

Grooming Online

Ensuring the safety of children and young people online is one of the most significant issues facing parents, carers and educators today. Predators are sophisticated and utilise whatever means at their disposal to gain the trust of vulnerable children and young people and lure them to various harms. In order to combat this, it is essential to be aware of the hidden dangers of being online.

Young people are currently being targeted for sexual exploitation, radicalisation, bullying, money laundering, drug running, scams, terrorist activities, activism and many more illegal and harmful activities.

This training is designed to simply assist parents, carers and educators to support children and young people as they learn about the subtle and subversive ways in which perpetrators can easily gain their trust and do harm.

The following key terms are used throughout:

E.g. Target refers to a child, young person or adult who predators test for vulnerabilities in order to harm them.

Predator refers to the conduct of an online person who operates in a predatory manner with the aim to perpetrate harm against children and young people. They aim to coerce children and young people to behave in ways they wouldn't offline.

Educational support for teachers and parents.

1. An example animation of someone grooming a young person for money laundering.
2. Grooming example of a 10 yr olds story with extra commentary from the predator and examples of the symbols predators use online to identify their preferences when targeting young people.
3. Teachers/Parents notes to encourage discussion and further understanding of grooming.



Known symbols used by paedophiles online as identified by the FBI.

Step 1 Contact

Contact can be made anywhere that chat takes place online. This includes via: social media, gaming sites, photo sharing, YouTube and 100's of over sites. Often predators will pretend to be a friend of a friend or find a similar interest, such as games, to initiate the contact.

Online interactions are completely different to friendships offline. No one knows how old the person is, or if they are male or female. You don't know if you are talking to a computer chat app that someone has made to go looking for people to start chatting with. You don't have the same senses online that you have offline. These senses and your intuition offline are essential to let you know if you feel good about the person, if you feel safe with them or if you sense something isn't quite right. It is impossible to tap into these senses online. It is also impossible to know if you are a similar age or if they are male or female. Online meetings are not the same as offline meetings. Honesty and a sense of safety is especially difficult to glean when you are online.

Predators are known to use bots (robots programed to run automatically across the web to complete specified tasks such as post to a public profile) to scan the internet looking for public profiles to send a message and initiate a chat. It can be difficult to know if you are responding to a bot or a real person. When a person responds to the bot, the predator can then take over and chat to the target. Bots are to scan and contact thousands of profiles quickly.

How to protect children online

Ensure all social media and gaming profiles are private. Most social media profiles are public until they are turned to private.

Where possible supervise any open forum chat. Often young people join chat rooms to get help with games, cheat sheets and computer settings. There are thousands of open forums online for gamers and interest groups.

Suggested topics for discussion:

1. Identify the chat sites the child or young person is familiar with using.
2. Identify any gaming sites that allow multiplayer options. (Predators often approach children here.)
3. Identify the difference between public and private profiles.

This varies according to the site, however public profiles can be viewed by anyone allowing everyone to see personal details. Private profiles keep posts and details available to only those that have been befriended. Some sites allow for posts to be marked public or private.

4. Identify the setting to turn a profile setting to private.

Profile settings differ according to the site the young person is on. Each gaming and social media site has a help section to guide you on how to turn the settings to private.



What privacy and security settings are set to the most secure and private? *Only me* important to look for and ensure that they are

- What personal details are shared by the app, game or website. Eg. Birthdays, name, address, school information should not be public.
- Chat settings turned off or restricted to contacts only.
- Restrict posts to friends only.
- Check for advertising settings.
- Check if strangers can make contact or send gifts in games.
- Check locations services. Some apps may have this option even when location is not relevant to the app.
- Check for parental controls. Some apps may include time controls.
- Encourage children to use strong passwords on their game and social media accounts.
- Check for password lock on settings to ensure children can't change them.

Step 2
We r
friends

At this stage of the online contact, information is shared and the predator will like everything the young person likes. They will also try to find out information about them and appear to support them in everything they say. The idea is to create the perception of being likeminded and supportive.

Suggested topics for discussion:

Step 3
Checklist

When a predator is targeting someone their success relies on gaining the trust of the target and not getting caught.

Suggested topics for discussion:



More Online Safety Education
<https://theonliners.com.au/>

For more information on grooming.
<http://www.pro360duction.com.au/landscape>

