



# Online safety tips for children and young people

Including how to spot grooming and what to do about it.

## **Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's job – and that includes knowing the warning signs of unsafe behaviour online or in real life.**

Whether you're chatting with friends, gaming, or using social media, it's important to know what grooming is and how to protect yourself.

### **What is grooming?**

Grooming is when an adult builds a relationship with a child or young person in order to manipulate, exploit or abuse them. It often starts with kindness and attention, but it can lead to unsafe or illegal behaviour – including sexual abuse.

Grooming can happen online through games, apps or social media, or in person. The person grooming might try to build trust with the child, as well as their family or carers.

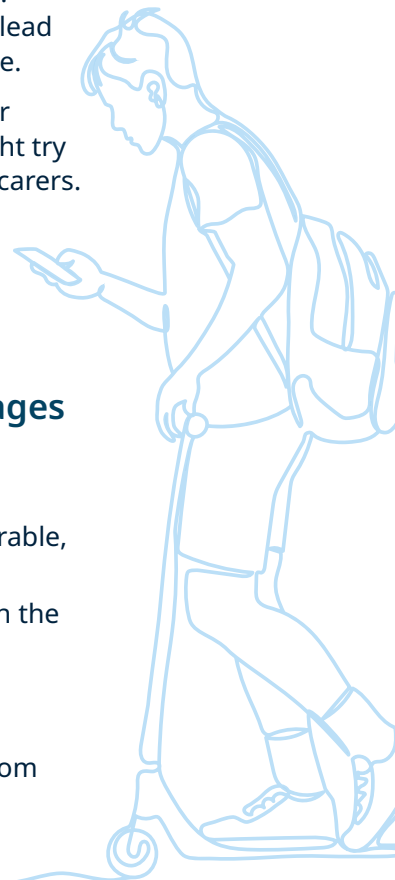
Grooming is a crime in Tasmania and across Australia. It includes things like exposing children to sexual material or encouraging inappropriate contact.

### **How grooming happens – 6 warning stages**

Groomers often follow a pattern to gain control.

It might look like:

- **targeting** – identifying children who may be vulnerable, online or offline
- **gaining trust** – building a friendly relationship with the child (and sometimes their family)
- **fulfilling a need** – offering attention, gifts, money, or favours
- **isolating the child** – trying to separate the child from friends or family
- **sexualising the relationship** – introducing sexual content or conversation
- **maintaining control** – using secrets, guilt, threats, or shame to stop the child from speaking up.





## What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse is when someone forces, tricks, or pressures a child or young person into sexual activities.

It can include touching, showing private body parts, talking about sex, or making a child look at or create sexual content.

It's important to know:

- Sexual abuse can happen in person or online.
- The person responsible might be someone the child knows or trusts – not just strangers.
- It is never the child's fault – the adult is always responsible for their actions.
- Sexual abuse is against the law and should always be reported.

If anyone makes you feel unsafe, confused, or uncomfortable about your body or private parts – even if they say it's a 'game' or a 'secret' – that is **not okay**. You have the right to be safe and respected.

## Signs an adult's behaviour isn't okay

Watch out for adults who:

- want to spend a lot of alone time with a child or young person without a clear reason
- send private messages, photos, or videos to a child or young person on apps or social media
- give gifts or money without parents knowing
- insist on secrecy or ask the child or young person to keep things 'just between us'
- offer to transport a child or young person without the knowledge or permission of their carer.

## What should you do if something doesn't feel right?

If you or someone you know is being contacted in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, don't keep it a secret.

**Talk to someone you trust or report it.**

**Here's what you can do:**

- talk to an adult you trust – like a parent, teacher, or school counsellor
- contact **Strong Families Safe Kids** on **1800 000 123**
- call the Tasmania Police **Police Assistance Line** on **131 444** (non-urgent)
- visit **crimestopperstas.com.au** or call **1800 333 000** if you'd like to make a report anonymously
- **if it is an emergency** – the incident is happening now, the suspect is still at the scene, or someone is injured or in danger – always **call 000 (Triple Zero)**.

## What is sextortion?

Sextortion is when someone threatens to share a sexual image or video of you unless you give them money, more images, or do something else you don't want to do.

This can happen online, often through:

- social media
- messaging apps
- gaming platforms
- video calls.

People who do this might pretend to be someone your age or someone you trust.

They may flirt, ask for nudes, or send sexual content — and then threaten you after you share something.

Remember: It's never your fault. The person blackmailing you is doing something illegal. You are not alone, and help is available.

## What should you do if someone is threatening you?

Don't respond to the threats. Don't send any more images or money.

Instead:

- stop all contact and block the person on all platforms
- take screenshots or save any messages, usernames, or profiles as evidence.
- **Report it immediately:**
  - › in an emergency, call **000** (Triple Zero)
  - › call the Police Assistance line on **131 444**
  - › visit the eSafety Commissioner website at [esafety.gov.au/report](https://esafety.gov.au/report)
  - › talk to a trusted adult – like a parent, teacher, or school counsellor.

