

CHALLENGING INFLUENCERS – TEACHER GUIDANCE



12–16 years

LIVING SWITCHED ON

From special journeys to everyday commutes, the rail network helps get us where we need to be. Even if we're not travelling, we need to be Switched On to the risks the rail environment can pose.

We can all enjoy life's adventures when we spot signs of danger, look out for our friends and always stay Switched On.

Young people often make responsible choices around the tracks but there can be times when independent decision-making can be compromised. Living Switched On has been designed to help young people aged 12–16 explore a range of themes such as peer pressure, the perils of group mindset and how at times accidents happen as a result of small bad decisions rather than one big mistake.

Living Switched On encourages young people to gain the knowledge that could keep them safer around the tracks, whilst also exploring the impact ripple that rolls out across communities and the rail industry workplaces when accidents happen.

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Although safer behaviour and better decision making are the desired outcomes of this resource, at its heart is a clear examination of young people's vulnerabilities. In the safety of the classroom, we encourage educators to discuss what makes their students 'tick' – particularly when they're out and about as part of a friendship or peer group. Through this process, potential vulnerabilities for flawed decision-making can be identified, explored, and corrected in readiness for real world challenges.

CURRICULUM LINKS

KS3 & KS4

- **PSHE**
Health and Wellbeing: Self Concept, Managing Risk and Personal Safety. Relationships: Relationship Values, Social Influences
- **Citizenship**
- **English**
Reading, Spoken English

S1–S5

- **PSE**
Health and Wellbeing: Self Concepts, Managing Personal Safety and Risks, Relationships. Social Influences
- **Citizenship**
- **English**
Reading and Talking

These resources can also be used within SMSC planning and delivery.

WHY IS THERE A NEED TO INCORPORATE RAIL SAFETY INTO YOUR TEACHING?

There are 20,000 miles of track, 30,000 bridges, tunnels and viaducts plus thousands of signals, level crossings and stations across our rail network. There are more than 19,000 trespass incidents on the tracks every year.

Learning to hazard spot and address potentially dangerous behaviour is crucial at any age. Schools have recognised the importance of teaching about a range of safety behaviours through PSHE and Citizenship lessons in school. The rail industry wants to support this vital work.

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HOW TO RUN THE ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL

This resource has been designed to be flexible and easy to use with a range of options for delivery. This teacher guidance document contains tips for delivery and a loose script that can be adapted by educators to best suit the needs of their learners.

Teachers may decide to:

- Deliver the activities linked to each lesson individually within the normal timetable
- Run all of the activities across a week, as part of a topic focus week

HOW TO USE THE RESOURCE AND WORKSHEET IN OTHER SETTINGS

We're aware that youth groups and families may also want to use this resource with young people. The **Challenging Influencers PDF resource** and

Interrogating social media worksheet can be used for home learning, with students responding individually to the questions, rather than engaging in any group discussion. Discussion may take place between the home educator and the student, or questions can be used for individual written reflections.

The **debate worksheets** can also be used in the home learning setting. The home educator can guide the student to fill out one of the debate worksheets – while the home educator does the other. A discussion can then take place between the student and home educator.

The bonus activity can also be used in the home learning setting, same guidance as written below applies but students can come up with their social media plan individually and then discuss with the home educator.

RESOURCE OVERVIEW

| NAME OF RESOURCE | FORMAT | LEARNING OUTCOMES |
|--------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Challenging Influencers | 'Scrollable' PDF | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can recognise unsafe behaviours in online social media content.• I can consider and debate complex issues regarding the generation of social media content and the impact it can have on viewers• I can navigate complicated situations with peers, including when to seek help and who to seek help from |

GETTING STARTED

- Resources can be accessed via the [Switched On website](https://www.switchedonrailsafety.co.uk). Living Switched On also incorporates films and activities from You vs Train, an existing Network Rail resource warning about the risks of trespassing on the railway
- Living Switched On hosts a range of resources from films to quizzes and group discussions we recommend that educators familiarise

themselves with the content and plan an appropriate approach for their students

- Some resources explore dangerous behaviour and we recommend sharing trigger warnings i.e. let students know the nature of the content and give them the opportunity to opt out if they feel it might trigger difficult emotions

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CHALLENGING INFLUENCERS

Overview

Challenging Influencers is a dynamic new resource developed to address unsafe behaviours of influencers and social media content creators, by highlighting the real dangers of copying risky online stunts near the railway. Designed for students aged 12–16, this interactive resource mimics real-life scenarios from social media to spark discussion and critical thinking around social media content, peer influence, online stunts, and digital safety.

