



# STAY SAFE FROM ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*ECPAT International is a global network of civil society organisations working together for the elimination of child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.*





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A stylized illustration of two children, a girl with pigtails and a boy, holding a large yellow sign. The sign has the text 'WELCOME TO THE GUIDE!' in bold green letters. The children are represented by dark green silhouettes.

# WELCOME TO THE GUIDE!

Welcome to this guide, which has been written to tell children and young people about sexual exploitation online. We hope you will find it interesting and useful. If you want to know more about this issue or get advice or help after reading the guide, you can find the addresses of organisations working to end the sexual exploitation of children online on pages 23-24.

## WHO IS A CHILD?

In this guide we use the term 'children and young people' and 'child and young person' to describe anyone aged under 18 years old. We also sometimes just use the word 'child, 'children' or 'youth' to mean anyone under 18 years old.

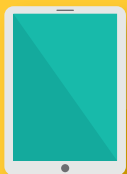
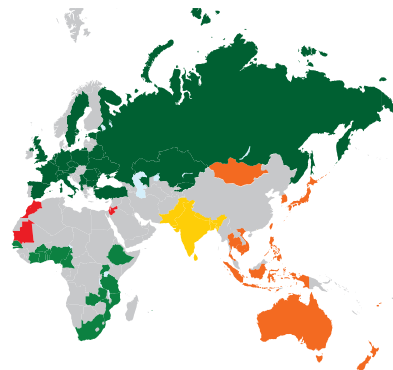
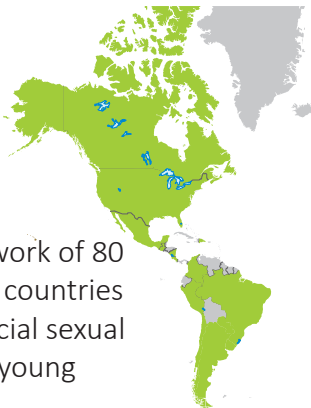


## WHAT IS ECPAT INTERNATIONAL?

ECPAT stands for

**END CHILD PROSTITUTION,  
CHILD PORNOGRAPHY AND  
TRAFFICKING IN CHILDREN  
FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES.**

ECPAT International is a network of 80 member organisations in 74 countries working to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children and young people.



### **Abuser, Offender, Exploiter?**

Note in this guide we use the terms abuser, offender and exploiter to mean the same thing: someone who sexually abuses a child, normally by giving or getting some sort of benefit.

Later on in the guide we will look at what that means, and how it happens online, and what kind of people abuse children in this way.

# WHAT IS THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)?

Before exploring what we mean by online child sexual exploitation, it is useful to begin by explaining what is meant by the commercial sexual exploitation of children, as this often forms or is part of online exploitation.

Commercial sexual exploitation happens when someone, usually an adult (but it can also be a young person, either a boy or girl) takes advantage sexually of a child and someone benefits because they are paid (they may be given other items, favours or services instead of a payment). Often the payment does not go directly to the child or young person who is abused, but is given to someone else who has power over them.

Since the child or young person is being taken advantage of, we say they have been 'exploited', and because the abuser is giving money or something else this is thought to be a kind of 'commercial transaction'. For these reasons, the correct way of describing what has happened when a child or young person is sexually abused or taken advantage of by others for their own benefit is to say that the child has been 'commercially sexually exploited'. We also use this term for when the abuse occurs online or through internet communications or technology (ICT) and someone benefits (for example if they sell nude sexualized photographs of a child).



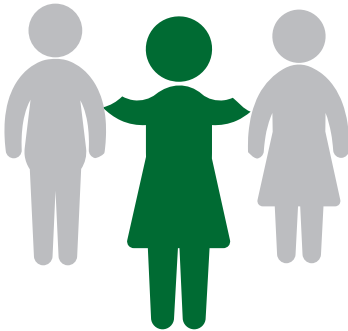


*What about youth who are the age of sexual consent in their country and engage in sexual relations with adults? Don't they have the right to choose?*

In some countries youth can agree to have sex when they are younger than 18 years old if they have reached the legal age of sexual consent. Some young people are therefore engaged in sexual relationships with adults. However, if the adult records sexual videos or pictures of the young person and sells it to others, then the youth is being exploited by the adult even if the young person has agreed.

