



## Sample Newsletter

### Making Online Spaces Safer for Youth

---

#### What Is S.O.S.?

The Safe Online Standards (S.O.S.) is a safety initiative that evaluates how well online platforms protect teens. It focuses on mental health, digital well-being, and preventing harm. S.O.S. is shaped by the voices of teens, parents, clinicians, and global experts, making it both expert-led and community-informed. More than just recommendations, S.O.S. sets clear standards for what it means to be safer online today and calls on technology companies to meet those expectations.

Commented [1]: repetitive

#### Why S.O.S. Is Important?

Families often struggle to find trustworthy guidance on what makes a tech platform safe for young people to use. S.O.S. offers a clear set of ratings to show how well platforms meet young people's needs and where risks remain. While no platform is completely safe or risk-free, SOS empowers families and professionals to make informed choices by defining clear standards and showing how platforms measure up.

#### Key Features and Benefits

**S.O.S.** was built to be practical, supportive, and grounded in what matters most to families:

**Youth-Centered:** Focuses on mental health, privacy, and well-being, including suicide prevention.

**Easy to Use:** Helps families, educators, and healthcare providers understand platform safety through a simple rating scale.

**Actionable:** Provides clear steps and recommendations for safer use of digital platforms.

**Collaborative:** Developed with input from youth, parents, researchers, and mental health experts.

#### The S.O.S. Rating

**S.O.S.** includes 24 standards and 160 measurable sub-standards, organized into 5 focus areas for how the platforms perform:

**Policies:** Define acceptable behavior, consequences, and enforcement.

**Governance & Transparency:** Promote accountability, external oversight, and regular data reporting.

**Functionality:** Offer tools such as privacy settings, time limits, and reporting systems.

**Content:** Employ effective moderation processes, safeguards against misinformation, and emotional impact.

**Digital Literacy & Well-Being:** Encourage responsible use, balance screen time, and build user awareness.






## Safe Online Standards

IMPROVING DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH

### The S.O.S. Icons

SOS rates digital platforms using a visual icon, and employs color-coded levels to make ratings easy to understand:

-  Platforms in this category demonstrate alignment with SOS standards, featuring transparent policies, safety tools, and thoughtful design. **However, platforms receiving this rating can still carry risk.**
-  Caution: These platforms include some safety features, although they may be limited, inconsistent, or difficult to access. Regular parental and caregiver oversight is recommended.
-  Warning: Platforms rated as a warning lack adequate protection, exposing users to risks such as data misuse, potentially harmful content, or unmoderated interactions.

***It is important to note that even the highest S.O.S. rating does not guarantee a platform is completely free of risk.***

### Current Platform Participation

Major platforms, including Meta and TikTok, have voluntarily participated in the S.O.S. evaluation process. Their results highlight both strengths and opportunities for improvement, and more companies will be reviewed soon.

### Get Involved

To learn more about the SOS framework or to access platform ratings, please visit the S.O.S. [website](#).

**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.