Through classroom debate and reflection activities, it empowers young people to recognise the real dangers behind risky online content and equips them with the tools to make safer, more informed choices – reminding them that no amount of likes or followers is worth jeopardising the safety of themselves and those around them.

Supporting resources and equipment required

- Challenging Influencers PDF to be downloaded and shown on class screen
- Worksheets:
 - Interrogating social media worksheet (1x per student)
 - Debate worksheet 1 (For)
 - Debate worksheet 2 (Against)
- Bonus activity worksheet
- Pens / pencils

Timing

45–60 minutes, although teachers can shorten and extend the lesson to fit schedules. Suggested timings are as follows: Activity one is designed to take 15–20 minutes. Activity two is designed to take between 30–40 minutes.

Extend this resource by getting students to complete the bonus activity, which is designed to take 15–20 minutes.

Set up

- Resources can be accessed via the [Switched On website](#).
- Set up the **Challenging Influencer Resource** on your whiteboard/screen ready to show your students.
 - The PDF is designed to imitate content that you would find on social media. Each image is set within a phone template and the resource is 'scrollable'. Each image has an audio overlay that can be played by clicking on the audio button.
- Print off the '**Interrogating social media**' worksheet and ensure each student has their own to fill in as you go through the gameshow.
- Print off the **debate worksheets** for team one and two. The class should be split into groups to debate either side of the argument. Teacher discretion should be used when deciding how big these groups are but our recommendation would be forming groups of no larger than 4–5 students.
- For those wanting to engage students in the **bonus activity**, print of the worksheet – you may want to print one per group.
- You may wish to show students this resource and conduct the activities during:
 - A normal timetabled lesson, for example, PSHE or Citizenship
 - A topic focus week, for example, Rail Safety Week

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ACTIVITY 1: INTERROGATING SOCIAL MEDIA

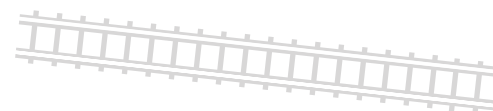
- **First page:** Start by explaining the nature of the resource:
 - Explain that as an audience, we will see a combination of images that show social media content being captured/ created around the railway environment.
 - The images will be accompanied by an audio overlay – of an “influencer” / content creator speaking. This will help explain the content creators intentions and what type of content they are creating.
- Ask students to consider why each scenario could be unsafe and what problems are presented in each. Students should write down their answers as you go through the resource on their individual ‘Interrogating social media’ worksheet.
- **Image 1:** Show the first image and play the audio by clicking on the button. You may want to play the audio twice. **Guide students to write down why the scenario is unsafe on their worksheet.** If students are struggling, prompt them to consider:
 - **where the girl in the image is** (at the train station, on the platform edge, on the wrong side of the yellow line)
 - **what the girl is doing** (looking/talking to her phone, with headphones on, not paying attention to her surroundings)
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page, which shows a buffering sign.
- ⏸ Pause here to engage in a class discussion. Call on students or ask for volunteers to share what they thought was unsafe about the image/ audio and why it could be dangerous.
- **Explain why the scenario is unsafe:**
 - The girl is on the platform edge, standing over the yellow line. This is dangerous as you must always stand behind the yellow line. Standing too close to the train tracks is dangerous as you could fall onto the tracks, or be affected by the turbulence of a fast train going past.
 - The girl is distracted from her surroundings while focussed on creating a video on her phone.
 - Having headphones means she can’t listen to her surroundings (such as an oncoming train, announcements, or she could be unaware of the other passengers on the platform).
 - **Bonus:** As she is live-streaming she could also be distracted by comments in the live feed.
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page.
- **Image 2:** Repeat action of showing the class the image and playing the audio. **Guide students to write down why the scenario is unsafe on their worksheet.** If students are struggling, prompt them to consider:
 - **where the pair are** (at a level crossing, behind the level crossing barriers and sign, near the train tracks)
 - **what the pair are doing** (making a video, the boy is about to run across the tracks)
 - **the level crossing sign** (red light is showing meaning a train is approaching)
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page, which shows a buffering sign.
- ⏸ Pause here to engage in a class discussion. Call on students or ask for volunteers to share what they thought was unsafe about the image/ audio and why it could be dangerous.
- **Explain why the scenario is unsafe:**
 - The boy is planning to run across the tracks, despite clear signage showing a train is about to come. This is dangerous as the train will not be stopping and will be moving at speed.
 - He’s not looking at the train tracks so unaware of his surroundings.
 - **Bonus:** The boy is more concerned with performing a risky stunt to get clicks/ viral views. He should be prioritising his safety and should wait behind the barriers until the train has passed.
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page.