To protect all children it is important that no children are exploited. Even if some children and young people say they agreed to have sexual relations or be abused, their consent is irrelevant and the abuse is considered a crime.

CSA?



## WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (CSA)?

As well as the sexual exploitation of children, professionals often use another term - **“child sexual abuse”**. Child sexual abuse happens when adult or a child involves another child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully understand, or is unable to give informed consent to, or for which they are not ready (perhaps because of age or development). Child sexual abuse is intended to satisfy the needs of other person (abuser), not the child that is being abused.

Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to rape, touching genitals or sexual intercourse with a child. It also consists of non-physical contact such as involving children in watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually explicit ways and exposing them to inappropriate sexual materials.

# WHAT IS ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?

There are various ways children and young people can be abused and exploited online. This guide focuses on **commercial sexual exploitation online**. Examples of this include where a person takes photos of a naked child to sell online or where a person buys online videos of children being abused.

We call the person who sexually exploits the child or young person through internet communications and technology, such as phones and messaging services (ICT), an 'exploiter', or an 'offender'. The offender could be someone who knows the child, or may not know then but just live in the same town or country. They may even be in a different country.



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## What is the difference between cyber bullying and sexual cyber harassment?

Cyber bullying is when a peer uses electronic communication to send intimidating messages to another peer.

Cyber harassment is when an adult or peer threatens or frightens a child or young person, sometimes, but not always, into taking part in sexual acts.





## Why do we prefer to say 'child sexual abuse materials' rather than 'child pornography'?

Child sexual abuse materials can be text, pictures, sounds or videos of a child engaged in sexual activities, images of sexual parts of a child or images that look like a child.

We use the term 'materials' because this is wider than just pornography and includes written, audio, video, pictures and even cartoon-like images of children. We also use child sexual abuse material because the term 'pornography' gives the impression that children agreed to participate in the serious abuses shown.

An offender might force a child into such a situation by first winning the trust of children through online communications. This is known as **grooming**. Grooming is when an adult gets to know a child by befriending, encouraging or tricking them in order to become involved in a sexual act or relationship. If the child refuses then the offender might verbally or sexually harass the child or threaten them in some other way, such as saying they will tell their parents or hurt their family.

Offenders might also persuade a child to watch children involved in sex or look at **child sexual abuse materials** to convince them that **this** is normal.

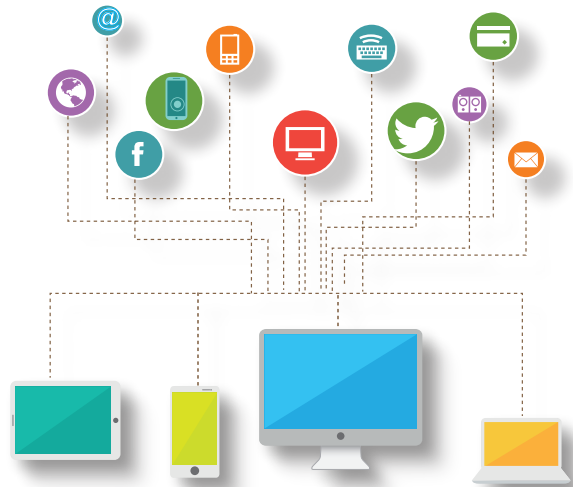
After gaining the trust of the child, an offender might force a child into an exploitative situation. This means the offender will give money, presents, food or special favours to sexually exploit the child or watch a child online being exploited by another person. This other person is often called a 'third party'.

# WHERE DOES ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION HAPPEN AND HOW IS IT DISTRIBUTED?

Online sexual exploitation can take place anywhere, but it usually occurs somewhere that is familiar to the young person. A familiar setting could be a child's home, a family member's house, or a neighbourhood cyber cafe.

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Whether children and youth are groomed in-person, through a chat room or social media, often they are exploited in the privacy of their homes. Chat rooms, **peer-to-peer networks** and social media are used by offenders to try and gain access to and distribute sexual abuse materials.

