

Online safety is everyone's responsibility

This week we will be looking at what your child should do if an online friend wants to meet up as recommended by [Childnet.com](https://www.childnet.com). Please share these with your children especially if they chat to others online.

What should I do if an online friend wants to meet up?

Having online friends can be lots of fun; someone to talk to or play games with but it is really important that these friendships are positive, healthy and safe too. First think about..

How do you know this online friend?

- **I know them in person - great.** The internet is perfect for staying in touch with our offline friends, especially if they live a long way away or in another country
- I only know this person online. Sometimes people make friends online that they have never met before in person. For some, these can feel like really close friendships – they may spend lots of time chatting together, or playing games, they may talk about things that are important to them, and they may feel like they really trust their online friend.
- Unfortunately, not everyone online is who they say they are and an online friend who you have never met before is still a stranger, even if you have been chatting to them for a long time.
- This does not mean that you have to stop talking to them online, it just means you have to be careful to always keep yourself safe. For example, you should not share any personal information with them.



Top Tips

If an online friend who you do not know in person asks to meet up with you, it can be tricky to know what to say. Here are two simple things to remember:

1. **SAY NO!** You can be polite about this, but make sure it is clear. 'I'm sorry, I can't' is a really simple response to give.
2. **TELL SOMEONE ABOUT THE CONVERSATION.** There are lots of people you could tell: a parent or another adult at home, your teacher, a trusted adult, the designated safeguarding lead in your school.

If an online friend...

- **Keeps asking to meet up**
- **Wants you to share photos and videos of yourself**
- **Is not taking no for an answer**

THEN THEY ARE NOT BEING A GOOD ONLINE FRIEND. They are not listening to you and they are not showing you the respect that friends should do.

1. If you are on a game or social media, you can try blocking the person so they can't contact you anymore or reporting them, so the site's safety team can investigate their behaviour
2. Report them to CEOP. CEOP are part of the police with the important job of stopping strangers online from trying to meet up with young people and possibly hurt them. To report someone to CEOP, go to their [website](https://www.ceop.gov.uk).

Working together to keep our children safe and happy online.