

What Is S.O.S. and Is Not

The Safe Online Standards (S.O.S.) help youth, parents and caregivers, educators, healthcare providers and advertisers navigate the opportunities and challenges of social media. It's a powerful guide but not a perfect one. Knowing what S.O.S. can and can't do helps you use it wisely and get the most value from it.

S.O.S. IS...

A clear, easy-to-use rating system – Simplifies complex platform policies and products into an understandable format so people can quickly see how platforms perform up when it comes to youth well-being, safety and mental health.

A window into platform priorities – Highlights whether platforms provide tools such as filtering, reporting, screen-time limits, and privacy safeguards.

Grounded in both expertise and lived experience – Built with insights from youth, educators, caregivers, and professionals to ensure credibility and relevance.

A guide for thoughtful decision-making – Empowers families, schools, and young people to choose digital spaces that align with their values, not just popularity.

S.O.S. IS NOT...

The single solution to all online risks – There's no one fix for digital well-being. S.O.S. works best when paired with open conversations, informed choices, and trusted support.

A guarantee of complete safety – All platforms, even platforms with a blue shield rating carry risk. Safety depends on evolving features, user behavior, and context.

A mandate for platforms – S.O.S. isn't law. It's a voluntary rating system that helps users and the public better understand what features promote safety, youth well-being, and how to develop better products for users.

A replacement for parenting or mentorship – S.O.S. supports, not substitutes, the role of caring adults. The ratings can offer a starting point for conversations about online safety, mental health, and wellbeing, and strengthening connections between youth and people who care about them.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Every online platform carries risks. The S.O.S. ratings are intended to guide families toward safer choices, initiate important conversations, and support youth mental health and suicide prevention. While these ratings highlight how well platforms perform and meet safety and well-being standards, they do not address every possible issue young people might face. Parental involvement, open communication, and ongoing awareness remain essential, even for platforms with the highest safety ratings. This is version 1.0 of the S.O.S. Ratings and will evolve with new insights and user feedback.