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- **Image 3:** Repeat action of showing the class the image and playing the audio. **Guide students to write down why the scenario is unsafe on their worksheet.** If students are struggling, prompt them to consider:
 - **where the group are** (accessing the train tracks) and **why this could be dangerous.**
 - **what the signs show** (electric third rail are live – meaning electricity is present, warning sign telling public not to trespass)
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page, which shows a buffering sign.
- ⌚ Pause here to engage in a class discussion. Call on students or ask for volunteers to share what they thought was unsafe about the image/ audio and why it could be dangerous.
- **Explain why the scenario is unsafe:**
 - The audio implies that the young people are going to venture off the tracks and shoot content nearby despite clear signage showing that electricity is nearby.
 - If young people were to come into contact with the electric third rail they are at risk of being electrocuted.
 - They are distracted, focussed on creating social media content – unaware of their surroundings and potential oncoming trains.
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page.
- **Image 4:** Repeat action of showing the class the image and playing the audio. **Guide students to write down why the scenario is unsafe on their worksheet.** If students are struggling, prompt them to consider:
 - **where the group is** (on the train tracks)
 - **what the group is doing** (taking a picture/ posing for a picture for their Instagram)
 - **what the group are not doing** (being aware of their surroundings, not looking to see if a train is coming)
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page, which shows a buffering sign.
- ⌚ Pause here to engage in a class discussion. Call on students or ask for volunteers to share what they thought was unsafe about the image/ audio and why it could be dangerous.
- **Explain why the scenario is unsafe:**
 - The group of young people are distracted, focussed on posing for a photo
 - None are looking to see whether a train is coming (from either direction)
 - The boy taking the photo is leant down, meaning he may not be able to get off the tracks quickly if a train is approaching)
- ⏮ Scroll to the next page. Pause here and ask student to consider why its important to stay Switched On and avoid creating social media content around the railway environment, but also in other instances. You may want to call on students individually to answer.
- **Answer:** Explain to students that there are more videos online than ever before. While many are harmless, videos like the ones they've just seen can be dangerous and put the people who are creating them in a potentially life-threatening position. Remind them that it's important that we think critically about videos we see on social media and avoid creating similar content.
- Guide students to individually answer the reflection questions on the their worksheet:
 - **Question 1:** When we see a video or post online, what are some things or questions we could think about to evaluate it? (e.g. Is what the video sharing safe? Why may it not be safe? What are some things you could think about before liking, sharing or commenting on it?)
 - **Question 2:** How might you apply this kind of critical thinking when watching online influencers or other people share content online?
 - **Question 3:** Why can videos showing risky behaviour around train tracks be a problem when shared online? Consider how watching these clips might influence the choices or actions of other viewers



