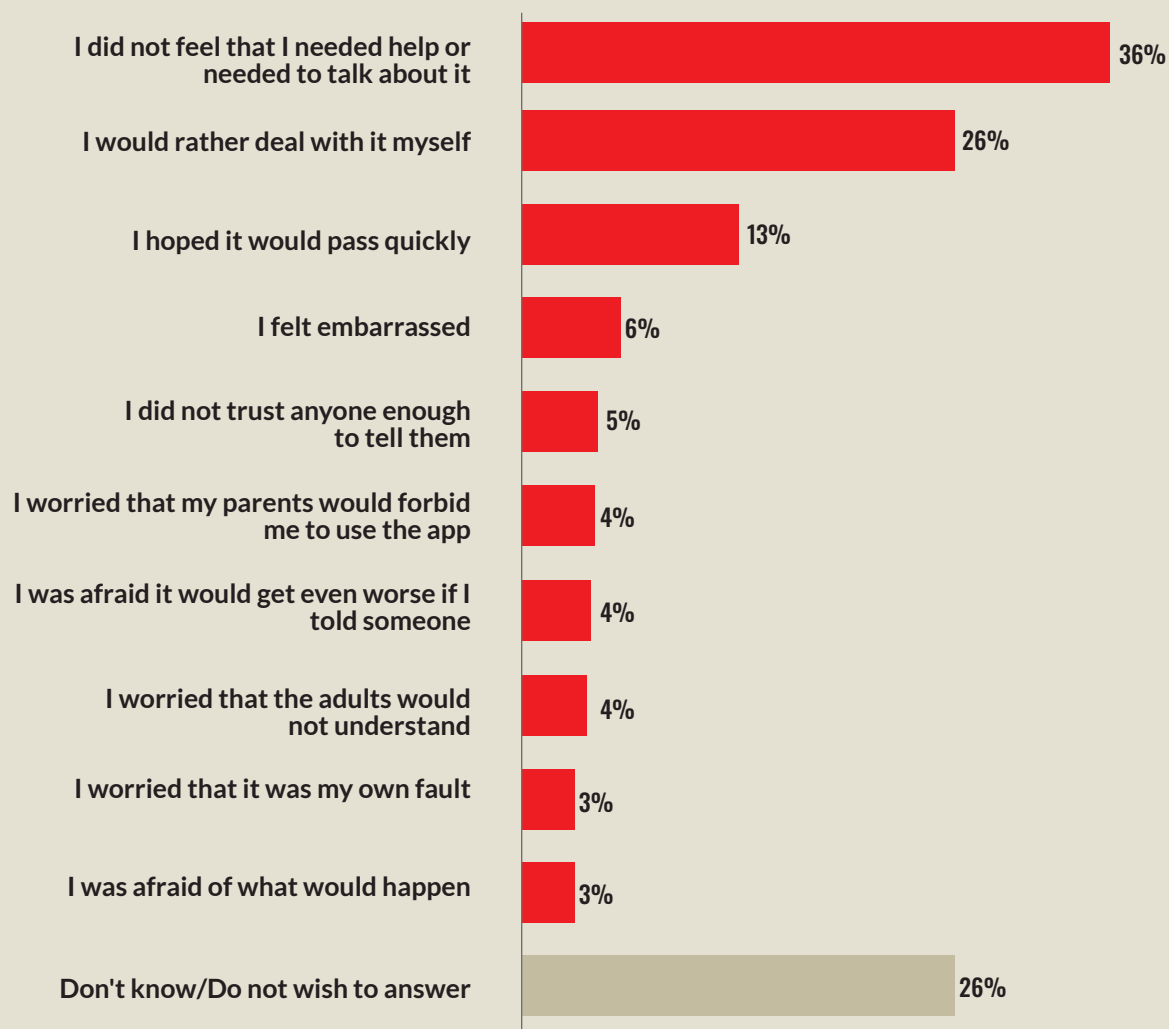
Some do not know what to do – others would rather deal with it themselves

Children and young people who take no action after experiencing a digital violation or other unpleasant experience online often say that they did not need help or would rather deal with it themselves. More than one in ten also say that they took no action because they hoped the unpleasant experience would quickly pass (Figure 27).

One in five also say that they did not know what to do when they were exposed to a digital violation or unpleasant experience (Figure 22 in Chapter 9), which may also help explain why they took no action.

