A TEENAGER'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING INTERNET SAFETY

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What is Internet Safety?

Internet safety is about protecting yourself online. This means being careful with what you share, who you talk to and the websites, games or apps you use.

- Keep your personal information private. Don't share your full name, address, phone number school name or passwords with people you don't know well or don't trust.
- Think before you post. If you wouldn't say it out loud in a crowded room, it's probably not safe to share online.
- Be aware of online friends. Not everyone online is who they say they are. Stick to chatting with people you know in real life.

Understanding Group Chats (Like WhatsApp or Snapchat)

Group chats can be fun for talking to friends but they can also be tricky.

- Think Before You Send: Only send messages or pictures that you'd be okay with everyone seeing. Don't share anything private or embarrassing.

- Know When to Leave: If people in the group are being mean or if you feel uncomfortable, it's okay to leave the group.

- Be Aware of Bullying: Bullying can happen online too. If someone is making fun of you or being mean repeatedly, tell your parents.

Group Chat Etiquette: How to Be a Good Friend Online

Group chats can be fun, but there are some important rules to remember so that everyone feels safe and respected.

- **Don't Spam the Chat:** Sending too many messages in a row may annoy people.
- **Respect People's Privacy:** Don't share private things (like secrets or photos) about other people without asking them first.
- **Be Kind and Positive:** If someone makes a mistake, don't make fun of them.
- **Watch Out for Jokes:** Sometimes jokes can be misunderstood online. If you think a joke could hurt someone's feelings, it's better not to say it.

Hidden Social Rules in Group Chats

Group chats have "hidden" social rules, which are not always obvious. Here are some things to look out for:

- **Don't Ignore Messages:** If someone asks a question or tries to talk to you, it can hurt their feelings if you don't reply at all. Try to answer when you can.
- **Include Everyone:** Don't leave people out of conversations on purpose or make inside jokes that only a few people understand.
- **Know When to End a Chat:** If the conversation has slowed down, it's okay to stop chatting. Sometimes people need breaks!
- **Don't Make Group Decisions Alone:** If you want to change the group name or picture, ask the group first. Don't make big changes without asking.

What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is when someone repeatedly tries to hurt, embarrass or threaten you online. This could be through mean messages, sharing private photos, or spreading rumors.

- What to Do if You Are Being Cyberbullied:
  - Tell an adult you trust.
  - Block the person bullying you.
  - Report the behavior to the app or website.

CYBER BULLYING

Subtle Ways People Can Cyberbully in Group Chats

Cyberbullying isn't always obvious. Here are some sneaky or subtle ways people might bully online:

- **Leaving Someone Out On Purpose:** Creating a new group chat without inviting certain people just to exclude them.
- **Ignoring:** Intentionally ignoring someone's messages or pretending they aren't there.
- **Subtle Insults or "Jokes":** Saying things like "Joking" or "No offence" after a mean comment or using sarcasm to make someone feel bad.
- **Sharing "Funny" Pictures or Memes:** Posting edited pictures or memes that make fun of someone without their permission.
- **Gossip or Rumors:** Spreading lies or talking about someone behind their back in a group chat.

If you see any of these happening, or if it happens to you, it's important to tell your parents and consider leaving the chat.

Using Snapchat, WhatsApp, and Online Games (Like Roblox) Safely

- Snapchat: Only add friends you know in real life. Remember that even though Snaps disappear, people can still screenshot them.
- WhatsApp: Make sure your group settings only allow people you know to add you. Leave groups where people are being unkind or making you feel uncomfortable.
- Roblox: Play games with friends you know. Don't share your account information, and report players who are mean or make you feel unsafe.

What is an Intimate Image?

An intimate image is a picture or video that shows someone's private parts (like a bum, chest etc). <u>These images are very private and personal.</u>

Why Sharing Intimate Images is Illegal and Unsafe

- **It Can Be Against the Law:** Sharing intimate images of yourself or others, especially if you are under 18, is illegal. Even if the person in the image agrees, sharing it can still be against the law.

- **It Can Hurt People:** Sharing these images can cause pain, embarrassment and even fear for the person in the image. It can damage friendships and trust.

- **It Can Have Serious Consequences:** Once an image is shared, it can spread quickly. Even if you delete it, other people might still have it. You could get into trouble at school or even with the guardai.

If someone asks you to share an intimate image or pressures you to send one, you have every right to say no. You should also tell your parents.

