



STUDENTS

For secondary school students

Support for you to be safe on social media

This guide provides tips to help you be safe on social media and links to advice about what to do if you need support.

How to have positive and safe experiences online

- **Know where to get information:** The eSafety Commissioner provides [lots of useful information to help you stay safe online](#) - topics include dating and relationships, navigating difficult situations, protecting yourself online, fake news and more.
- **Balance your online and offline worlds:** It can be easy to spend a lot of time online, but being aware of how often and why you go online can help you work out a healthier and happier balance with time offline. Have a look at [Balancing your time online](#).
- **Control your digital footprint:** The internet remembers more about you than you might expect. It leaves a trail of data, known as your digital footprint. The good news is, there are ways to manage your digital footprint. Check out [Digital footprint](#) for tips to manage yours.
- **Reduce the pressure:** Social media can be a great way to stay in touch with friends, but sometimes it can also cause us to compare our lives to others or feel like we need to be constantly connected. The pressures from social media are very real and they have consequences for all of us. Have a look at [Pressures from social media](#) for tips.
- **Be an upstander:** While it can be hard to see someone being bullied in person or online, it's even harder to be the person being bullied. We can all do something to help by being upstanders. An upstander is someone who chooses to support a person who is being abused or harmed. It might seem daunting but there are safe ways to be an upstander online and face-to-face. Look at [i-have-your-back](#) to learn more.
- **Help for spending too much time online:** Is your online behaviour affecting you offline? If the way we're using social media is having bad effects on our health and relationships, we need to stop and think about what's going on. Check out: [Real friends](#).

What to do if you are involved in an unsafe experience online

Things can happen online that make us feel uncomfortable or unsafe. This could be because of bullying, seeing disturbing or violent content, having photos shared without your consent, receiving unwanted nudes or even being contacted by a stranger that is making you feel uncomfortable. There are ways to get help.

You are not on your own. There is always someone who can help. An adult you trust, like a family member or teacher, can give you a fresh point of view, as well as helping you decide what to do and how to deal with any impacts. Try to stay connected with your support person while you handle the situation.

Being bullied online

- **Help if you're being bullied online:** No one should have to deal with cyberbullying, but knowing the most effective ways to stop it will help. Cyberbullying is bullying using digital technologies like mobile phones, email and social media tools. You can learn more about it here: [Cyberbullying](#); and learn what to do if you experience [Bullying online](#).
- **What to do if you are called a bully:** If you are engaged in bullying behaviour, it is important that you think about how you can change your behaviour. You can also take steps to make sure it doesn't happen again. If you've been called out, look at [I've been called out for being a bully](#) | eSafety Commissioner for advice.

Feeling unsafe online

- **Get help if someone makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe:** Meeting people, making new friends and staying in touch with others you already know is common on apps, sites and games. Whoever you connect with, it's important to know how to get help if they make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Read more about what to do at [Unsafe contact and 'grooming'](#)
- **If someone has shared or is threatening to share nude images of you:** Even if you send someone an intimate image or video of you, or agree to them taking one, that doesn't mean they're allowed to share it with anyone else. Find out what you should do here: [My nudes have been shared](#) or [Someone is threatening to share my nudes](#).

Reporting harmful content

- **Reporting online harm:** The eSafety Commissioner can help you to remove serious online abuse, and illegal and restricted online content, including cyberbullying that is likely to harm the physical or mental health of the person targeted. Go to [Report online harm](#) to learn more about what can be reported, how to report it and what evidence to save and to make a report.
- **Disturbing content:** Sometimes you come across something you'd rather not see when you're online. It can include content that's disturbing or distressing because it shows a seriously violent or offensive event. You can do something about it. [Disturbing content](#).

Where to go if you or a friend need further support

- Contact 000 for urgent assistance
- Talk to someone at your school or a trusted adult outside of school
- Contact the [eSafety Commissioner](#) for advice or to report online abuse
- headspace Counselling: Victorian Government secondary school students can access counselling services from headspace. eheadspace: 1800 650 890 [headspace.org.au/eheadspace](#)
- Visit your local GP if you need some mental health support
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 [kidshelpline.com.au](#)
- Lifeline: 13 11 14 [lifeline.org.au](#)
- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636 [beyondblue.org.au](#)