Figure 27:

Children and young people's reasons for taking no action in response to digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online, %



N=660. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Why didn't you seek help or tell anyone about it when (the digital violation or unpleasant experience online) happened? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Shame and fear of consequences deter young people from seeking help from adults

Young people find it easier to tell a friend about an unpleasant experience online than to tell a parent or another adult. In the interviews, young people describe various barriers to telling adults about their online experiences. They are often afraid that adults will judge them, which may leave them feeling that it is their own fault if, for example, someone writes something nasty to them:



I think a lot of it is about adults judging you. Because often, when it happens online, you've done something wrong yourself as well, or written something back. If loads of bad things are being written about you, you're afraid either that they're true or that you deserve it. Girl, 17

A small proportion of children and young people worry that their parents will forbid them to use social media if they hear about the digital violations and unpleasant experiences they have been exposed to (Figure 27). Although only 4% of the children and young people who take no action give this reason in the survey, this concern comes up relatively often in the interviews.

I was a bit afraid that my mum would then say I shouldn't have social media or Snapchat or things like that, just because this happened once. Girl, 14

In the interviews, young people say that they feel it is wrong for parents to exclude them from social media because they have had unpleasant experiences. Instead, parents should take an interest in what young people do online and keep up with their online lives:

You shouldn't cut your child off from social media because they've seen something unpleasant. I think that's wrong. Because that's where children keep up with what's going on. Instead of just saying that the child has to stop using it completely, you should say, 'You can use it for half an hour, and I need to keep an eye on what you're doing and things like that' (...) If the child has said they've seen something unpleasant, I'd say parents should have to keep an eye on what their child is doing. Boy, 15



Young people feel that adults do not understand the online world and that involving their parents may make things worse

A small proportion of children and young people take no action following digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online because they are worried that things will get worse or that adults will not understand (Figure 27).

In the interviews, some young people explain that they do not tell their parents what has happened online because they feel that involving them only makes the situation worse. A 14-year-old girl gives an example of being bullied online and says that she does not want to tell her parents because she is afraid the bullying will get worse if they become involved.

Finally, young people say that they feel there is no point telling adults about things that happen online because adults “don’t understand that world”. They give examples of offensive language that is only meant as a joke and which they feel parents and teachers overreact to. A 13-year-old boy puts it this way: *“adults can sometimes just be too adult.”*

CHAPTER 12

Many do not know what to do when it happens to others

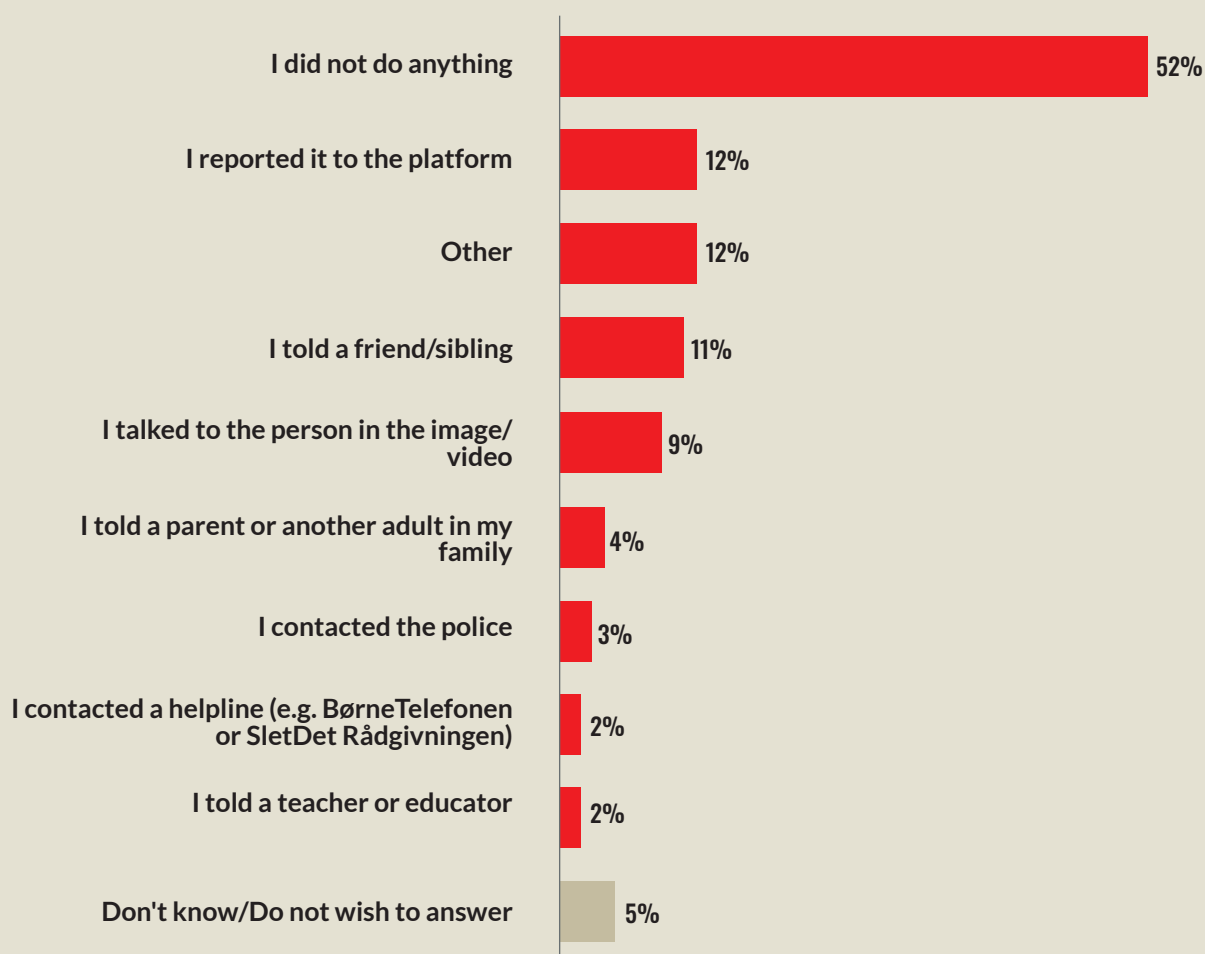
Young people find it difficult to intervene when they witness the unlawful sharing of intimate material or online bullying. Many hesitate because they do not know what to do and are afraid of the consequences – or because they do not believe that intervening will make a positive difference.