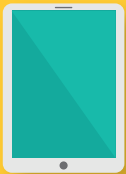
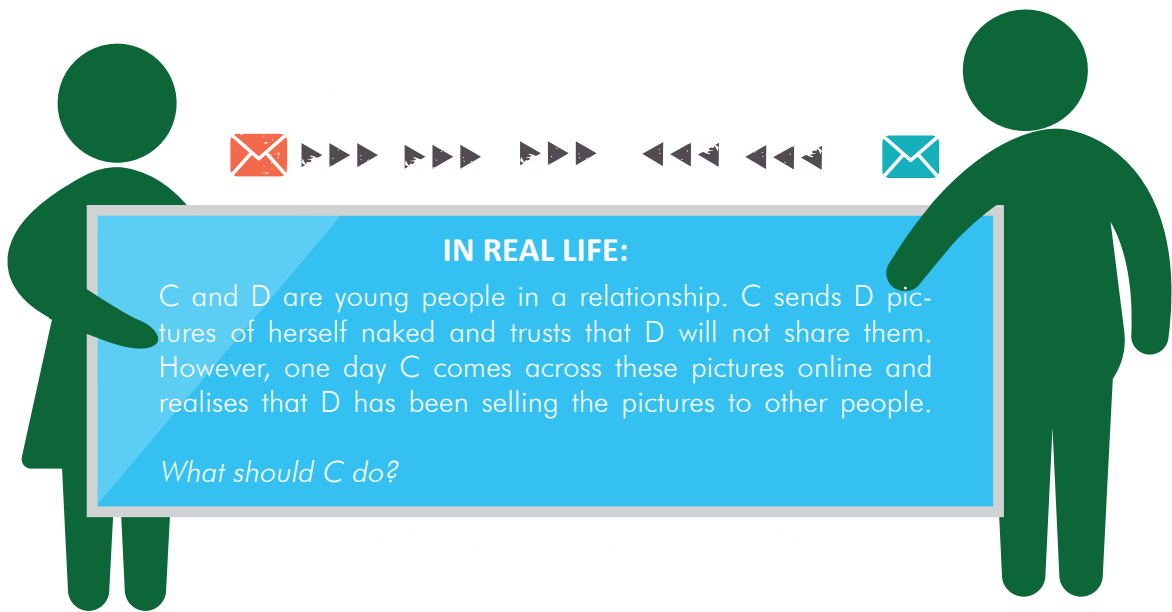


Online sexual exploitation can also occur if children are taken from the place they live to another place or sexual exploiters travel with the intention of having sex with young people in another country. In these cases the children are abused, and then images of the abuse are shared online or through other technologies, such as phones.



## What is a peer-to-peer network? (P-2-P)

A peer-to-peer network is a system of personal computers that can exchange files and e-mails directly with every other computer in the network.



### Taking Action - Example from Southeast Asia

ECPAT Philippines worked with Sali ka Bata, a community mobile theatre advocacy group made up of children and youth. Their idea was to raise awareness about the different forms of CSEC such as online sexual exploitation and to empower young people to avoid such situations.

Members of the theatre group performed in vulnerable communities, held discussions and led workshops. They also created an action plan to fight against CSEC, and distributed awareness raising materials so that people were better informed about CSEC.

# WHO SEXUALLY ABUSES AND EXPLOITS CHILDREN ONLINE?

A common, but wrong idea about online child sexual exploiters is that they are old, lonely men. This is not always true. Online sexual offenders can be women and young people but are usually men of all ages and professions. They come from various social classes, ethnicities and religions. They might have families, be one of the exploited child's family members, or be strangers.

Sexual exploiters often claim to be someone else on the internet. For example, they might pretend to be a child's friend to convince the child to send revealing pictures or videos. The offender will then exploit the child by distributing the pictures and videos on the internet for other people to buy and see.

Sometimes people who produce and distribute online sexual abuse materials are part of an organised crime gang. Organised gangs are very dangerous and are usually involved in other criminal activities.

Some online child sexual exploiters play a role in producing sexual abusive materials while others take pleasure in viewing materials as they download. To view, collect, and possess sexual abusive materials is a crime.



