

ONLINE FRIENDS AND STRANGERS



Lesson plan

 **Topic:** Online friends and strangers

 **Target age group:** Years 4-5

 **Lesson duration:** 20-40 minutes

 **Recommended teaching approach:**

1. Whole class takes part in the virtual classroom event.
 2. Use the teaching notes to reinforce key messages and generate deeper discussion.
 3. Students complete the personal reflection activity.
-

 **Activity purpose:**

By the end of the learning students will be able to:

- identify and establish personal online safety boundaries
 - develop skills to identify problematic situations which may impact their online safety
 - consider appropriate help seeking and reporting strategies for dealing with unsafe situations online
-

 **Key words:**

- respectful online relationships
 - dealing with unwanted/unsafe contact, grooming
-

 **Australian Curriculum links:**

This presentation will address Australian Curriculum Health and Physical Education and Digital Technologies outcomes including:

- practise skills to establish and maintain relationships (ACCPPS055)
- plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACCPS054)

- plan, create and communicate ideas and information including collaboratively online, applying agreed ethical, social and technical protocols (ACTDIP022)

It also addresses elements of the Personal and Social General Capabilities including:

- become confident, resilient and adaptable
- understanding relationships

Story synopsis

This story follows the experiences of a young student, Abigail, who has made friends with someone she met online. Abigail has created an account on the popular (fictional) app TikTakTake. It's fun and exciting to sing along to songs she knows. One day she accepts a friend request from Lou, who she has never met face-to-face. The two become friends online but Abigail begins to question Lou's behaviour. This story explores strategies Abigail can use to help manage a situation in which an online friendship becomes unsafe or worrying.

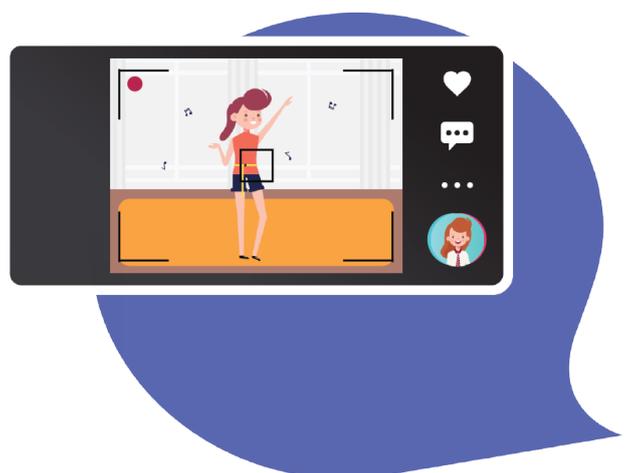
Teaching notes for slides

During this lesson your students may share their own experiences of creepy messages, grooming situations, solicitation or even unwanted sexual messages. If this type of discussion takes place it is important to emphasise it is not the student's fault and suggest appropriate support. It is also important to discuss these situations in the context of lessons on body ownership and personal safety.

Ways to safely communicate online

Some of the ways young people safely communicate with friends online is:

- sharing funny pictures
- inviting friends to events
- playing games together
- creating videos
- sharing ideas or news articles



Discussion question: How do you communicate online?

27% of kids aged 8-13 years old have used the internet to chat to someone they did not know. Source: State of play – youth, kids and digital dangers, eSafety Commissioner, 2018.

Find out more about the online experiences of young people:

esafety.gov.au/about-the-office/research-library

Discussion question: Is it ok to chat to someone you haven't met in person?

Connecting with people online that you know in real life is usually the safest option — however if you do talk to strangers or 'online friends' it's important to have the skills to quickly assess when you could be in danger.

Sharing images safely

Sharing photos — even silly photos with friends — can be lots of fun but it's important to consider your safety before you do. Some questions to ask yourself before you share an photo with a friend online:

- Public vs private - does the photo share too much personal information?
- Community guidelines - does the photo meet the site's community guidelines?
- Safety – is it safe to send the photo?
- Consent – do I feel ok about sending the photo?