Being subjected to a digital violation or unpleasant experience online yourself is one thing; witnessing someone else being subjected to one is another.

One in five young people (20%) have received an intimate image or video that had been shared without the consent of the person depicted (see appendix report). Just under half of them take action (Figure 28). Most report it to the platform, tell a friend or sibling or talk to the person in the image or video. Very few tell an adult or a professional, such as the police or a helpline.

Figure 28:

Proportion of young people who take action after receiving an intimate image or video shared without consent, %

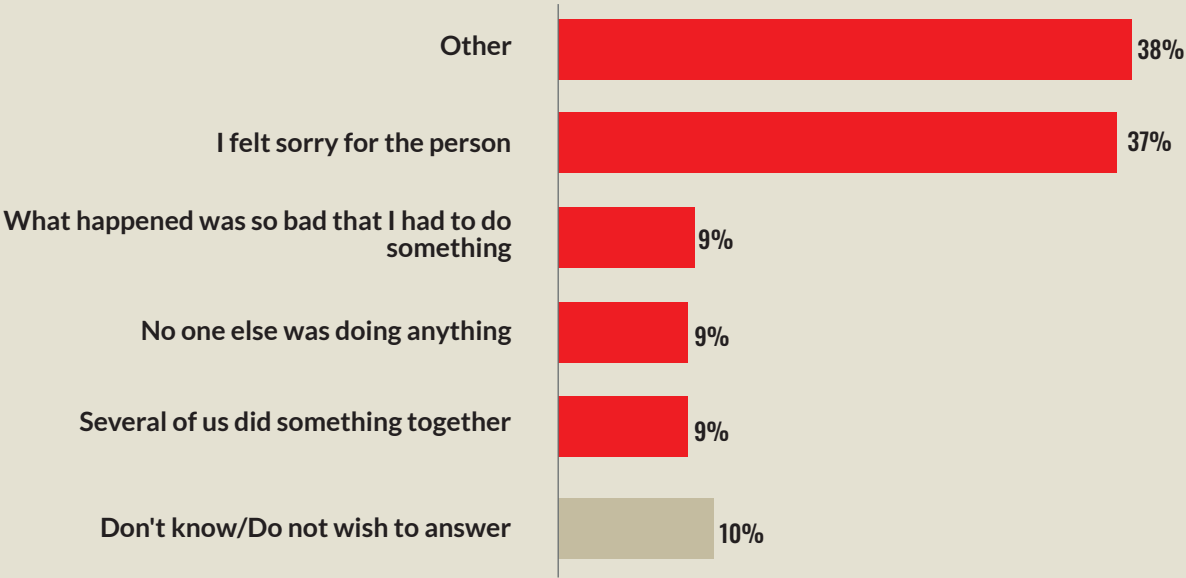


N=226. The figure is based on responses to the question: "What did you do the last time you received an intimate image or video of someone that had been shared without their consent? For example, an image or video in which the person was naked or wearing very little clothing. You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

The main reason young people give for taking action is that they “felt sorry for the person”, cited by 37%. In addition, one in ten young people take action because they feel that what happened was so serious that they had to do something and no one else was doing anything. Others took action because several of them did something together (Figure 29).

