



eSafety: Challenges and Choices for lower primary students

eSafety: Challenges and Choices is an interactive, choose your own style adventure animation for children aged 6 to 8 that is all about online safety and grooming.

Challenges and Choices aims to skill children in how to recognise red flags, identify their body clues and learn how to report online grooming. Children will develop the skills to stay safe online.

Aim of eSafety: Challenges and Choices

eSafety: Challenges and Choices will teach children about online grooming in an engaging and age-appropriate way. Students are immersed in the narrative by choosing the character's next actions at key points throughout the story.

The story follows a boy named Ollie and his friend Charlotte as they play an online game called Core Defence. Throughout the story, Ollie needs help to make decisions online when he is interacting with other players. The story highlights tactics that 'dodgy tricksters' use online to try to trick people.

eSafety: Challenges and Choices is designed for students to play individually at school or at home. However, it could also be shown to class groups to generate discussion around decision-making.

Key learning objectives

- To understand that some people online are trying to trick us.
- To practice using online safety strategies.
- To learn that if someone tricks us, it is never a child's fault.
- To believe that it is never too late to seek help. Telling a safety helper is always a good idea.
- To normalise helpseeking when something happens online, particularly reporting online grooming and talking to a safety helper.

In the classroom

Prior to the lesson, discuss the following safety guidelines with children

For students to engage, it is important that they feel safe and supported during the lesson. Talk to the students about some ground rules and encourage them to agree upon the group rules. These rules should include:

1. No put downs – be nice to each other.
2. Respect others and value their individual contributions.
3. If you have a private story to tell, talk to a safe adult after the lesson.
4. It is okay to ask questions.
5. Let children know that they are not being tested. There are no right or wrong answers in the animation. We want kids to learn that they can always get help to be safe, no matter what happens online. That's why we've put in lots of tricky things for them to help Ollie work out.

Who Challenges and Choices is for?

Challenges and Choices is designed for children 6 to 8 years of age, but older kids also find it entertaining!

It is designed for students to play individually at school or at home. However, it could also be shown to class groups to generate discussion around decision-making.

Adopt a strong non-victim blaming approach

Feeling like it is their fault is one of the biggest reasons that children do not seek help when something happens online.

Make sure that you do not appear to blame the characters, or the students, for any risky decisions that they make. Correct any students who criticise the characters or their classmates for their choices, reiterating that it can be hard to know what to do in tricky situations.

Explain that we all make mistakes and no matter what we've done or sent online, we have the right to be safe. If something happens online that makes us feel scared, worried or unsafe, it is never our fault. It is never too late to get help.

One step removed

The 'one step removed' strategy reduces the risk that students might feel personally confronted or triggered. Instead of using first person when posing questions or presenting hypothetical scenarios, use third person, focusing on the characters in the story. For example, instead of saying 'What would you do if someone sent you this message?', say, 'What could Ollie do now?'

Protective Interrupting

This content may prompt a student to be ready to make a disclosure of abuse. We recommend advising the class that personal stories should be saved until the end of the lesson. However, a student may begin to disclose, or a teacher might sense that a student is about to make a disclosure.

In this situation, protective interrupting validates the importance of the disclosure, whilst protecting the student from revealing personal abuse which may increase their vulnerability. This strategy also protects other children from the vicarious trauma of hearing a disclosure.

Using phrases such as, 'I really want to hear what you have to say, but...' or 'It sounds like you are about to say something really important. I think we should talk about this privately,' educators can postpone a disclosure until students are in a safe, private context.

The educator could gently suggest that the child talks privately with them after the lesson. Where possible, if staff are available to supervise the remaining group, the teacher should request that the child goes out of the classroom with them to continue the conversation.

This strategy is not meant to dissuade the child from disclosing harm. If any protective interrupting has been necessary, it is essential that the educator subsequently creates a safe space for a follow-up conversation with the child as soon as possible.

Each Australian state and territory has its own requirements relating to reporting harm, so it is important to understand what this means for individuals.

Using Challenges and Choices to teach scepticism.

Remind children that not everyone on the internet is safe. We call these people dodgy tricksters. It's best to be sceptical about people's intentions.

Ask the students: What might be a clue that someone online is a dodgy trickster?

Someone might be a dodgy trickster if they:

- ask to keep the conversation secret
- ask if they are home alone or what part of the house they are in
- ask if anyone else uses their device
- ask for private information such as where they live, or where they go to school etc.
- give lots of body compliments or asks questions about their body
- use sexual language
- send sexual content
- ask for photos
- offer presents, gift vouchers, or money for favours.

