



# TIPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

## STAYING SAFE ONLINE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

unicef   
for every child

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all aspects of our lives. With schools closed and lockdowns imposed, you may be spending all of your time at home and will most likely be spending a lot of that time online. This opportunity to spend much more time online can be both a positive thing and a social lifeline, but it also comes with the possibility of increased risks.

Here are some practical steps you can follow to keep yourself safer during this period and improve the time that you and your family have both online and offline:



1. **It is important to check your privacy settings on ALL of your social media accounts and know how to set your accounts to private or to friends online.** You can find advice [here](#) or [here](#) on how to change your settings.



2. Make sure that **when you are using any applications that use video, your location cannot be identified.**





3. When you step away from the camera for any reason, the video may still be on and recording. **It is okay to cover the camera when not using it.** ALWAYS ensure that the video is turned off at the end of a session. And think about what other people can see when the video is on.



4. **Be extra careful of how you treat and communicate with your friends online** during this time. Think about how your posts, comments, likes and shares might affect those who see them.



5. **Meeting new people is part of the attraction of being online but be extra careful while you are online during the pandemic.** Remember that not everyone online who wants to talk to you has the same reason as you for wanting to chat. **If you are in any doubt, block the person and speak to a trusted adult about your concerns.**



6. **You may receive unwanted messages, photos and videos, including some with sexual content.** You can delete what you receive. You can block the sender and report them. You may also be asked or pressured to share images of yourself by people you know and by strangers. Think about what you share – **you cannot control what happens to your image once you have sent it. And remember - it is not okay to share other people's private images.**



**7. If anyone online asks you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable in any way at all, end the conversation immediately and block the person.** If you do something that you realize was not a good idea, or that you regret doing, speak to an adult about it, someone you know and trust, as soon as possible. It is never too late to ask for help.



**8. Identify an adult you trust and agree with your parents that you will speak to that person about any concerns:** you may be able to confide in your parents but it is common for young people to not want to speak to their parents about many of the things that bother them, or that may involve any forms of sexual exploration or behaviour, either online or offline.



**9. Know where to seek help and assistance:** It is important that you know where you can report any experiences online that make you feel uncomfortable.

a. **You can block anyone that asks you for or sends you content and messages that you do not want.** You can also make a report to the platform if you see, receive or are asked to send content that makes you uncomfortable, including sexualised content.



© UNICEF/UNI320299/Cherdchaisripong



© UNICEF/UNI304647/Ma

- b. If your own nude or explicit image has been shared, you can report this to the platform or application where it was shared, to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#), to the [CyberTipline](#) and to the [national hotline](#) in your country to help to get it taken down.
- c. Reach out for support – **you can talk anonymously to someone about your experiences through local online and telephone helplines.** Contact a [national Child Helpline](#).
- d. And click [here](#) for tips and advice if you are experiencing cyberbullying.



- 10.** This is not an easy time. You may feel more anxious and frustrated than usual while being isolated at home. Though being at home and indoors so much and physically isolated can be stressful, it is also an important opportunity to **deepen your friendships and relationships, and to explore new offline or online hobbies or do things you usually don't have time to do.**



- 11. Try and spread your time between the different online activities** to make sure that you allocate enough time to doing homework and schooling from home, as well as time on social media, gaming and chatting. Think of how to keep fit and healthy with online fitness programmes or challenges – things you can do online for yourself or with friends and family. It is also important that you set aside time to ensuring your mental well-being. You could try meditation or relaxation apps and programmes. **Think about how you can be more creative online:** Are there social mobilization campaigns you can design and lead, that you think other children your age could benefit from, either in your city or all over the world? Can you help with online support or safety messaging and campaigns? Now would be a good time to see if there are any volunteer activities that you could support through the digital space.

**And remember that it is important to take breaks from being online! And spend time doing other things. Have some quality time with your family. And at night, think about turning off your notifications and placing your devices away from where you sleep so you can get some rest.**



© UNICEF/UNI320296/Cherdchaisripong

© UNICEF 2020

Developed by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office with the support of Patrick Burton of the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention and Dr. Monica Bulger of Literacy Online