

## 2-minute briefing

Online safety**What is online grooming?**

Online grooming is where someone befriends a child online and builds up their trust with the intention of exploiting them and causing them harm.

**How does online grooming happen?**

Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time. It can start out publicly on social media and in games but will most likely move across to private chats.

Anyone could unfortunately groom a child online, regardless of age, gender or race. Groomers are very skilled at what they do and can often befriend a child by appearing to have the same hobbies and interests as them. Using fake accounts and photos, they may also appear to be the same age as the child.

However, not all groomers will choose to mask their age or gender. Some groomers may impersonate an aspirational figure, whilst others may use their age and experience to develop a 'mentor' type relationship with their victim.

A groomer will use the same sites, games and apps as children in order to gain their trust and build a friendship. Children can be flattered at first by the attention given to them by this new 'online friend', particularly if they are offering support, showing understanding or giving validation.

However, they may also seek to manipulate, blackmail and control the child, potentially isolating them from their friends and family. It's important to remember that children may not understand they have been groomed or see their 'online friend' as untrustworthy or abusive.

**What harm a child may experience online?**

- child sexual abuse
- exposure to radicalising content
- youth-produced sexual imagery ('sexting')
- cyberbullying
- exposure to age-inappropriate content, such as pornography
- exposure to harmful content, such as suicide content

**Places where online grooming can happen:**

- Social networking sites
- Instant messaging and live streaming apps
- Photo sharing apps
- Chat rooms
- Dating apps
- Online gaming sites

**Responding to an incident**

- Share your concerns with the DSL/DDSL Even the smallest piece of information, when put together, can make a bigger picture of what might be happening to a child or young person online.
- Record accurately your concerns/disclosure

**NEVER copy, share or show others sexual imageries. You'll be breaking the law.**

**Further information**

[Online Safeguarding - What is the dark web?](#)

[Online blackmail education resources page](#)

[Send me a pic? NSPCC](#)

[Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides |](#)

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