Figure 29:
Young people’s reasons for taking action when they receive an intimate image or video shared without consent, %

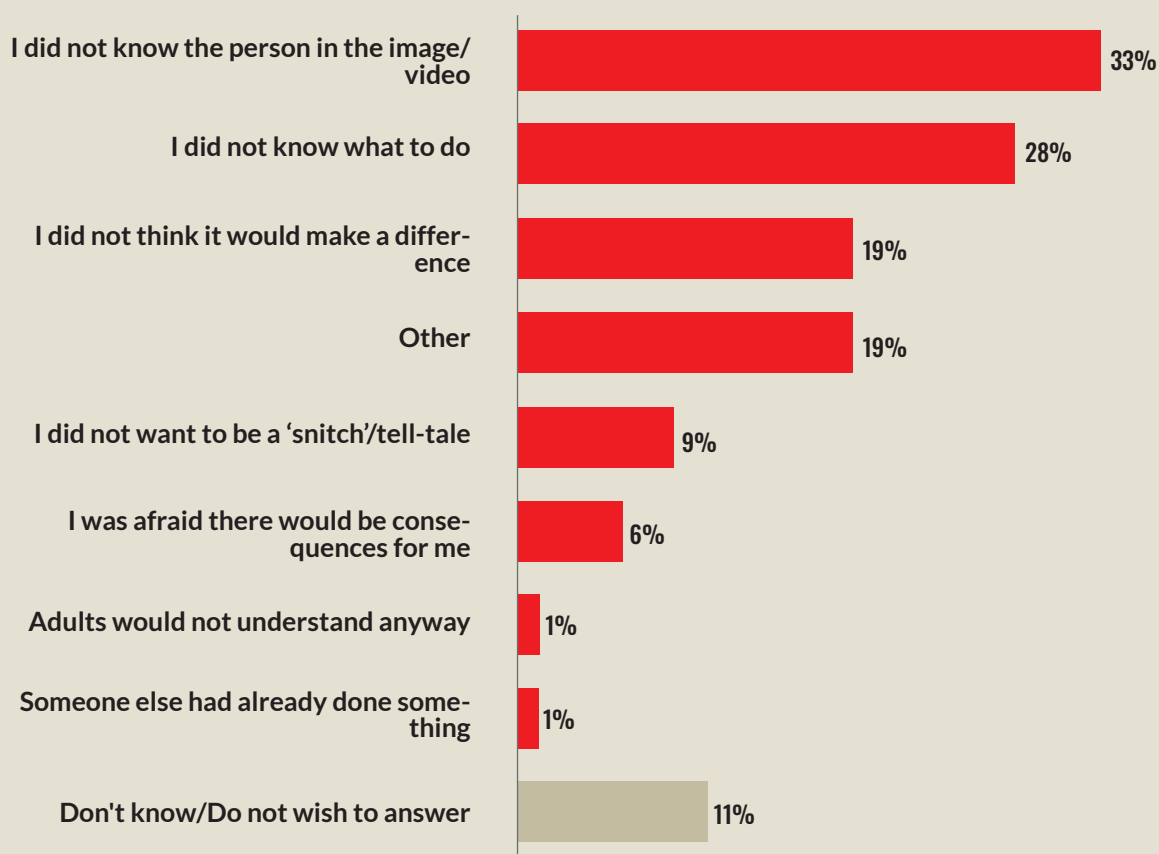


N=92. The figure is based on responses to the question: “Why did you do something? You may tick multiple answers.”
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

By contrast, not knowing the person in the image or video is a barrier to taking action, and a large proportion of young people do not believe that taking action would make a difference. Finally, just under three in ten (28%) do not know what to do (Figure 30).

Figure 30:

Barriers to young people taking action when they receive an intimate image or video shared without consent, %



*N=122. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Why did you not do anything? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026*

See Insights from the SletDet helpline: Sharing of intimate material in Chapter 8.