You don't have to go through it alone.

## Important to know

- If you've shared an image and feel scared, ashamed or worried – you are not in trouble. The law protects young people and support is available.
- The eSafety Commissioner can help remove nude images from the internet and stop them from being shared.
- You're not alone. Many young people have been targeted by sextortion scams. Speaking up is the bravest and safest thing you can do.

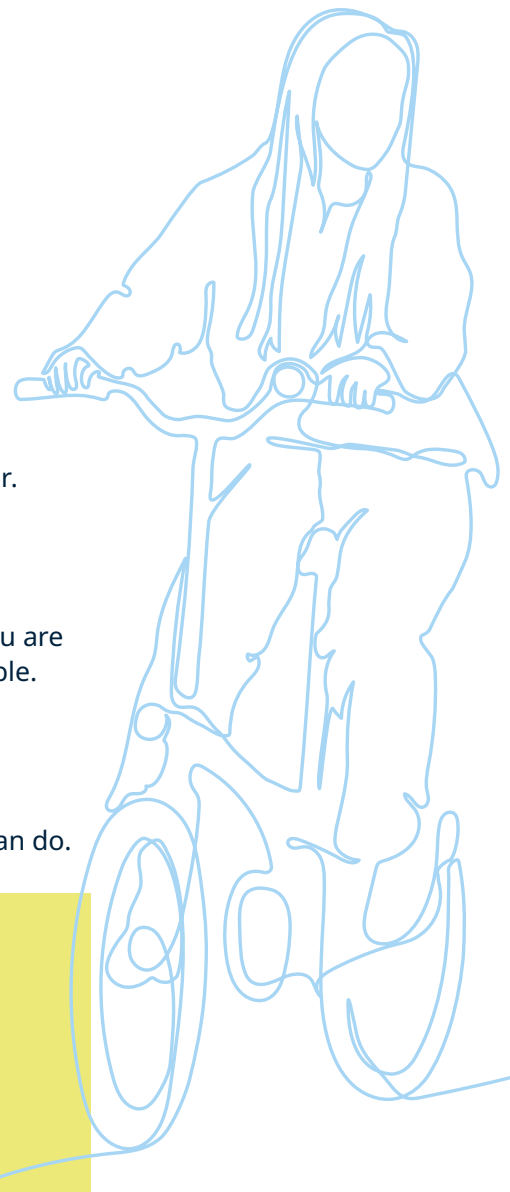
## If something feels wrong – trust yourself

If someone online is:

- asking for personal information or pictures
- making threats or blackmailing you
- sending sexual messages or images
- making you feel scared, confused or pressured...

...it's okay to say no, block them, and talk to someone you trust.

**You don't have to deal with it alone.**



## How to stay safe online

The internet is a great place to connect, create, learn and have fun – but just like in real life, it's important to look after yourself and your mates.

### Here are some smart tips to help you stay safe online:

- **Protect your personal info** – don't share your full name, address, school, phone number or photos with people you don't know in real life.
- **Check your privacy settings** – keep your accounts set to private and only accept friend or follow requests from people you know and trust.
- **Think before you post or share** – if you wouldn't say it or show it in real life, don't post it. Once something is online, it can be hard to take back.
- **Be kind and respectful** – don't say or do anything online that could hurt someone else. If you see bullying, report it and support the person being targeted.
- **Watch out for red flags** – be cautious if someone:
  - › asks you to keep secrets
  - › wants private pics or videos
  - › tries to move conversations to another app
  - › makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- **Keep your passwords private** – use strong passwords and don't share them – not even with your friends.
- **Pause before you click** – don't click on strange links or open messages from people you don't know. They could be scams or contain viruses.

## What to do if you suspect grooming

**If you are concerned about an inappropriate relationship between an adult and a child, or suspect a child is being groomed:**

- report it to the **Tasmanian Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line** on 1800 000 123
- call the **Police Assistance Line** on 131 444 at any time and provide details of the incident
- visit **crimestopperstas.com.au** or call 1800 333 000 or if you'd like to make a report anonymously
- visit the **Tell Someone** website – [tellsomeone.tas.gov.au](https://tellsomeone.tas.gov.au) – for information about spotting the signs of child sexual abuse
- **If it is an emergency** – the incident is happening now, the suspect is still at the scene, or someone is injured or in danger – always call **000 (Triple Zero)**.

## Find out more

- More information about grooming and how to recognise inappropriate behaviour between adults and children and young people is available from the Tasmania Police website: [police.tas.gov.au/what-we-do/family-and-sexual-violence/grooming](https://police.tas.gov.au/what-we-do/family-and-sexual-violence/grooming).
- You can also visit the [keepingchildrensafe.tas.gov.au](https://keepingchildrensafe.tas.gov.au) website for information, help and support – or to report child safety concerns.