In the animation, Ollie uses the sequence Pause And Think (PAT) to remind himself to look closer at messages and people online before he makes a decision. As a class, brainstorm other times when you might use the PAT strategy.

Challenges and Choices: Who's Who

Two interactive pathways follow a young boy, Ollie, as he learns to navigate suspicious situations online. Ollie often discusses the situations with his friends Charlotte before reaching out to his safety

helper Aunt Sophia. Aunt Sophia teaches him how to **recognise** red flags, **react** to his body clues and **report** what has happened. Charlotte's younger sister, Vayda, also helps them with some important non-verbal safety messages.



How to use Challenges and Choices

- **Talk about Challenges and Choices with your child** and encourage them to share what they have learnt.
- You could **go through the interactions together**.
- Use on **multiple occasions** with your child to enable exploration of each pathway.
- It can be used by children on their own as well as with an adult.

What will my child learn in That's Suss?

Both pathways cover areas that can support conversations about suspicious behaviour online and safety strategies.

Key Learning Points Include:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People online who are trying to trick children will use different tactics to get them to trust them. (RECOGNISE)¹ • They may pretend to be someone they're not. • They may offer points or prizes to gain their trust. • They may try to isolate them from family and friends.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body clues can help someone to notice that they are in an unsafe situation. (RECOGNISE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never share personal information (including images) online. Either with strangers or with people they think they know in the offline world. (REACT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop chatting to someone unknown and block their profile. (REACT)

1. **Teaching ongoing scepticism:** Remind children that not everyone on the internet is safe. It's best to be sceptical about people's intentions. Suspicious ('Suss') behaviour by someone online may include: asking to keep the conversation secret, asking if anyone else uses their device, asking for private information such as where they live, or where they go to school, giving lots of body compliments or asks questions about their body/using sexual language, asking for photos, offering presents, gift vouchers, or money for favours, offering them rare opportunities, like modelling, elite gaming teams or talking to their favourite celebrity.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children should speak to a safety helper if they feel unsure about something. (REPORT) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can speak to Kids Help Line if they need support. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online grooming and unsafe situations can be reported to ACCCE and eSafety. (REPORT) ² |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make accounts private. Check the settings on accounts across all platforms. ³ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is nothing embarrassing about being tricked online and it's never too late to ask for help. |

Conversation Starters:

The following conversation starters could be used to explore Challenges and Choices with your child:

- Why do you think Ollie...?
- Could Ollie have done anything differently here?
- Have any of your friends had something similar happen?
- What might you do if this happened to you?

Online Safety Tips Going Forward

- **Share their online world.** Get involved in what your child is doing online. Ask them to show you their favourite websites or apps and play their favourite games. Bond over the positive things in their online world.
- **Audit their friends and followers.** Sit together and review the people who follow them, are friends with them or are able to communicate with them. Work together to remove people that they don't know in real life. This is important to do together and develop their understanding of why it is important.
- **Open up conversation.** Recognise changes in their behaviour or mentions of new online friends who you don't know. ⁴ Let your child know that they can come to you about anything that is troubling them online.
- **Block and report.** Let your child know that they are always allowed to say no to an adult or a child that makes them feel unsafe. It isn't rude and they never have to reply, even if someone compliments them etc. Empower them to block and report anyone who makes them feel unsafe.

² **Blocking:** Before you block someone or delete posts, make detailed notes about what has been shared. Copy the site URL's or the account address, user profiles, write down the date and time they contacted you. Further information can be found here: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/report-online-harm/summary-table-what-you-can-report-and-how>.

³ **Check privacy on accounts regularly** as new features can be added to games and apps etc. Do this together to start a discussion about privacy. Encourage them to take ownership of this.

⁴ **Know the warning signs of online grooming:** If a groomer is manipulating a child, you might notice that they: spend more time online; are increasingly secretive or defensive about what they are doing online; take their device into private spaces; receive unexplained gifts (often e-vouchers) or has more money than usual; use sexualised language; may have sexualised search results, indicating that they have googled what they have been asked; experience mood changes including being significantly happier as well as hostile or withdrawn; fight with or disengages from family members and friends; stop doing things they normally enjoy; have low self-esteem or blames themselves; lash out in anger

Where to get help

- If you believe a child is in danger call **Police 000**
- Factsheet - [How do I report online grooming?](#)
- Factsheet - [Understanding online grooming](#)
- Factsheet - [How do I react to online grooming?](#)
- Factsheet - [How do I recognise online grooming?](#)