



# FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

The internet provides enormous benefits for children and young people. However, it can also expose them to a range of risks, including inappropriate contact, online grooming, and sexual extortion.

## Signs for parents and carers to watch for:

Unfortunately, there isn't one clear sign your child may be a victim of online child sexual exploitation and in some cases it can be very hard to spot.

- Online grooming, coercion or sexual extortion might be difficult to detect because your child may be trying to keep it a secret.
- Any change in your child's online routine or usual attitude to online activities could indicate they may be experiencing issues online.
- A sudden increase in your child's internet use that feels out of character; being private or secretive about what they're doing, becoming withdrawn and upset or even unexplained new possessions could all be indicators that something isn't right.
- Online child sex offenders can be expert manipulators and can make a victim feel ashamed and think that they will get in trouble; a child or young person is never to blame for becoming a victim.

## If you think something isn't right:

Here are some of the things we recommend parents and carers do.

- Firstly, make sure your child is safe.
- Stay calm and have an open conversation that reassures your child they won't be in trouble for their actions. This can help you find out what is happening, and whether you need to seek help and make a report.
- Importantly: Disclosing online child sexual exploitation takes courage.

## Ways to protect your child online:

There are some simple measures you can take to keep your child safer from online child sexual exploitation.

- Know what your child is doing online and be engaged in their online activities.
- Talk openly and regularly to your child about their online activities.
- Check if your child is using apps or games with direct message or chat functions. These are commonly used by offenders to contact children and young people.
- Check privacy settings and turn off location and chat functions, and set profiles to private.
- Teach your child online safety skills and to be aware of the 'red flags' to identify suspicious behaviour online.
- Be approachable if your child needs help. Let your child know they can always come to you - or a trusted adult - if they're unsure or something goes wrong online.
- **KNOW HOW TO REPORT:**  
[www.acce.gov.au/report](http://www.acce.gov.au/report)

### Red flags to look out for:

- \* random friend or follower requests from suspicious accounts
- \* asking personal questions
- \* starting sexualised chat
- \* inconsistencies in the profile or language used

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## SEXTORTION SAFETY ADVICE - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

### What is it?

A form of online blackmail where someone tricks a person into sending sexual images then threatens to share them unless their demands are met. Organised criminal syndicates are targeting Australian teens using high pressure tactics.

## YOU CAN MAKE IT STOP!

### How you can help your child

#### DO

- ✔ Stop the chat
- ✔ Take screenshots of the text and profile
- ✔ Block the account and report it to the platform
- ✔ Report to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation
- ✔ Get support

#### DON'T

- ✘ Send more images
- ✘ Pay
- ✘ Respond to demands
- ✘ Enter into further communication
- ✘ Think you're alone

### eSafety

If a blackmailer has shared your child's intimate image or video, you can report to eSafety, to help have it removed: [www.eSafety.gov.au/report](http://www.eSafety.gov.au/report)

### Where to get help:

**Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploration (ACCCE)**

- [www.acce.gov.au/sextortionhelp](http://www.acce.gov.au/sextortionhelp)  
Advice and resources to prevent online child sexual exploitation, including sextortion.

### eSafety

- [www.eSafety.gov.au/parents](http://www.eSafety.gov.au/parents)  
Tips on how to keep your child safe online.
- [www.eSafety.gov.au/young-people](http://www.eSafety.gov.au/young-people)  
Information to help young people stay safe online.

### ThinkUKnow

- [www.thinkuknow.org.au](http://www.thinkuknow.org.au)  
For resources and advice for parents, carers and educators to prevent online child sexual exploitation.

## REPORT

**IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER  
CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000).**

If there is no immediate danger or you want to report non-urgent crime, contact the 24-hour Police Assistance Line on 131 444.

**Online child sexual exploitation, including the sextortion of young people under the age of 18 should be reported to the ACCCE.**

Police are here to protect children and young people from online child sexual abuse. They will not blame or criticise you for being a victim. Your report could save further victims from harm. The ACCCE has specialist investigators who can get you the help you need.

For more information, visit:  
[www.acce.gov.au/report](http://www.acce.gov.au/report)

### Support

It's important your child gets support if they are a victim of sextortion. They don't have to manage this alone; what has happened is not their fault.

Visit [www.acce.gov.au/support](http://www.acce.gov.au/support) for more information.