

# Online friends and strangers



**Topic:** Online friends and strangers



**Target age group:** Years 3 to 6



**Lesson duration:** 40 minutes



## Description:

This resource teaches students how to have safe online friendships.

It follows the story of a young girl called Abigail who creates an account on the popular fictional app TikTakTake. She accepts a friend request from Lou, who she has never met face-to-face. But Abigail soon begins to question Lou's unusual behaviour.

This story explores Abigail's situation and what to do when an online friendship becomes unsafe or worrying.



## Recommended teaching approach:

1. Show the PowerPoint presentation to the class and work through the questions and answers together.
2. Reinforce key messages and generate deeper discussion.
3. Encourage the students to complete the personal reflection activity.



## Activity purpose:

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

- identify and establish personal online boundaries
- recognise unsafe situations online
- develop help seeking and reporting strategies.



## Australian curriculum links

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

- 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 collaborating online and applying agreed ethical, social and technical protocols (ACTDIP022).

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

- become confident, resilient, and adaptable
- understand relationships.

## Teaching notes for slides

### Ways to communicate safely online

Young people can communicate safely online by:

- sharing funny pictures
- inviting others to face-to-face events
- playing games together
- creating and making videos
- sharing ideas, news articles or pictures.

**Discussion question:** How do you communicate online?

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

To find out more about the online experiences of young people visit [esafety.gov.au/about-us/research](https://esafety.gov.au/about-us/research)

**Discussion question:** Is it OK to chat to someone you have not met in person?

Students should avoid talking to strangers online and should only connect with people they have met face-to-face. It's important for students to be able to quickly assess whether someone is friendly or unsafe to talk to online.

**Discussion question:** Do you think accepting the friend request was a good idea?  
(Ask students to vote – they could hold up the number of their choice.)

1. Yesssss!
2. No Way!
3. BRB – I will just check with Mum.
4. Is this person dodgy?

## Sharing images safely

Sharing images or videos with friends, like silly pictures, can be lots of fun – but it's important to do it safely

### Student discussion:

Think about these questions before sharing an image or video of yourself online:

- Public or private – does it give away too much personal information?
- Community guidelines – would most people where you live think it's OK?
- Consent – do I feel OK about sending it?

When someone asks you to share an image or video of yourself, you have the right to say 'no'. If a friend or stranger keeps asking you for a picture, talk to a trusted adult about what is happening.

If someone asks you to send a photo of yourself in your swimwear or show parts of your body which are normally private, this isn't safe. You should tell someone you trust straight away.

**Discussion question:** Who would you ask for help if something like this happened?

### Handful of helpers

It's important for students to know who to speak to if something makes them feel uncomfortable online.

### Student discussion:

When you are feeling upset with something you have seen online, it can be hard to figure out who to speak to. It's important to find a someone who will listen to how you feel.

You might feel comfortable sharing how you feel with:

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

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

**Discussion question:** Who would you talk to if someone made you feel unsafe online?

## Signs that an online friendship isn't safe

There are some important signs that an online friendship isn't safe.

### Student discussion:

You should stop chatting online if someone is:

- asking a lot of personal questions just after starting an online friendship
- asking you for favours
- wanting to keep your friendship secret
- contacting you frequently using different platforms, like Instagram, online chat services or through text messages
- asking you things like, 'who else uses your computer?' or 'which room is your computer in?'
- complimenting you on your appearance or body, or asking things like, 'have you ever been kissed?'
- insisting on meeting offline
- offering to give you gifts if you do things online.

## Setting up your apps safely

There are ways of making online accounts private and safe.

### Student discussion:

Check your different account settings and ask:

- do I have a public or private profile?
- who can see what I post?
- who can contact me in the app?

Read the The eSafety Guide to find out more about different apps, games and social media, and how to protect your information.

## Getting help and support

If you don't know who to talk to about something you have experienced online, you can call or start a web chat with a counsellor at the Kids Helpline. You don't have to be sad to call them and you can contact them anytime of the day or night at [kidshelpline.com.au](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au).

### Student discussion:

What should you do if someone online sends you an inappropriate (nude or sexual) message, image or video which makes you feel uncomfortable? Or if someone asks you for a picture you do not feel comfortable taking or sharing?

**Scenario 1:** If you know the person or they go to your school

- Ask the person to stop.
- Report the messages to the social media service.
- Talk to your parents, a trusted adult or a teacher.

**Scenario 2:** If you don't know the person

- Talk to your parents or a trusted adult and decide what to do next.
- Report the messages to the social media service, game or app.
- Think about if you should report them to the police.

You can report inappropriate, harmful or criminal activities that happen online to the police at [accce.gov.au/report](https://accce.gov.au/report).

If you are in danger, ring Triple Zero (000).

## Activity: who is a good online friend?

A good friend is someone who:

- you can rely on
- would never send anything that would shock you or make you feel uncomfortable
- understands when you need time out
- plays fair and speaks to you with respect
- listens and helps you, but does not ask you to keep or tell them secrets
- respects your feelings and listens when you say 'no' or tell them to stop.

## Personal reflection follow-up activity

- What are the warning signs that someone is unsafe to talk to online?
- Who would you go to for help if you felt unsafe?
- What action could you take now to be prepared?