When someone asks you to share a photo of yourself, you can always say no. If a friend or stranger keeps asking you for your photo, talk to someone about what's happening. If someone asks you to send a photo of yourself in your swimwear or showing parts of your body which are normally private, this isn't safe, and you should tell someone straight away.

Handful of helpers

It's important to think about the supportive people you can turn to if something online makes you feel uncomfortable. When you're feeling upset it can be hard to figure out who to turn to — remember to choose helpers that you feel listen to you.

You might feel most comfortable sharing things with:

- a family member, like a parent, aunty or uncle or an older brother or sister
- a sport coach or music teacher
- a friend's mum or dad
- a favourite teacher at school
- a neighbour you trust

Talk to your support person regularly about what happens online. This can make it easier to go to them when something worrying happens.

Discussion question: Who would you turn to for help if you weren't sure an online friend was safe to talk to?



Signs that an online friendship isn't safe

Some of the signs that an online friendship isn't safe, and you should stop chatting include:

- asking a lot of personal questions soon after starting an online friendship
- asking you for favours and doing things in return
- wanting to keep the relationship secret
- contacting you frequently and in different ways, like texting, through Instagram or online chat services
- asking questions like “who else uses your computer?” or “which room is your computer located?”
- complimenting you on your appearance or body, or asking things like “have you ever been kissed?”
- insisting on meeting face-to-face
- offering gifts like an iTunes voucher or promising gifts in return for you doing things online

Setting up your apps for safety

You can make your apps more private and safer by changing the account settings. In the account settings, check:

- whether your profile is public or private
- who can see what you post
- who can contact you in the app

Getting help and support

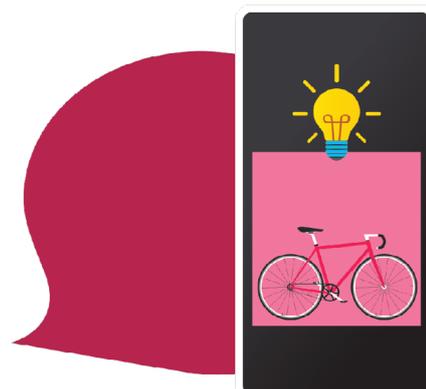
If you don't know who to talk to about something you've experienced online, you can call or start a web chat with a counsellor at Kids Helpline. You don't have to be sad to call them — you can call them anytime of the day or night.

Visit: kidshelpline.com.au

Phone: 1800 55 1800

What to do if someone online has sent or asked for an inappropriate message, photo or video

An inappropriate message contains content not suitable for the young person's age. It can also be any content that contains sexual messages, photos or videos.



If you know the person or they go to your school:

- ask the person to stop
- collect screenshots of the evidence
- report the message or content to the social media service
- talk to your parents, a trusted adult or a teacher

If you don't know the person:

- talk to your parents or a trusted adult, they can help you
- collect screenshots of the evidence, then block the contact
- report the message or content to the social media service
- consider reporting them to the police

If you are in immediate danger call Triple Zero (000). For non-emergency situations that still require a timely response, contact your local police station (131 444).

Police can help, even when you are online.

You can report online grooming to the AFP's Child Protection Operation via the [AFP website](#). Find out more about making online grooming reports by clicking on the Report Abuse button on the [ThinkUKnow](#) website.

Activity: What is a good online friend?

A good friend is someone who:

- would never send anything that would shock you or make you feel uncomfortable
- you can rely on and understands when you need time away
- plays fair and speaks to you with respect
- listens and helps without asking you to keep or tell secrets
- respects your feelings and listens when you say no or ask them not to do something

Personal reflection follow-up activity

It's a good idea to take some time to consider how you can stay safe when chatting online. Think about the following questions:

- What are the warning signs when someone is unsafe to talk to?
- Who would you go to for support?
- What action will you take to stay safe?

