

# COVID-19: CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

COVID-19 Home

## SAY NO! A FOCUS ON CHILDREN

What are the main risks?

- Grooming
- Making explicit material (nude images and videos)
- Sexual coercion and extortion
- Sexting
- Bullying
- Accessing pornography and violent content online
- Games with gambling-like elements
- Costs of in-game spending
- Use of webcams

## WHAT HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CHANGED?

The global impact of COVID-19 means people are spending more time online. This includes both children and adults.

Adults working remotely are less able to spend time with their children, who are allowed greater unsupervised internet access. As a result, children are:

- more exposed to offenders through online gaming, the use of chat groups in apps, phishing attempts via email, unsolicited contact in social media and through less secure online educational applications;
- more inclined towards making explicit material to exchange with peers, eventually reaching child sex offenders;
- in some cases, becoming lonely and isolated, which offenders try to benefit from, connecting with them to produce explicit material or to arrange a meeting in real life.

## CHILDREN ARE AT HOME MIND THE ONLINE RISKS

Sexual coercion  
and extortion

Grooming

Making explicit  
material

Accessing  
pornography and  
violent content  
online

Sexting

Costs of in-game  
spending

Games with  
gambling-like  
elements

Bullying



## WHAT CAN I DO AS A PARENT?

While the majority of children can use the internet safely – staying in touch with their peers and studying – it's important to be aware of the risks they face when going online, such as grooming, sexual coercion and extortion, sexting, bullying or accessing harmful content.

By taking these steps and keeping an eye on what your child is doing online, you can reduce the risks.

## PREPARE

- › Talk to your children about online safety – help them learn to make good choices and stay alert, explain that the rules are to help them stay safe.
- › Have an open discussion about the risks of taking nude pictures and the impact it can have in their lives – once a file is shared, there is no control anymore over who can see it.
- › Agree on a timeframe for online and offline activities.
- › Encourage using devices in communal areas of the home – build an open, trusting environment.
- › Restrict the privacy settings of games and apps to control who can contact your child.
- › Restrict the use of webcams – unless it is for online learning or under your supervision.
- › Turn off geolocation data on their devices.
- › Instruct your child to use strong passwords – and to keep them private.

## MONITOR

- › Stay involved – get to know the apps, games and websites your child visits and make sure they are age-appropriate.
- › Use parental control filters – monitor internet use and protect children from harmful content.



## REACT

- › Report and block – unwanted requests from strangers.
- › Be alert to signs of distress – support your child without being judgemental and know where to get help if needed.
- › Call the police – if you think your child is at risk from a predator or crime.

International Edition

# COVID-19 Global online safety advice for parents and carers



eSafety Commissioner

In collaboration with  
EUROPOL

What can I do as a carer/teacher?

- › Engage with pupils online – allow them to speak confidentially to you.
- › Report any signs of abuse as you would do normally, through the appropriate channels.
- › Be aware of internet risks as you are also at risk of phishing and scams to collect your data and that of your students.



How do I talk to children about being safe online?

Those who want to harm you will first make friends with you and then make you afraid of something.

It is important to know what to do if anyone (whether a friend or a stranger) tries to make you do something you aren't comfortable with and to know that it is not your fault.

- › Don't post any personal information online – like your address, email address or mobile number.
- › Never give out your passwords for any reason.
- › Cover your webcam when not in use.
- › Keep your privacy settings as high as possible – ask a parent if you are unsure what to do.
- › Don't 'friend' people online that you have never met offline – if someone you don't know asks you to meet in person, speak to your parent or carer. Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are.
- › Be 'click smart'. Don't click on any links that come from unknown or unusual emails, or in messages from people you don't know.
- › Think carefully before uploading any videos or pictures of yourself, your family or home. Only share photos and videos that you wouldn't mind

Think carefully before uploading any videos or pictures of yourself, your family or home. Only share photos and videos that you wouldn't mind your friends and family seeing. Once these pictures are online, they can become accessible by anyone else online to download. They are not yours anymore.

**#SayNO!**

- If someone asks you to say or do things you don't want to.
- If someone threatens you with sharing your photos and/or videos if you don't do as they say.
- If someone asks you to keep your chat a secret.
- If someone reacts in a nasty way when you don't do what they want.
- If somebody asks to join your private chats/networks.
- Never webcam with a stranger with a broken webcam.

**EUROPOL**  
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Know what to do: If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: [say no](#), leave the website or app and tell a trusted adult immediately. Don't delete anything until you've shared it with an adult.

Do you have a sexual interest in children?

Hotlines are available for individuals with a sexual interest in children to help them control their fantasies from becoming a destructive reality.

Visit <http://helplinks.eu> to access the help resources in your country. Information on the visitors to this domain or the separate individual services it links to will never become part of a police investigati



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