## **Taking Action - Example from North America**

Beyond Borders ECPAT Canada hosted educational events about how children can stay safe online. Speakers with experience of victims of cyber bullying and cyber sexual harassment gave presentations.

High school and university students were able to attend and reported that they wanted to share the information with their peers. One idea for how to do this is for youth to organise an event in school to encourage friends to join the campaign in staying safe online and offline.



### IN REAL LIFE:

Mr.P is a fisherman from a small village in Southeast Asia. A few months of the year are off-season for Mr.P so he has to earn extra money for his family. Mr.P and his wife hear that they can earn money by taking pictures of their 10 year old daughter and 5 year old son naked and putting these on the internet.

Mr.P and his wife think that since the pictures were taken in a private setting like their home it would not cause any harm. They believe that the pictures would only be viewed by a few people who pay them money in return. Since their children are not getting physically hurt, Mr.P and his wife think it must be OK.

*How might Mr.P and his wife's actions hurt their children in the future?*

## WHO ARE VICTIMS ABUSED THROUGH ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?

All children and young people regardless of their background or where they live can be at risk of online sexual exploitation. However, living in a vulnerable environment, such as being very poor, or being abused or feeling lonely and having low self-esteem, can make children especially vulnerable.



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Sometimes victims of online sexual exploitation are young people who have access to technology themselves or know others who have access to it and can photograph or videotape them. However, keep in mind that children do not need access to the internet or mobile phones to become a victim.





*What about youth who seek sexual relationships with adults, online and offline, by selling or sharing their own images and videos?*

Some young people think that engaging in such activities is normal for different reasons. In some cases, it might be influence from the media or friends that make young people believe it is normal to publicly share pictures. Young people may also be curious about intimacy and romance or want to learn about relationships and sex.

For many reasons youth engage with adults online because it can make them feel 'grown up'. The protection of a computer screen can make them believe they are 'safe'. However, it can be easy to forget that adults can often easily manipulate children.

Everyone makes mistakes and any young person or child who feels unsafe, online or offline, should tell someone they trust. This may be embarrassing, or the young person might worry that people will think it is their fault, but it is better to feel protected than try to cope alone.





**IN REAL LIFE:**

F is 15 years old and lives in a crowded orphanage with little supervision from her carers. One day, while on the internet, she comes across fliers that advertise modeling careers. F wants to make money so she signs up for the modeling agency and begins posting revealing pictures of herself. F feels like a grown up because other adults appreciate her picture and pay her to send more.

*What would you do if you were F and saw the fliers? What would you do if you started selling your picture and then realised it was not a good idea?*

## WHAT IS HARM DONE TO CHILDREN?

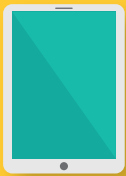
Children and young people who experience online sexual exploitation can suffer physical, mental and emotional trauma such as depression, low self-esteem and lack of confidence. This can leave them with long-term problems. Children may also feel shame and humiliation at the thought of being recognised fear that this will always happen.





It is difficult to remove images and videos online as these materials spread quickly and all over the world. Children may suffer long-term trauma at the thought of people still having access to their images and videos even when they are adults.

Children and young people may find it difficult to trust others, have nightmares, isolate themselves and live in fear. They may also isolate themselves because they feel that the images hide the abuse they experienced as they are sometimes made to look like willing participants.