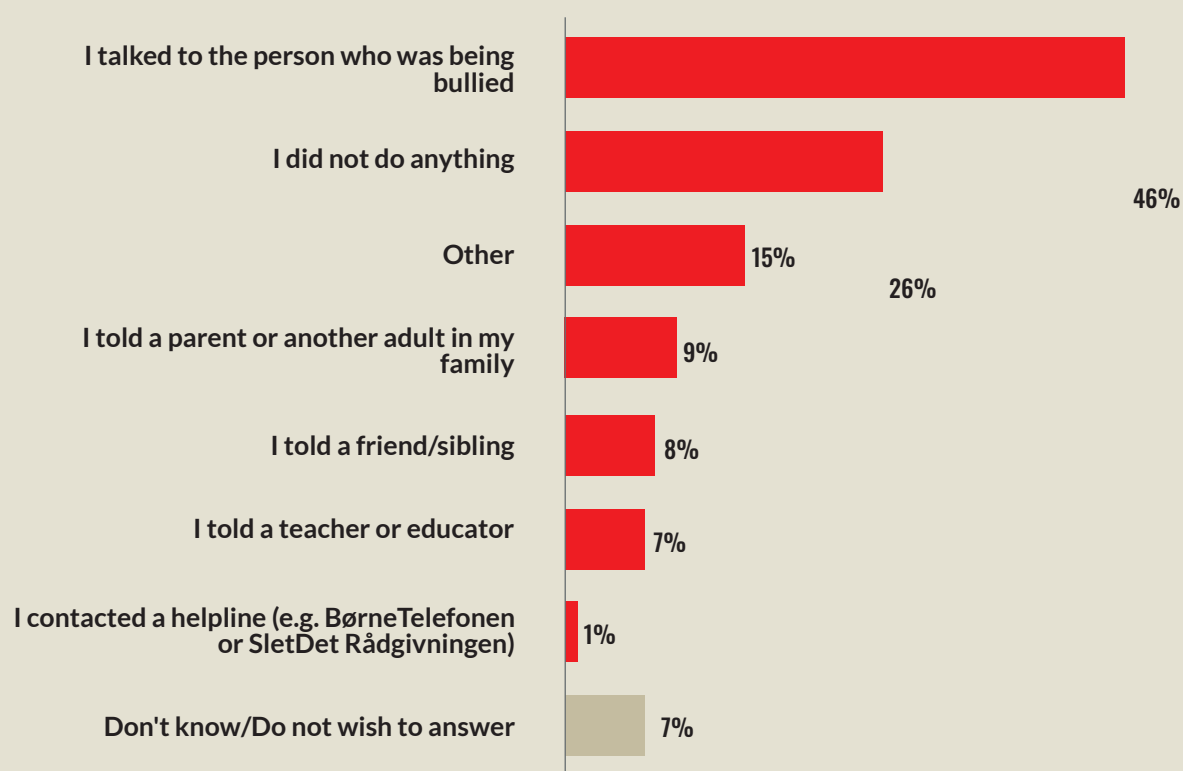
More young people take action in response to online bullying – but many still do not know what to do

Just under one third of young people (30%) report that someone they know has been bullied online (see appendix report). Most young people take action when someone they know is being bullied online (Figure 31). By far the most common response is to talk to the person being bullied.

Only 7% of children and young people tell a teacher or educator if they witness online bullying.

Figure 31:

Proportion of young people who take action when someone they know is being bullied online, %



N=352. The figure is based on responses to the question: "What did you do the last time someone you know was bullied online? You may tick multiple answers."

Source: Save the Children Denmark 2026

Insights from the SletDet helpline: Online bullying

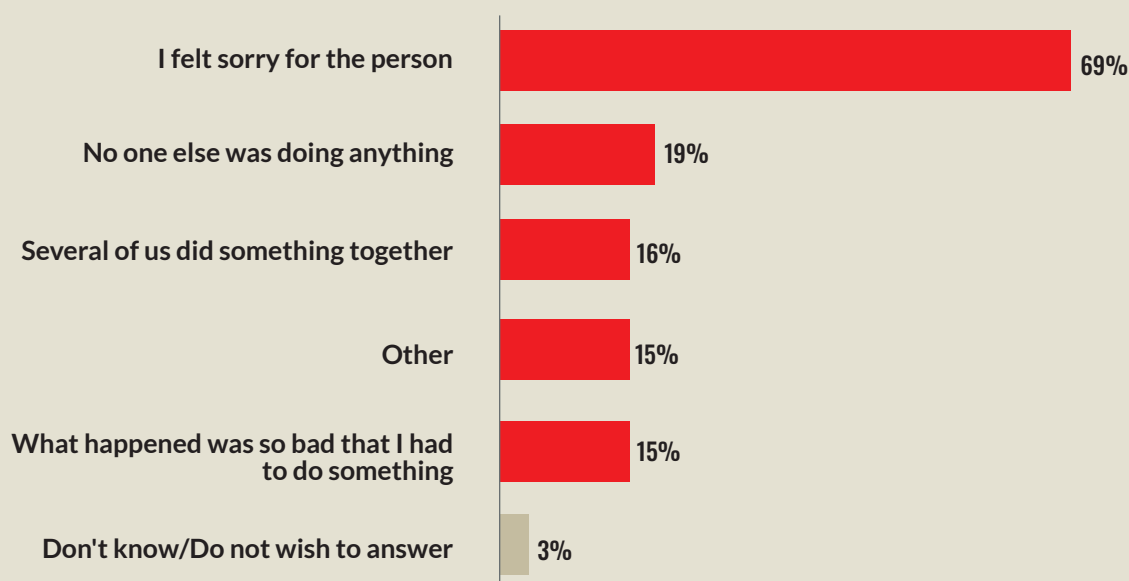
We know that bullying online involves the same dynamics as bullying that takes place face to face. When bullying occurs between children who also know each other offline, it affects school communities and the sense of safety in schools. Pupils often feel that professionals do not notice online bullying, while professionals may find it difficult to intervene because online bullying is often subtle. This may include being excluded from a group chat, implicit meanings conveyed through emojis or receiving mocking messages that may appear harmless at first glance (Red Barnet (2025): Afpresning, grooming og deling uden samtykke – Årsrapport fra SletDet Rådgivningen 2024).

