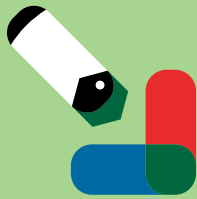**Grades 4-6**

Safe Communication Online

ROGERS
cybersecure
catalyst

What does it mean to communicate safely online? Time spent online often includes chatting with friends, sharing pictures from a recent vacation, playing a game or watching videos. Some of these activities take place using social media platforms, mobile apps or a messaging system 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 end of the device, or what their intentions may be. That's why, in order to communicate safely online, it's important to limit the amount of private information shared publicly, as strangers may try to use this information to create fake friendships in hopes of gaining something personal about the kid and use that information to cause them harm.

This resource contains information for parents/guardians to communicate with kids about how they can be safe online and be aware of potential risks, while having fun!
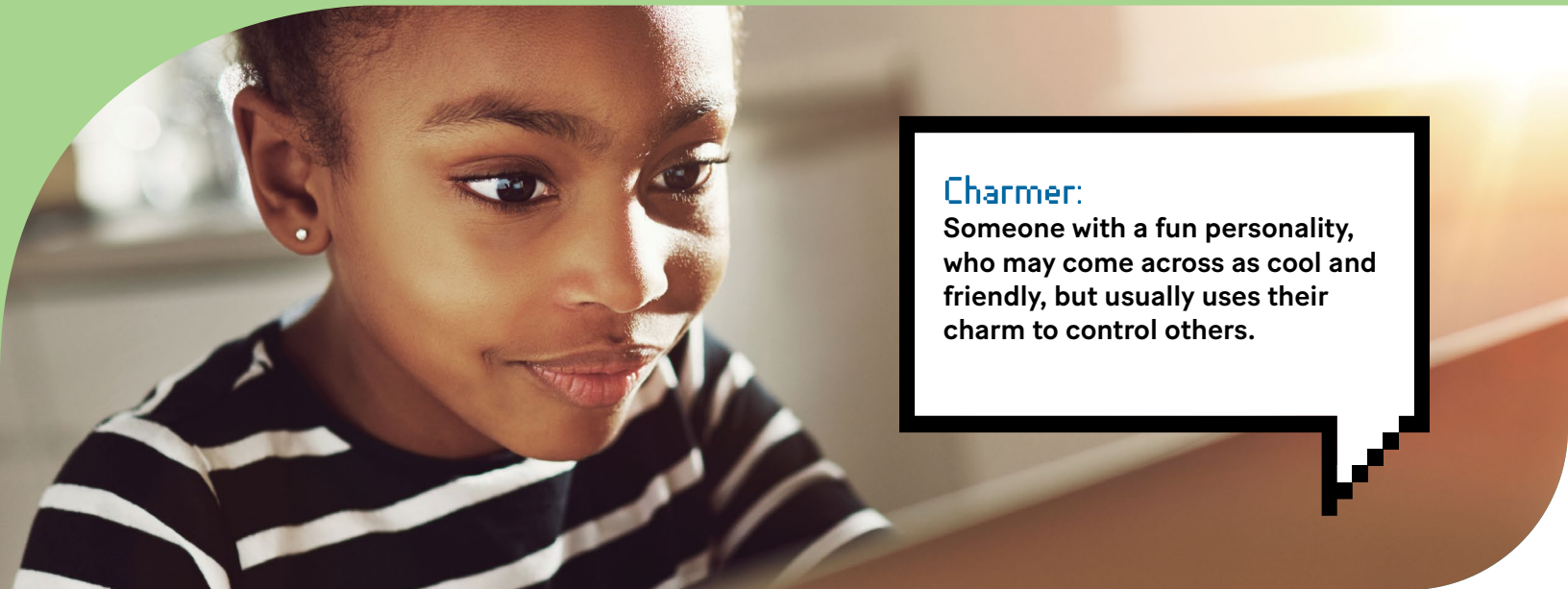
DEFINITION

Be on the lookout for online charmers

Online charmers aren't very easy to spot because they often look like they're trying to be genuinely nice. They use private information about a person, or how that person is feeling, as an opportunity to gain trust. When kids come across someone online being overly nice to them, or who is much older but still trying to be friends with them, they should always ask themselves: "Are they trying to charm me?" Keep in mind that charmers often:

- Look for kids who may seem sad or lonely, or who are going through a hard time. Bad days can happen to everyone, but charmers will use a bad day as a chance to gain trust.

- Look for people who may be happy, or looking for someone to talk to and share with. They can pretend to share in a person's happiness or celebrate something with them, but their real goal is to try to get close to the person.

Remember this!

Keeping personal feelings of ine makes it harder for charmers to target kids

What to watch out for

When a charmer finds someone they think they can take advantage of, they will begin by trying to become the kid's friend. The charmer may start sending fun emails or texts, saying really nice things about the kid or sharing things (pictures, videos, comments, etc.) the charmer knows the kid would like to see. Parents/ guardians can teach kids the following tips to help them spot and avoid charmers.

- Charmers usually start by asking simple questions about a person, then get more personal.

- Charmers may compliment kids, claim to like the same things as kids or offer to buy things for kids. But, parents/ guardians should remind kids, this is a trick.

