

Appendix 8

How can you protect yourself online?

Keep control of what and with whom you share your private information online.

Only share photos and videos that you wouldn't mind your friends and family seeing.

If somebody asks you to send them a sexual photo or to record a video with sexual content, ask yourself: Why does this person want me to do it? What could they do with that photo or video once I send it to them? Could this person use this material to take advantage of me in any way?

It is perfectly fine to say NO in such circumstances. You and your comfort are important:

If it's a friend you know very well, they should understand that you are not happy about doing things you are uncomfortable with. If not, maybe they are not as good of a friend as you thought.

If it's a person you only know online, be more cautious. Can you verify the identity of that person? Talk about it with a trusted person in real life, seek advice.

Keep your private stuff private

- Don't share your personal information – phone number, address or school – with someone you have only met online. If in doubt, ask yourself, what do they need it for?
- Always set the privacy settings of your social media accounts to protect your private data.

How do I look?

Be aware of your online presence

Abusers look for young people who use a sexualised username, post sexualised pictures or talk about sex online. Think about how your online profile makes you appear to others.

Want to meet up? Always put your safety first

It is a bad idea to share your location or meet up with someone you have only met online. But if you do so, stay safe: meet in a public place and take a trusted adult with you.

A 'friend of a friend'?

To be sure, ask your friend

It's easy for anyone to post fake photos and stream a fake video over a webcam. If they claim to be a 'friend of a friend', ask your friend if they have met them in person. Anyone can learn about you and your friends from information that they find online.

Finally... Just between us?

Make sure you don't expose yourself (or your privacy)

If you send sexual photos of yourself to someone online or do embarrassing things in front of a webcam (that may be recording without your knowledge) you run the risk of those images being shared anywhere and with anyone. Do you want that to happen?

More information is available:

www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/public-awareness-and-prevention-guides/online-sexual-coercion-and-extortion-crime