



JACK

11:15 PM

Show me how much you love
chatting to me 📱😏

✓ Seen by Emily999

Don't be exposed

Information for parents and carers

Online grooming

Online grooming is a type of child abuse and exploitation. It refers to the deliberate actions taken by an adult to form a trusting relationship with a child with the intent of later facilitating sexual contact.

Children can very easily become victims of abuse online through social media platforms, online gaming, private messaging, and email. This can happen on any digital device including mobile phones, computers, tablets and games consoles.

Any child can be a victim of online grooming and exploitation.

Criminals target children online, often posing as children their own age and manipulating them. Sexually explicit messages, images and videos may be exchanged, and the offender may entice the child by sending them gifts or money.

The grooming process can take anything from a matter of hours to years.

Offenders will contact dozens of young people, and the communication can quickly become sexually explicit. Offenders will take a response to an online message as an opportunity to exploit children, sexually and criminally.

They may be asked to hand over money and threatened with sharing of sexual pictures, videos, or information if they do not do so. This is known as sextortion – young people aged between 15 to 17 are especially at risk of sextortion.

A recent report from the NPCC indicated that one fifth of girls aged 11-16 and one third aged 17-21 have received unwanted sexual images online.

Signs to look out for

- secretive behaviour, including about what they are doing online
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- going to unusual places to meet friends
- having new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- having access to drugs and alcohol



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What parents can do

- understand the risks associated with your child being online and talk to them about these risks
- talk to your child about the potential risks of sharing images online and make sure you both know how to remove content should you need to
- talk to your child about the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships
- be aware of the tell-tale signs that may indicate your child is being sexually exploited
- have an agreement in place and set boundaries for your child's internet use
- check age ratings on games, apps, films and social networks your child uses
- consider using parental controls on your home network and devices including games consoles and phones

Online Safety Act

Since the introduction of the Online Safety Act 2023, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence to:

- share unsolicited intimate images or film online, also known as 'cyberflashing'.
- share or threaten to share non-consensual intimate images or film of another person online, also known as 'revenge porn'.

These offences carry a sentence of up to two years in prison.

Under the Criminal Justice Act 1998 and Protection of Children Act 1978, possession of an indecent image of a child, and taking, making, and sharing an indecent image of a child under 18 are offences that carry a prison sentence of up to 10 years.

Advice and help

If you discover that your child or a child you know is being groomed, report it to the police on **101** or **999** in an **emergency**.

We know that not everyone feels able to report directly to the police, so you can report anonymously to CrimeStoppers online or by telephone and pass on what you know – **crimestoppers-uk.org** or **0800 555 111**.

For more advice and to report any concerns:

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre:
ceopeducation.co.uk
- NSPCC: **nspcc.org.uk**
- Say Something and runaway 24-hour helpline: **116 000**
- Report remove:
childline.org.uk/report-remove
- Local authority social care services

Sexting

It's illegal for anyone to have, share or make sexual images or videos of other people under 18.

This includes personal images or videos made by under 18s and shared with each other. This is sometimes called 'sexting'.

It's not always in the public interest to prosecute in these cases. The police will decide whether to take action depending on things like evidence of exploitation or grooming.



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