- Charmers may try to make kids feel like it's normal for the kid to be friends with someone much older, or friends with someone they've never met inperson – when it's not normal at all! Remind kids that when we talk to someone on our phones, iPads, computers, etc., there's no way to know who's really on the other end of the device.

- Charmers may try to get kids to feel safe enough to meet the charmer in person, join them in a private video chat, or send the charmer pictures.

- In order for kids to feel safer and trust the charmer, the charmer may tell kids that the charmer is friends with and/or know the kid's friends, or even say that the kid's friends might also be coming along. But the charmer is usually lying and kids shouldn't trust them.
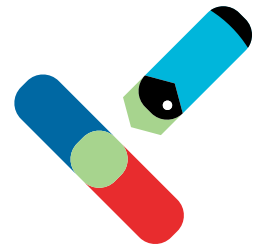
Conversation Starter:

What is considered personal, or private, information?

Why is it dangerous to share this type of information online or with strangers?

Online Lure:
When a person kids don't know starts talking to them online, for example, through texting or direct messages, and their intention is to cause some sort of harm or to trick them.

Online lures to be on the lookout for

- Someone the kid doesn't know tries to take advantage of their good nature, pretending that they need help.

- Someone the kid doesn't know promising to give them things.

- Someone the kid doesn't know tries to make them believe that they already know them or someone in their family, even when they don't. That's why it's so important that kids keep their personal information safe – because it's easy for a charmer to know the names of family and other things about them if they're not careful.

- Someone the kid doesn't know says mean things to/about them on a social media account or sticks up for them. Kids shouldn't pay attention to comments made by people they don't know, even nice ones.

Phishing

Kids should also be wary of phishing – when someone they don't know uses information learned about a person to get additional information the person didn't intend to share. Such information can give the phisher (pronounced "fisher") a clue as to what area someone lives in! Kids should always think twice about what information they provide to someone online because it can be used in ways the kid may not fully understand.

Phishing:
Prononced "fishing"; when someone gets kids to share personal or private information online in order to get more information that kids didn't mean to share.
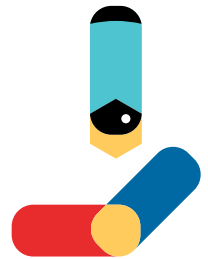
Encourage kids to trust their gut

Encourage kids to listen to those gut feelings they have! If something or someone feels "creepy" or makes them uncomfortable, even if they don't understand why, they should listen to that feeling. Explain to kids that this feeling often happens when, deep down inside, they know something is wrong.

Kids must understand that they have to be much more careful online because it's harder to tell how honest a person is through a screen. Charmers may ask kids to keep secrets from the kids' family and friends. Remind kids that this behaviour is questionable and can be risky; they should report this to a trusted adult right away.
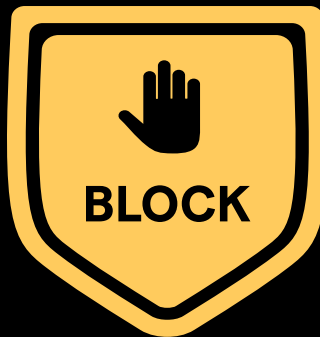
Take Action!

If a kid thinks they're potentially interacting with a charmer, here are some actions to take:

STOP

BLOCK

TALK

Stop speaking with the charmer right away. The kid doesn't need to tell the charmer they're no longer going to answer or give them an explanation.

Block the charmer, but don't delete the messages they sent. Share those messages with a trusted adult.

Talk to a parent/guardian or trusted adult immediately.

Have you ever had a strange feeling about someone or something when using technology? What made it feel strange? These are feelings to be aware of!

TIP:
Try using comparisons from in-person situations to explain a gut feeling – such as when someone is staring for too long or is physically following too closely.

Conversation Starter:

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

Safe Communication Word Search

Can you find the keywords related to safe communication online? As you find the words, think about what they mean, what you have learned, and how you can share this information with others!

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K F L K F A L S N T K Z W W H
S H A S E C U R I T A I R E A
J Y R L H A M E C O N N A G E
C L C S R M R Q V H L E I U G
Y P L N R D R V E M P P X W V
I F B S S A Z A M D A A C J U
C H A R M E U R N A R R E T E
P R E U X C H E V A L I E R B
J E O F M L G V E F E S T O L
V R N F D F A B M Z O Y J F O
E K O L D S N L E N G Y N E Q
K P B U I Q R S B M B S W Y U
N D R U B G Z W X K T F A W E
M W I H C O N F I A N C E I S
J K F R O E E E Z K J N E Y N
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White Knight

Safe

Phishing

Stop

Charmer

Block

Talk

Online

Trust

White Knight:
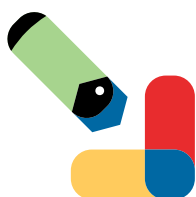a term used to describe a charmer's fake identity they use to pretend to stick up for someone as an online lure.

Use the next page to draw a poster to remind yourself of the rules of communicating safely. You could use one of the headings below for inspiration or create your own!

STOP! BLOCK! TALK!

TRUST YOUR GUT

SAY NO TO CHARMERS!

⬡ D 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