What to Do if Someone Asks You for an Intimate Image

- **Say No Firmly:** You don't have to give any reasons. Just say, "No, I'm not comfortable with that."
- **Tell a Trusted Adult:** This could be a parent or teacher. They can help you handle the situation.
- **Block the Person:** If someone keeps asking you for these kinds of images, block them and report them to the app or website e.g. snapchat, Roblox, What's app.

BANNED

BLOCKED
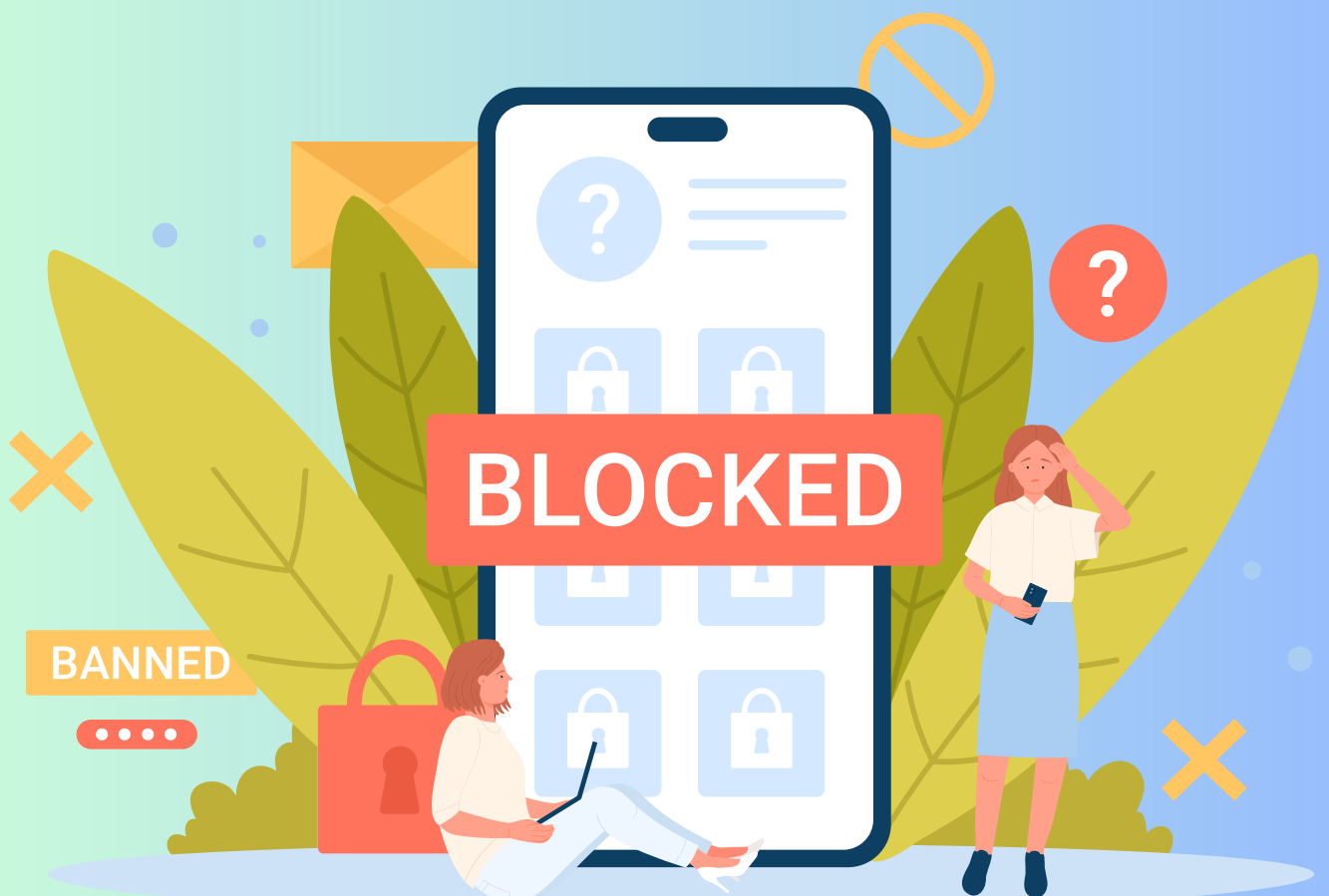
Important Safety Tips:

- Keep Your Account Private: Set your social media profiles to "private" so only friends can see your posts.
- Choose Strong Passwords: Use a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Never share your passwords except with your parents.
- Be Careful with Links: Don't click on links in messages or emails if you don't know who sent them.