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The main reasons young people give for taking action when they witness online bullying are that they “felt sorry for the person” and that no one else was doing anything (Figure 32).

Figure 32:

Young people's reasons for taking action when someone they know is being bullied online, %

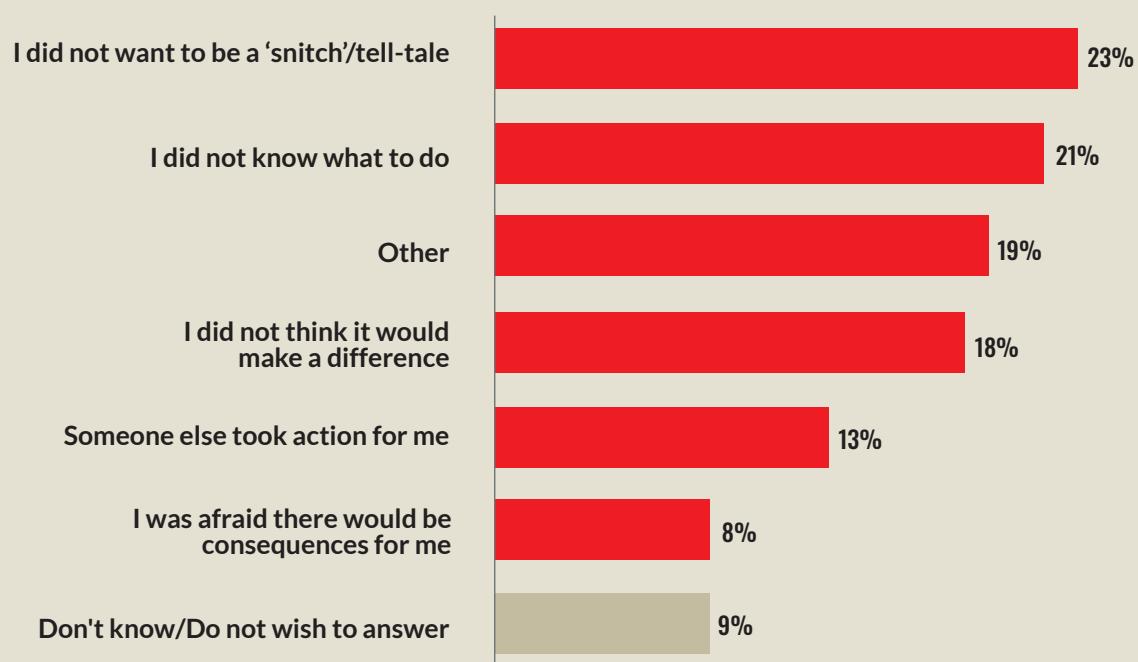


N=236. The figure is based on responses to the question: “Why did you do something? You may tick multiple answers.”
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

When children and young people take no action in response to online bullying, the most common reasons are that they do not want to be a 'snitch'/tell-tale or that they do not know what to do (Figure 33).

Figure 33:

Barriers to young people taking action when someone they know is being bullied online, %



N=91. The figure is based on responses to the question: "Why did you not do anything? You may tick multiple answers."
Source: Save the Children Denmark, 2026

Fear that taking action could have consequences for themselves or their friends is a barrier

A smaller proportion of young people say that they are afraid there will be consequences for them if they take action (Figure 33).

This is also reflected in the interviews, where one girl explains that she did not intervene when a girl in her class was being bullied because she was afraid that the bullying might then be directed at her:



Me and my group just stayed out of it. We weren't part of it. We were neither on her side nor against her. We were just on the sidelines. (...) We definitely thought about doing something, but you also knew that if you stepped in, stood up for her and helped her, you could become the next victim, and then it would just keep going round in circles. (...) I wish I'd had a bit more courage to speak up and say, 'You shouldn't do that.' Girl, 15

The girl therefore wishes she had been brave enough to do something at the time, but she was afraid of the consequences. The fact that she was not friends with the person being bullied also played a part.

Another girl has received intimate images and videos from her friends. She did not want to tell anyone because she was afraid that doing so would have consequences for her friends:

If it's one of my friends, I don't really want to tell the police. I don't want to say that it was my best friend who just sent me this. Because then they'd get into trouble too. Girl, 16



3

**PIECES OF ADVICE
FROM
YOUNG PEOPLE**

In the interviews, the young people offer advice. They give advice both on what other young people in similar situations can do and on how parents and teachers can better support young people who have had unpleasant experiences online. Here are examples of the most common types of advice.

