

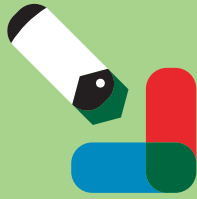


**Grades  
K-3**

# **Safe Communication Online**



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Younger kids are spending more and more time online, as watching favourite videos on YouTube, drawing pictures on the newest app, or interacting with classmates online become the new normal. Some of these activities take place over social media platforms, mobile apps or messaging systems that can allow kids to have conversations with people they may have never met in-person or don't know very well. In such cases, it's hard to know who's on the other side of the device, or what their intentions may be. Communicating safely online is about limiting the amount of private information being shared publicly or through interactions with strangers. There's always a possibility that strangers may try to use this information to create fake friendships in hopes of personal gain or, ultimately, to cause some sort of harm.

This resource contains information for parents/guardians to help them communicate with kids about how they can be safe online, and be aware of potential risks when chatting or sharing with others, while still having fun!



### Internet:

The Internet connects millions of computers and people around the world, and lets us share information on devices like a tablet, cellphone, computers and TVs – they don't work the same way without the Internet!

## A DEFINITION

### Staying safe online

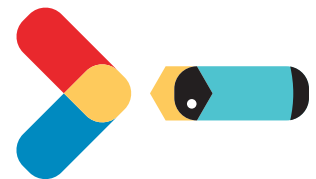
In order to keep kids safe online, it's important to understand the Internet – the good and the not so good.

#### The Internet: The Good

- It's fun to use and kids can learn about all kinds of new things.
- The Internet is full of fun things like videos, pictures, cartoons and games.
- It lets us talk to and see family and friends, even if they live far away.
- It's filled with helpers who like to help other people.

#### The Internet: The Not So Good

- It's available to all kinds of people and can be used by tricky people who aren't nice or kind.
- Tricky people try to use the Internet to do bad things and hurt others. We need to learn how to tell helpers and tricky people apart.





A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair and a young girl with dark hair and bangs. They are both smiling and looking down at a screen, which is partially visible at the bottom of the frame. The woman is on the right, and the girl is on the left. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

### Online:

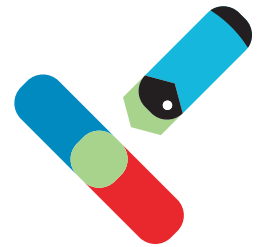
Is the word we use when a device is connected to the Internet, and we use it to access information such as videos, pictures and games.

### Trusted Adult:

An adult that a child has a good relationship with, and who has their best interests and safety in mind.

**Tricky People:**

People who break the rules and do things to make other people feel uncomfortable or scared – they can be someone they know or someone they’ve never met.



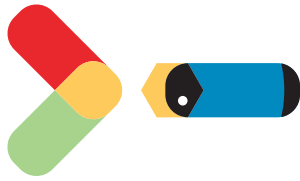
## Tricky people

Talking to kids – especially within this age range – about dangerous people, unfortunate intentions and the harm they can cause, is a sensitive topic. We suggest calling these dangerous people “tricky people” in order to make kids aware, without scaring them.

Tricky people can be found both on the Internet, through connected devices, and outside of the Internet, in real life. They can seem just like regular people in the way that they talk and act, but they could also just be pretending. To help kids identify when/if they may be communicating with a tricky person while using devices, parents/guardians need to explain that kids should keep a lookout for, and tell them or another trusted adult, if:

- A stranger the kid doesn’t know tries to make the kid think that they’re a friend.
- Someone asks the kid to keep secrets from their family and friends, or says it’s okay to share secrets or personal information.
- Someone the kid doesn’t know tries to buy things for them. Kids shouldn’t accept anything from anyone they don’t know.
- Someone who says bad things will happen if the kid tells anyone about them. Kids need to know that it’s always okay to let parents/guardians, or another trusted adult, know.





## Advice for kids

Parents/guardians hope that their kids won't ever have to experience tricky people, or uncomfortable conversations online or in-person. The following information offers some advice to share with kids while navigating technology and devices connected to the Internet.

**The "inside alarm":** The inside alarm is a gut feeling or instinct that kids may have that can tell them when someone or something isn't safe. The goal is to trust kids to understand that feeling because it's often there for a reason. Try explaining an inside alarm as:

- A weird feeling, like butterflies in the stomach that might also make kids scared, sad or upset about something or someone. Kids should trust their inside alarm and tell a trusted adult whenever they feel that way.
- Is easier to feel in real life than on the Internet. That's why kids have to be extra careful when they're talking to someone or watching something online. Their inside alarm might not always go off when it should.
- Sometimes it's hard for kids to know what to do, or sometimes they realize what's happened after they've already encountered a tricky person online. Reassure them that asking for help from someone they know and trust shows everyone that they know the right thing to do.



## Conversation Starter:

What is something that a tricky person could say or ask you, to make you feel uncomfortable? Who would you tell?

# The difference between secrets and surprises

Tricky people will often try to communicate directly with kids and ask them to not tell anyone. They may even try to frame it as a surprise when they're really trying to conceal their actions and identity with a secret bond. Parents/guardians should talk to kids about the difference between surprises and secrets.



## Surprises

Surprises can be good! A surprise could be a present from someone they know and trust, or good news they hear from friends.

## Secrets

Secrets can be bad! A secret could be to not tell a parent/guardian that the kid is talking with someone online, or that they're friends with someone the parent/guardian doesn't know about.



## Remember this!

If asked by a tricky person to keep a secret, kids should always say "No, I will not keep a secret" and then tell a trusted adult!



## The difference between an online community and the rest of the world

- A kid's **online community** consists of people they know and can trust to talk with on their computer, tablet or phone. However, kids in this age range may not have very many people in their online community, and that's okay! People in their community are their friends, family and even their teachers.
- The **rest of the world** is made up of people that kids may not know; sometimes it can be people they see around them, but it would still be weird to talk to them online because they don't know them very well. It could be the person at the grocery store or someone from a parent's/guardian's work, or a person who delivers the mail or cuts their hair.





# ACTIVITY

1

Activities are a useful way for kids to test and demonstrate their knowledge on the topic covered in this resource.

## Draw a Tricky Person

Draw a picture of a tricky person from your favourite cartoon or movie!



**EXAMPLE:**  
Scar from the Lion  
King or Prince  
Hans from Frozen



# ACTIVITY 2

## Matching!

Match the people to the "circles" they belong to:

### Online Community

(People you know and can trust to talk to on your computer or phone)

OR

### Rest of the World

(People you may not know or that you sometimes see around you, but don't know very well)



**BEST FRIEND**



**TEACHER**



**PARENT/GUARDIAN**



**POSTMAN**



**BUS DRIVER**



**WAITRESS**



**GRANDPARENT**



**POLICE OFFICER**



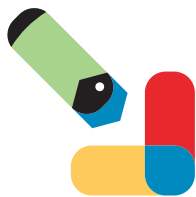
**SIBLING**



**GROCERY STORE CLERK**



## FOR MORE INFORMATION



For more information on cybersecurity, or to continue the conversation and learning process, visit the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security website:

<https://cyber.gc.ca/en/>

### **Kids Help Phone:**

Contact by text message at 686868 or by phone at 1-800-668-6868 from across Canada, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; or access their resources online: [kidshelpphone.ca](https://kidshelpphone.ca)





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