



Unfortunately there has been a rise in online grooming since the start of the pandemic and Instagram is increasingly being used.

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them.

Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

You meet friends of friends online and just chat, and that that is ok. But sometimes people are not who they say they are, so you need to spot the signs:

Too good to be true – do they say they share all your interests, do they agree with everything you say? **If they ask you to do anything you're comfortable with say no!**

Flattery – do they lavish you with praise for pictures you post?

Let's talk about sex – sometimes groomers will get young people to talk about sex really quickly, and being online means they may lose the shyness they would have in real life. **Be cautious, you do not have to say or do anything you are not comfortable with.** Remember – it is against the law for an adult to have sex with anyone under 16. It is also illegal for someone to put pressure on an under 18 to send sexual photos of themselves.

Got any sexy pictures? If they ask you for pictures they are breaking the law. They may try and entice you by saying other people have sent pictures...this is probably not true!

Can we go somewhere more private? **Always be safe.** If you met online, then they may ask to meet you in person. It is not good to do this, but if you want to then take a friend with you and meet in a very public place. If you met in a game online, they ask you to contact them via another app like Snapchat or WhatsApp. Again make sure that you use group chats or stay on public forums

Out little secret? Abusers don't want other people to know that you're chatting, so they may ask you to keep it secret. **If someone is making you do things you don't want to do or aren't comfortable, it's not your fault, and you will not be blamed.** You do not need to keep their secret and contact CEOP or Childline for help (see below for contacts)

Mood swings – some groomers tend to change from being nice to being nasty. They might do this to make you do something and react. **No one deserves to be treated like this**

"My camera's broken" – they say this because they might be pretending to be younger than they actually are and because you cannot see them you can't tell. Sometimes they

even use fake pictures and videos to trick you. **If you think this is happening report it (see below)**



What to do:

- Block people that make you feel uncomfortable
- Keep personal information private
- Be careful about meeting up – it is best not to meet up with people you have met online. If you do take a friend with you
- Take breaks – remember to go offline as well! It is important to talk to others in your house, but also to move around for your health
- Speak to a trusted adult – if you feel uncomfortable talk to someone about what is happening
- Make sure you and your child know how to report any misuse – use the CEOP report button (see link below)

Useful places to go for information:

Samaritans: 116 123

Childline 0800 1111

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.kooth.com/>