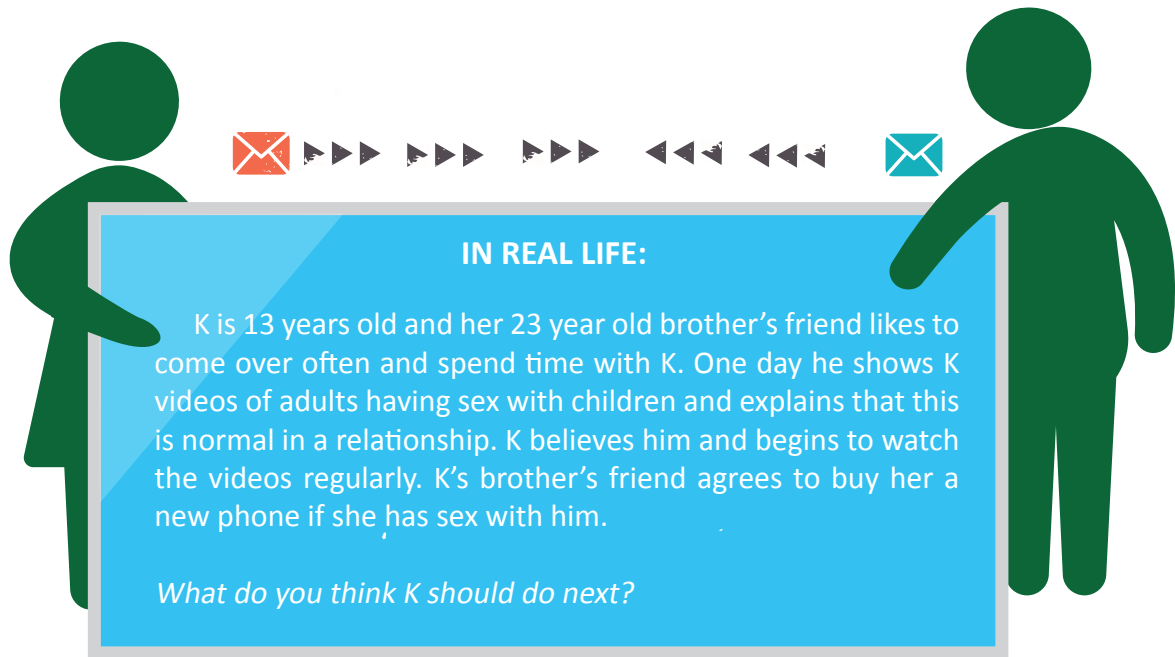
### Taking Action - Example from Africa

In January 2013, ECPAT International collaborated with membership organisations in Africa to conduct a youth-led study on the usage of ICT.

Here are some facts we found:

- Almost 82% of children in Gambia access the internet at a cybercafé
- In Uganda, over 50% of children said they saw children their age or younger in sexual abuse materials
- Around 85% of children in Togo exchange files through Bluetooth and MMS
- Over 50% of children have seen sexual abuse materials on the internet in Kenya
- In Cameroon, only 20% of children said their school had events that talked about internet safety.

For more information access the report at: <http://bit.ly/1fQQKnk>



**IN REAL LIFE:**

K is 13 years old and her 23 year old brother's friend likes to come over often and spend time with K. One day he shows K videos of adults having sex with children and explains that this is normal in a relationship. K believes him and begins to watch the videos regularly. K's brother's friend agrees to buy her a new phone if she has sex with him.

*What do you think K should do next?*

## WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

There are different kinds of laws, including global and regional international treaties and national legal acts.

International laws are normally made up of agreements between many countries and set certain standards for national laws and policies. The most important international agreement regarding child sexual exploitation online is the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC). This says that children and young people should be protected from all kinds of sexual exploitation, including the production, viewing and distribution of sexual abuse materials.



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There are also a number of regional legal agreements. In Europe, the most important are the Council of Europe Conventions on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention), the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention) and the European Union Directive on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography. These laws make producing, distributing and viewing online sexual



### Taking Action - Example from Europe

ECPAT groups in UK, Austria, Germany, Netherlands and Belgium started a 'make-IT-safe' campaign that enhanced the knowledge of youth on safe and responsible use of the internet and new technology.

Young people were trained to be "experts" on online safety like adjusting Facebook security settings. They then helped and supported other peers in being safe online.

abuse materials a crime and state that offenders should be punished. The Lanzarote Convention is the first international treaty to prohibit cyber grooming. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which is signed by most African countries, also mentions that children should not be used in pornographic activities, performances, and materials. There have also been awareness initiatives in Latin America and Asian regions that hold governments responsible to signing the OPSC.