1. Show more interest in what children and young people do online – and ask them about it



If adults can tell that their child is a bit upset and quieter than usual, they can just ask whether their child wants to talk. Girl, 15

You don't always need help. Sometimes you just need adults to listen and understand. So you can talk about what's difficult. Girl, 14

Pay more attention to your children and what they're doing. Take an interest in what they do online. Ask them about it. Boy, 14

2. Don't go through children's phones

I don't think parents should go through their children's phones. Like, going through them and checking stuff (...) I'd feel pretty uncomfortable if my mum went through my phone and saw all sorts of things. Because there are some things I talk about with my friends that my mum doesn't know about. Girl, 16

3. Teachers should ask questions and take an interest in young people's lives online

If a teacher finds out that a child has been through something, I think it would be really helpful if the teacher made it clear that you can actually come and talk to them. So you don't feel like your parents are the only people you can turn to. There are other adults you can talk to as well. The teacher could maybe take the child aside and say, 'Hey, do you want to come out and have a chat?' Don't do it in front of the other children, but ask them more discreetly or in private. Girl, 15



METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the report

The purpose of the report is to examine children and young people's experiences of digital violations, digital abuse and other unpleasant experiences online. The report also maps children and young people's use of online platforms and identifies the platforms on which most digital violations and unpleasant experiences occur. Finally, we look more closely at how children and young people respond when they encounter behaviour that violates their boundaries or have an unpleasant experience online. For example, do they tell an adult or a friend? What prevents them from taking action? And how do they feel after the experience?

This is the third report in a series examining children's experiences of digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online. This allows us both to provide an updated picture of children and young people's use of online platforms, their experiences and the action they take, and to examine developments over time.

For the first time, we also examine children's experiences of digital abuse, involving more serious incidents that typically fall within the scope of the Danish Criminal Code.

Rambøll Management Consulting was responsible for the quantitative data collection, in consultation with Save the Children Denmark. Save the Children Denmark was responsible for all analysis and reporting, as well as the qualitative data collection.

The previous reports on children's experiences of digital violations and other unpleasant experiences online were conducted for Save the Children Denmark by Epinion in 2024 and Rambøll Management Consulting in 2021.

Quantitative data: The survey

Sampling and pilot testing

The quantitative part of the report consists of a survey of children and young people aged 9–17. Data were collected from January to March 2026.

All primary and lower secondary schools and upper secondary and vocational education institutions in Denmark, including special schools, were invited to participate in the report. The survey was completed in class, and teachers were also offered supplementary teaching materials tailored to their pupils' year group. The materials cover, among other things, what digital violations are and how to support children's digital literacy and ability to take action. The survey was pilot-tested with four children aged 9–12 and three aged 13–17. Three were boys and four were girls. The children and young people were asked to think aloud as they answered the questions in order to capture their immediate reactions. The pilot testing ensured that the wording of the questions and the response options were understandable and relevant to the target group.

Survey design

We limited the number of digital violations and other unpleasant experiences about which children and young people were asked follow-up questions. This was to prevent the survey becoming too long. 9–12-year-olds were asked follow-up questions about a maximum of two digital violations or unpleasant experiences, while 13–17-year-olds were asked follow-up questions about a maximum of three. Types of violation that occurred less frequently in the results two years ago were prioritised for follow-up questions. This ensured that all types of digital violations and unpleasant experiences reported by children and young people were covered sufficiently to allow meaningful analysis. The analyses use weighting to account for this design. In addition, 9–12-year-olds were not asked about how they respond when friends or acquaintances are bullied online or have intimate material shared without consent, in order to keep their survey shorter. After completing the survey, all children and young people were redirected to the SletDet helpline website, Save the Children Denmark's anonymous helpline for digital violations.

Children and young people's well-being was measured using the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, which assesses well-being based on five questions. The index ranges from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating better well-being. We classified children and young people with a score below 50 as having poor well-being, cf. the WHO-5 guide (Danish Health Authority, 2017). Loneliness was measured using the question "Do you feel lonely?", with the response options "No", "Yes, occasionally", "Yes, often" and "Yes, very often". The "Feel lonely" category includes children and young people who said that they often or very often feel lonely.

Data and weighting

The final dataset comprises N=2,012 complete responses to the entire survey. There are also 130 partially completed responses, in which respondents answered only the questions about their use of online platforms and the initial general questions about experiences of digital violations and unpleasant experiences online. A large proportion of the children and young people with partially completed responses reported having had an unpleasant experience online. The partial responses have therefore been included wherever possible.

The final dataset of N=2,012 was cleaned to remove 'speeders', defined here as children and young people who completed the survey in less than 30% of the median completion time. This resulted in the exclusion of 17 responses.