Where to Get Help or More Information:

- **Childline (Ireland):** <u>Childline.ie</u> — For free, confidential help.
- **Tozi App:** A tool for learning about online safety and dealing with bullying.
- **Webwise (Ireland):** <u>webwise.ie</u> — Information on internet safety and advice on how to handle cyberbullying.

My name is Katie. I sent a picture of my new outfit that I love in the group chat. Instead of positive comments, a few group members reacted with laughing emojis. I feel embarrassed and hurt because I think the other girls are making fun of me.

- Why do you think using mean emojis can hurt someone's feelings?
- How would you handle a situation where you feel someone is being unkind to you in a group chat?
- What are some ways you can respond if you see someone being made fun of in a group chat?

My name is James, in the snapchat group, I started sending private messages to different group members, asking them to share secrets about others. Some members felt uncomfortable but weren't sure how to respond.
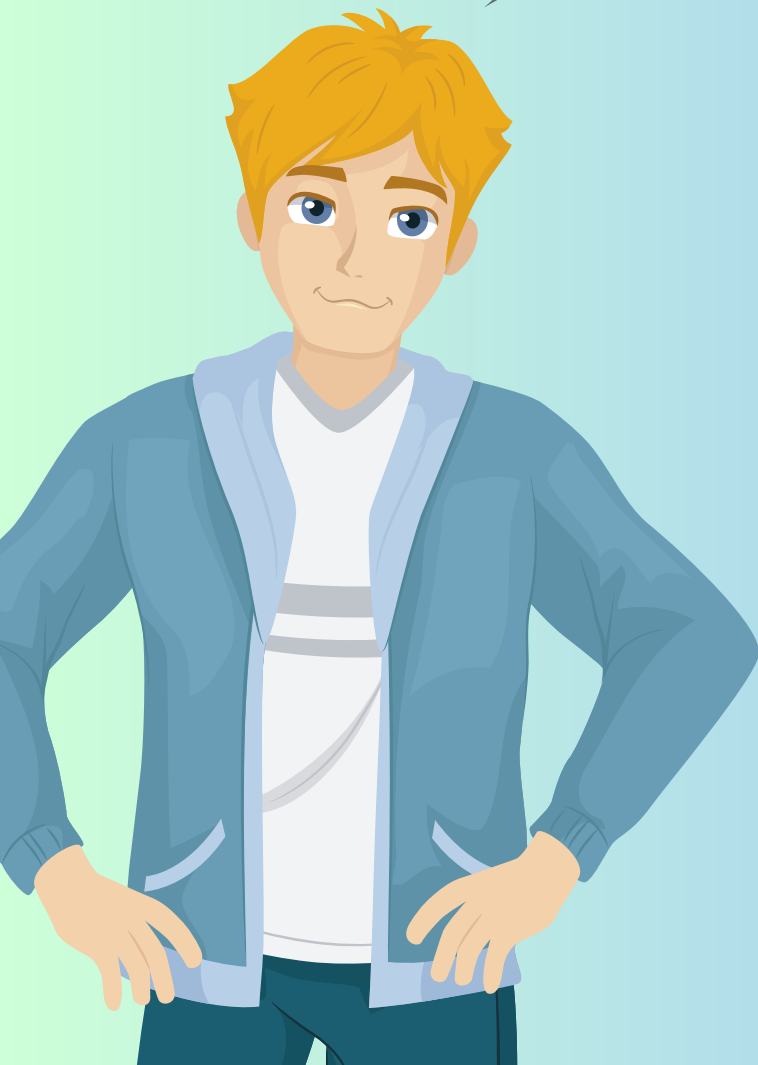
- Why is it important to keep private messages and secrets private?
- What should you do if someone asks you to share something private about someone else?
- How can you support a friend who feels uncomfortable about private messages they are receiving?

My name is Emma. I made a new friend online called Lucas. I received a message from him asking me to send a picture in my swimsuit. I am not comfortable with this request and I don't know what to do.

- Why is it important to think carefully before sending pictures like this?
- How should Emma respond to this request?
- What should you do if someone pressures you into sending intimate images?

My name is Ryan. Oisin in my Snapchat group has sent me a lot of mean messages. The messages are hurtful and also include threats to share private information about me. This is scary and upsetting.

- How should Ryan handle receiving threats or mean messages?
- Why is it important to report cyberbullying to an adult or authority?
- What steps can you take to protect yourself if you are being bullied online?