Each country has its own national (sometimes called 'domestic') laws. Once a country has signed an international agreement it is then supposed to adapt its national laws to meet the international standards. Even though there are national laws, children and young people are not always protected. Some countries have domestic laws that address online sexual abuse while others are still slow to change their laws. Sometimes the law is in place but no action is taken.





The internet's global connection also makes it difficult to track down people who have produced or accessed materials and countries have to work together to exchange information so offenders can be caught and victims helped. In some countries there are special protection and police units that children can turn to for help and guidance. However there may not be enough specially



trained police or professionals to investigate and track down every offender or victim. This might be because the domestic law is not strong enough and gives opportunities to offenders to escape. In some cases, those who are caught might pay 'compensation' to the child or young person or their family to avoid action being taken.



- SOME COUNTRIES HAVE DOMESTIC LAWS THAT ADDRESS ONLINE SEXUAL ABUSE WHILE OTHERS ARE STILL SLOW TO CHANGE THEIR LAWS.
- SOMETIMES THE LAW IS IN PLACE BUT NO ACTION IS TAKEN.

# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS PROTECTED


# WHAT CAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DO TO HELP IN COMBATING ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?

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## SPEAKING OUT

If you think someone is being cyber bullied, sexually harassed, exploited or groomed online, please tell someone. Depending on the situation this might mean talking to an adult you trust, or going to the police or child protection services. If you are not sure the best thing to do, contact a child helpline or one of the other organisations on page 23-24 and ask for their advice.



## TALK TO YOUR PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

To stay safe online and keep away from sexual abuse materials, you can talk to your parents or guardians about blocking websites with child abuse images or videos, or registering personal computer codes.



## SPREADING THE WORD

Talk to your friends and family about what you have read in this guide, and raise awareness about the problem of online sexual exploitation. Warn your friends about the possible risks related to job offers, promises of attractive modelling careers or family or friends taking pictures or videos that are too revealing even if it is in the privacy of a familiar setting.



## TAKING ACTION

There are lots of actions that children and young people can take to help combat online abuse. Examples include:

- ➡ finding out if you have a child hotline / helpline or somewhere to report online abuse in your country, and if not writing letters and working with organisations to get one started;
- ➡ talking to a teacher or principal in your school about inviting people to present on how to stay safe online;
- ➡ telling your parents/guardians about ways to make using the internet or mobile phone safer, or asking them what advice they can give you on internet safety.

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Another idea is to celebrate Safer Internet Day by distributing awareness material or simply talking to your peers about how to use technology and social media in a safer way. If you access the internet in public places such as cybercafés, try to find out what the owner knows on this issue and what safeguards are put in place for children.



### Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day was started by INSAFE, a European network of awareness centres that promote the safe and responsible use of the internet and mobile devices by children and young people. The day aims to advocate for safe and responsible use of internet by children and young people through public events and sharing ideas and information. Safer Internet Day is celebrated in more than 100 countries worldwide and every year INSAFE chooses a new emerging issue as a theme. Safer Internet Day takes place every year in the second week of February.

For more information see [www.saferinternetday.org](http://www.saferinternetday.org)

# TIPS ON HOW TO STAY SAFE ONLINE



## BE CAREFUL AND THINK TWICE:

When talking to someone you just met online, think twice before sharing your home address, telephone number or school's name or other personal information. Be careful when sending your picture, credit card or bank details to someone you don't know or just met.



## LEARN TO SAY NO

Remember you can say NO or choose leave a chat room if someone says or writes something which makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.



## IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO TELL SOME ONE:

If you have agreed to send a naked or revealing picture or video and you regret it or are scared, talk to a trusted person. If you think that someone is taking pictures or videos of you without your consent, confront them or tell someone you trust. Details of organisations you can contact if you would prefer not to speak to someone you know can be found on page 23-24.



## BEFORE YOU POST OR UPLOAD ANYTHING,

remember that what is posted on the internet is permanent, widespread, and hard to delete.



## SET PRIVACY ON YOURS SOCIAL MEDIA

Check the privacy settings on your social media and chat room accounts regularly and always make use of them to control who can chat with you or share your pictures and videos.