To ensure that the report is representative, the results are weighted to account for groups of children and young people who are over- or underrepresented.

Figure 34 shows the survey responses both before and after weighting, broken down by gender, age and region. Children and young people who did not wish to answer the question about gender (N=30), or who selected "boy/girl does not describe me" (N=15), are weighted only by age and region.

Figure 34:

Descriptive statistics for responses compared with the population

		Responses Unweighted	Responses Weighted	Population
Gender	Girl	51%	49%	39%
	Boy	49%	51%	51%
Age	9-year-olds	4%	11%	11%
	10-year-olds	7%	11%	11%
	11-year-olds	17%	11%	10%
	12-year-olds	14%	11%	10%
	13-year-olds	14%	11%	11%
	14-year-olds	12%	11%	11%
	15-year-olds	11%	12%	12%
	16-year-olds	14%	12%	12%
	17-year-olds	7%	11%	12%
Region	The Capital Region of Denmark	23%	31%	31%
	Central Denmark Region	17%	24%	23%
	North Denmark Region	12%	10%	10%
	Region Zealand	24%	14%	14%
	Region of Southern Denmark	24%	21%	21%

N=2,029. That is, all completed responses, including n=17 speeders who were excluded from the analyses. Some figures in the table may add up to less or more than 100% due to rounding.

Source: The distribution of survey responses is based on Rambøll's calculations, while the population distributions are based on data from Statistics Denmark, Table FOLK1E (2026K1).

The table shows that, even before weighting, the sample closely reflected the distribution of the population and that, after weighting, it matches the population. This means that the findings of the report can be generalised to the population of 9–17-year-olds throughout Denmark, subject to the caveat that the parameters examined here are not exhaustive. Where partially completed responses are included, this is accounted for in the weighting.

Qualitative data: Interviews

The report includes interviews with a total of 14 young people aged 13–17, conducted in March and April 2026. We chose not to interview 9–12-year-olds. This was partly because of their level of maturity and partly because a larger proportion of the older age group had experienced something unpleasant online, making it more likely that the interview participants would have experiences to talk about. Figure 35 provides an overview of the interview participants by gender and age.

Figure 35:
Distribution of interviewees by gender and age

	13-year-olds	14-year-olds	15-year-olds	16-year-olds	17-year-olds
Girl		3	1	1	4
Boy	2	2	1		

Recruitment

The young people were recruited through their teachers. After a class had completed the survey, the teacher received information about the interviews and consent forms, which they shared with interested young people and their parents. Young people aged 13–14 could take part in an interview only if a parent had given consent. Young people aged 15–17 could give their own consent to participate.

Rambøll was responsible for recruiting young people for the interviews.

Conduct of the interviews and interview guide

Save the Children Denmark staff conducted the interviews. The interviews were based on a semi-structured interview guide covering predetermined themes, while also allowing the interviewer to follow the young person’s account.

The young people could choose to receive the themes in advance of the interview. All young people were given the option of having a parent or friend present during the interview, and a small number chose to do so.

The interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. The interviewer had their camera on,

while the young people could decide whether or not to have theirs on. Most chose to have their camera on.

At the end of each interview, the interviewer encouraged the young person to talk to a parent or another adult if the interview had given them anything to think about. The interviewer also referred young people to the SletDet helpline for support if, for example, they said that intimate images of them had been shared and they wanted help having the images removed from online platforms.

Processing the interviews

The interviews were recorded via Microsoft Teams and transcribed using the AI tool Good Tape. A Save the Children Denmark staff member subsequently listened to all the recordings and corrected the transcripts. The interviews were coded manually using NVivo.

The young people are anonymous in the survey. In a small number of cases, details in their accounts have been changed to protect their anonymity.

Appendix report

If you would like to explore the data of the report in more detail, you can read the appendix report. It contains tables showing the distribution of responses to most questions in the survey.



SletDet (Delete-It) helpline

The SletDet (Delete-It) helpline, run by Save the Children Denmark, is Denmark's only professional helpline providing support and assistance to children and young people who have been exposed to digital violations or other unpleasant experiences online. The SletDet helpline also helps professionals and parents, as well as children and young people who have themselves subjected others to digital violations.

The SletDet helpline provides support and guidance when an image is shared without consent, when children and young people see violent or harmful content, are bullied online, are extorted into sharing sexual and intimate material or are groomed.

Over the past ten years, the SletDet helpline has built up unique expertise and is now a specialist knowledge centre that conducts surveys and analyses, raises awareness and educates children and young people about digital literacy. It also has extensive expertise in children and young people's digital lives and online activities.

The SletDet helpline offers confidential counselling by telephone, email and chat. The helpline's special status as an official trusted flagger also means that, under EU law, online platforms are required to give priority to Save the Children Denmark's notices of illegal content and process and decide upon them without undue delay.