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- **Question 4:** Certain parts of the railway are open to the public, like at train stations and level crossings. But if you step on the railway track, the land next to the track or any area near the railway that isn't open to the public, you are trespassing. It is both dangerous and illegal. With that in mind, do you think it is appropriate or smart to make a video trespassing on the railway? What could be the implications?
- **Question 5:** What are some risks about the electrified railway that these young people might not have thought about/ considered
- **Question 6:** How do you feel when you watch/ view social media content that has an element of danger?
- **Question 7:** If you were a friend involved in this situation, is there anything you would have done differently to help keep everyone safe
- **Question 8:** If you see a risky stunt or unsafe behaviour online what could you do to prevent others from creating the same sort of video/content?
- **Question 9:** Would you be able to tell if this content had been generated by AI? How could this affect the way that viewers are influenced by content, positively or negatively?
- Outline the rules of the debate, informing students that each team must:
 - Include an opening statement, three main points and a closing statement to end on
 - Include the following sentence somewhere in their debate argument: **The generation of content near the railway should specifically be considered in this instance, because...**
 - Each member of the team must be involved in presenting one part of their team's argument.
- Instruct teams to, in their groups, start by conducting research to inform their argument. Suggested research times can be 5–10 minutes but if teachers want to extend this activity, allow for longer.
- Once the teams are ready to present begin the debate. Your role is to guide discussion, encourage debate, and reinforce the message that no amount of likes or followers is worth risking personal safety.
 - Ask Team 'For' to present their side of the debate
 - Allow time at the end of Team 'Against' to ask questions and rebuttals
 - Ask Team 'Against' to present their side of the debate
 - Also allow time at the end for Team 'For' to ask questions and present rebuttals
- After the debate has concluded engage the whole class in a group discussion. Ask students to reflect on which arguments were most persuasive and why.
 - **Suggested discussion prompts include:**
 - » How has the debate influenced their own views about social media and safety?
 - » Why might freedom of expression be important for influencers and creators?
 - » What are the potential benefits and drawbacks of allowing unrestricted content creation near railway environments?
 - » How can content creators balance their rights with the responsibility to keep themselves and others safe?
 - » Do you think social media platforms should do more to control where and how content is made, especially in risky places? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 2: DEBATE

- Divide your class into groups. Group sizes will depend on class size, but ideally this would be groups of no more than 4–5 students.
- Half of the groups should be given the '**Debate worksheet 1 (For)**' and the other half should be given '**Debate worksheet 2 (Against)**'.
- Inform the teams that they will be debating two sides of an argument about influencers and social media creators creating content.
 - Teams with '**Debate worksheet 1 (For)**' will be arguing that **influencers and social media creators have the freedom to create and post content where they choose.**
 - Teams with '**Debate worksheet 2 (Against)**' will be arguing that **influencers and social media creators should be prosecuted or banned for generating content that promotes dangerous behaviour.**

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BONUS ACTIVITY: SWITCHED ON SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

- Split your class into different groups. You may want to change the groups that were used in the previous debate activity. Group sizes will depend on class size, but ideally this would be groups of no more than 4–5 students.
- Explain to students that social media content – when created safely – can be used for good.
- Guide students to imagine that they work for Switched On. Instruct them that they must come up with a way to use social media to spread the following message: **“Stay Switched On; Don’t risk it for the clicks”**.
- Explain the rules of the activity:
 - Each group must create a 3-minute presentation to share their ideas with the rest of the class.
 - Each group must consider the type of post, image or video they would create
 - The content should warn other young people about the dangers of behaving unsafely around the railway.
- Encourage students to be creative and think big, but remind them that their ideas need to be realistic and something that they or their friends would actually post or share. Warn students that they should also be prepared to explain why they think their campaign would work.
- Before they start, prompt the students to consider:
 - What are the key messages they want to share?
 - Are there any catchy phrases or hashtags they could use to grab attention and encourage safe behaviour?
 - What social media platform would they post this on? Why?
- Allow each group to present their ideas to the class. Each group has 3 minutes.
- Once presentations have concluded, engage in a group discussion. Your role is to guide this discussion, using the following prompts:
 - Who’s idea was effective in getting the message of rail safety across?
 - What did the groups like about each others’ ideas?
 - Is there anything that a group presented that seemed unlikely to be effective?
 - What visuals or images would be successful in helping each team’s message stand out and be memorable on social media?
 - How would they measure the success of their campaigns? What outcomes would show it’s making a difference?
 - Did any of the campaigns tackle issues around peer pressure to promote safer behaviour around the railway?
 - What tone – serious, humorous, or inspiring – would work best for the audience, and why?
- Conclude by reinforcing the importance of staying safe around the railway and thinking about this lesson and its learnings before creating social media content around the railway.

Additional activities

[Explore the Living Switched On resources](#) on the Switched On website, for more rail safety activities to complete with pupils in the classroom.

Looking for more resources that tackle topics of peer pressure around the rail environment? Try the Switched On [Track Back resource](#), which uses a set of high impact photographs, role-play activities and discussion to explore the behaviours of young people’s peers and analyse how attitudes to risks may change for the better and for the worse.

