

# Online Grooming

*What parents need to know*

Grooming is when someone seeks to build an **emotional connection with a child** to gain their trust for sexual purposes. It happens both online and face to face.



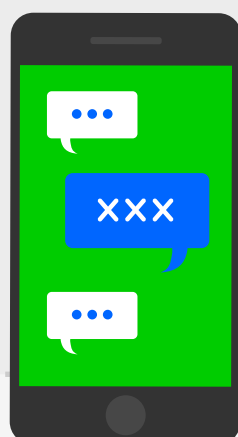
Children may often meet people through **social and gaming sites** that aren't who they say they are so it's important to discuss the risks with them.



*What is  
online grooming?*



Once groomers have gained a child's trust they **may encourage them to share** sexual images, or videos of themselves, live stream, or arrange to meet.



Groomers are **not always strangers** and sometimes children may not be aware that they are being groomed **believing they're in a relationship** with the person.



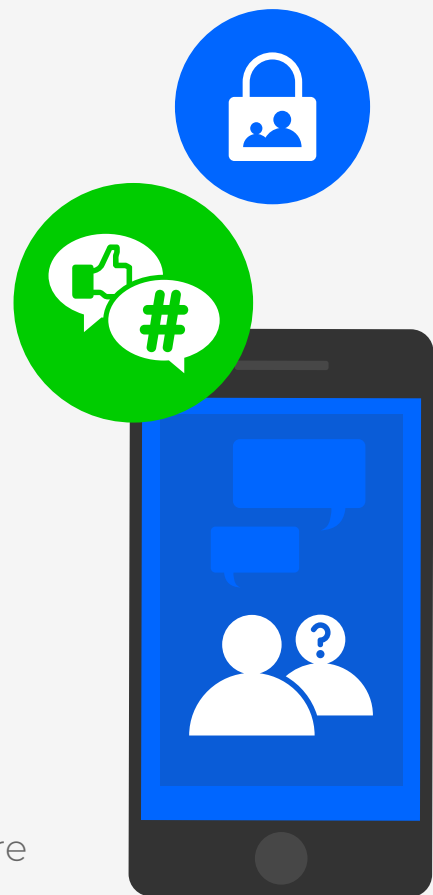
**internet  
matters.org**

# Ways to protect your child

## Talk about it

Although a tricky subject to talk about with your child it is important that you start a conversation

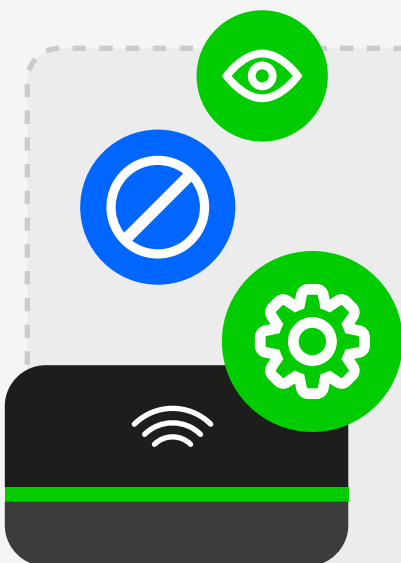
- Show them where to get help if they are concerned and to **talk to you or a trusted adult** for support
- **Spend time discussing** where they interact with friends online and how and what they share with others
- **Explain how easy it is to pretend** to be someone else online, and why an adult may wish to approach them
- Remind them that the people they have met online might feel like friends but they **may not be who they say they are**
- Discuss what **healthy and unhealthy relationships** look like to make them aware



## Tools to keep them safe

Encourage them to **make use of privacy settings on the social networks and platforms** they use so they stay in control of who can see their content.

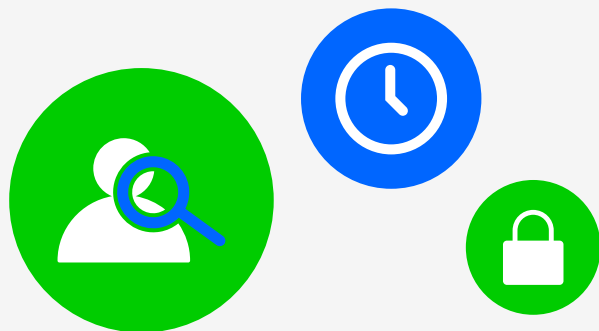
For younger children **use our parental control how-to-guides** to set the right controls across devices, platforms and internet connections.



## Spotting the signs

Recognising the signs of online grooming can be hard because it can happen at home and groomers often tell children not to talk to anyone about it.

There are a number of signs to be aware of (although a lot of them are quite common among teens), but look out for increased instances of:



- wanting to spend **more and more time** on the internet
- **being secretive** about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit
- **switching screens** when you come near the computer
- **possessing items** – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them
- **using sexual language** you wouldn't expect them to know
- becoming **emotionally volatile**

## Steps to take if it happens

If you are concerned that your child is being targeted by an online groomer here are a few actions you can take to protect your child:

- **Report it** to the authorities
- **Reassure them** it's not their fault
- **Seek support** from the National Crime Agency's CEOP command for support
- **Contact Childline** - **0800 1111** or the **NSPCC Helpline** on **0808 800 5000** for one-to-one support
- **Report any sexual abuse images** to the Internet Watch Foundation