# ORGANISATIONS WORKING TO END ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

There are many organisations working to end online sexual exploitation of children and young people. Here are some of the largest, working globally. You can contact them for more information or to find details about local organisations in your area:

## GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS WHERE CHILDREN CAN REPORT ABUSE



**Virtual Global Taskforce** (<http://www.virtualglobaltaskforce.com>) is dedicated to investigating online abuse and exploitation. Through the website, children and adults can 'Report Abuse' with the click of a button. You can report abuse in Australia, Canada, Italy, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, UAE, UK, and USA.



**INHOPE** (<http://www.inhope.org/gns/home.aspx>) is an active and collaborative network of hotlines in 45 countries worldwide, dealing with illegal content online and committed to stamping out child sexual abuse from the Internet. INHOPE Hotlines offer the public a way of anonymously reporting Internet material including child sexual abuse material they suspect to be illegal. If you found child sexual abuse material online, please visit the website to find a hotline in your country to report.



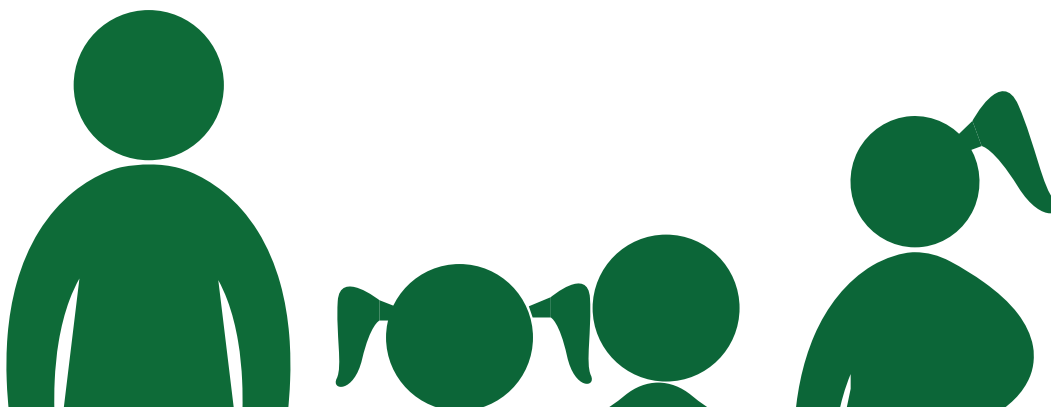
**Child Helpline International** ([www.childhelplineinternational.org/where-we-work](http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/where-we-work)) establishes help lines all over the world. If you are a victim or know someone who is being/has been exploited please visit the website to find a help line number in your country.

## CHILD-FRIENDLY RESOURCES FOR ONLINE SAFETY

The websites below provide resources such as interactive games, tips or advice, and workshops for children of all ages, teachers/educators, and parents/guardians on staying safe online:

Organisation	Website
ECPAT International	<a href="http://www.ecpat.net">www.ecpat.net</a>
ChildNet International	<a href="http://www.childnet.com">www.childnet.com</a>
*Think U Know	<a href="http://www.thinkuknow.com">www.thinkuknow.com</a>
*UK Safer Internet Centre	<a href="http://www.saferinternet.org.uk">http://www.saferinternet.org.uk</a>
Digizen	<a href="http://www.digizen.org">www.digizen.org</a>
Kid Smart	<a href="http://www.kidsmart.org.uk">www.kidsmart.org.uk</a>
Stay Smart Online	<a href="http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au">www.staysmartonline.gov.au</a>
NetSmartz Workshop (USA)	<a href="http://www.netsmartz.org">http://www.netsmartz.org</a>
*Netsafe	<a href="http://www.netsafe.org.nz">http://www.netsafe.org.nz</a>
*Cyber Kids (ECPAT New Zealand)	<a href="http://www.cyberkids.co.nz">www.cyberkids.co.nz</a>
European NGO Alliance for Child Safety Online (eNACSO)	<a href="http://www.enacso.eu">http://www.enacso.eu</a>

\* European NGO Alliance for child safety online



THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS GUIDE. WE HOPE THAT IT HAS HELPED YOU TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO BOTH SUPPORT THE FIGHT TO END IT AND PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BECOMING A VICTIM.



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