

Navigating the ‘new normal’ – advice for young people to stay safe online

Overview

This year certainly did not pan out as we had planned — the COVID-19 pandemic has created a world we could never have imagined. By March, Australian students made the transition to remote learning to help stem the spread of the virus and increased their use of technology to communicate with friends, family, and teachers daily.

Unfortunately, at the height of the COVID-19 crisis, with young people spending more time online, we saw forms of online abuse like cyberbullying and image-based abuse increase.

While lockdown restrictions are slowly being lifted across Australia and students return to school, we remain cautious about the possibility of having to self-isolate again — particularly if there is another major outbreak. And if so, a safe and supportive online environment is vital.

We’ve developed engaging, targeted content and advice for young people, aged 13 to 18, on a range of issues to help support them during isolation, spending more time online or navigating any uncharted territory. This includes things like staying connected with friends; cyberbullying and social exclusion; managing your time online; managing mental health; fake news; and being cautious of online relationships.

The content provides useful tips to support the digital wellbeing of young people as well as advice on what to do if things go wrong.

We appreciate your support in promoting our new advice — we have created resources and digital assets so you can join in on the conversation and help us keep young people safe online.

How you can help

We would love your support in spreading the word about our new online safety advice for young people. You can do this by:

1. Forwarding this kit to relevant stakeholders.
2. Sharing our key messages on your social media channels (suggestions below) to help us reach young people.
3. Publishing an article, blog or post.
4. Including an article in your next newsletter.



Social media posts

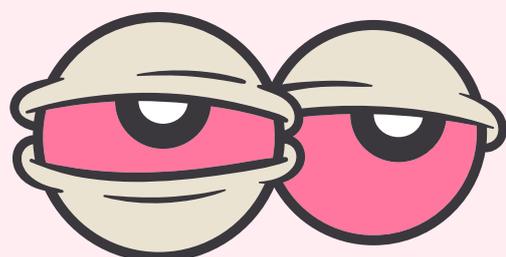
Social media tiles

As part of this kit, you will find social tiles that are designed for use on social media with the suggested copy.

Suggested copy for social media

You can use or adapt the following posts suitable to your audience on either Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. eSafety's accounts can be found at: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

Theme	Content
Being separated from friends	<p>How are you staying in touch with friends online? It's hard not being able to see all of your friends in person all at the same time, so @eSafetyOffice have put together some great tips to help you #stayconnected esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety</p> <p>@eSafetyOffice shows us creative ways to #stayconnected with your friends and even flex your skills with a #StayAtHomeChallenge esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety</p>
Self-isolation Mental health	<p>Are you or someone you know having a bit of a tough time online? @eSafetyOffice is here to help. Check out their advice to make sure you're having positive online experiences esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety</p>
Intimacy and relationships	<p>Has #socialdistancing had an impact on your relationships? For some, online dating apps are your go-to, however it's important to be aware of some of the risks. @eSafetyOffice can help esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #stayathome #COVID19 #OnlineSafety</p> <p>Heard of image-based abuse? You might know it as 'revenge porn'. It's a serious issue & can happen to anyone. @eSafetyOffice is here to help you protect yourself online esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety</p> <p>It's not cool to share other people's nude images. If it happens to you, get help @eSafetyOffice : esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people</p> <p>"Promise u won't share it with anyone k?" – When it comes to sharing nudes there is no guarantee it will stay private. Before clicking send see @eSafetyOffice advice if you feel pressured or unsure about how to say no esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety</p>
Cyberbullying	<p>Have you seen someone creating drama online that might be hurting others but you're not sure what to do about it? @eSafetyOffice has helpful advice on what to do if you see it: *insert link* #OnlineSafety</p> <p>Being left out of a group or video chat on purpose? Not cool, right? If you see it happen, don't let it slide. eSafety can help with what to do if it happens: esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety</p>
Managing your time online	<p>Need a break from the feed? Check out @eSafetyOffice's tips to help you manage your time online esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #stayathome #COVID19 #OnlineSafety</p> <p>While spending 6 hours straight watching random videos on YouTube might be fun, we can all agree it's not always productive. @eSafetyOffice has some handy tips to help you manage your time online a little better esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #isolife #stayathome #COVID19 #OnlineSafety</p>
General	<p>eSafety has put together your go-to guide to staying safe online: esafety.gov.au/covid-young-people #OnlineSafety #stayathome</p>



Publishing an article, blog, or post

Below is some suggested copy you can adapt and use for a newsletter, blog, or similar in communicating to young people or people who work with them about how to stay safe online during COVID-19.

For educators or mental health workers

For young people, not being able to socialise in person during the height of COVID-19 restrictions meant spending a lot of social time at home playing video games, chatting online or scrolling through Tik Tok videos.

Unfortunately, with young people spending more time online, the investigators at the eSafety Commissioner saw forms of online abuse like cyberbullying and image-based abuse increase.

While lockdown restrictions are slowly being lifted across Australia and students return to school, it's important to remain cautious about the possibility of having to self-isolate again — particularly if there is another major outbreak. And if so, a safe and supportive online environment is vital.

eSafety have developed engaging, targeted content and advice for young people, aged 13 to 18, on a range of issues to help support them during isolation and beyond. This includes things like staying connected with friends; cyberbullying and social exclusion; managing your time online; managing mental health; fake news; and being cautious of online relationships.

The content provides useful tips to support the digital wellbeing of young people as well as advice on what to do if things go wrong. For more information, head to esafety.gov.au.

For young people

2020 sure hasn't turned out quite like what we had planned. It's safe to say, it's a weird time that can be a little frustrating and confusing for a lot of people.

And to top it off, school life is probably a little overwhelming. Trying to navigate homework, online classes, your family all home at the same time and spending more and more time online to stay connected and in touch with your friends (and scroll through Tik Tok videos!) is a lot to deal with. The good news is the restrictions are slowly being lifted and you may feel like life is returning to some form of 'normal'. However, it's important to keep in mind that if another outbreak occurs, we may have to isolate again.

Technology has played a really big part during isolation, helping us to feel connected. But more time online unfortunately can mean we're being exposed to more risks like cyberbullying or image-based abuse (more commonly known as revenge porn).

The eSafety Commissioner is a government agency that is working to keep Australians safer online — especially young people. Sadly, young people are one of the most at-risk age groups for things like being bullied online or having nudes shared without consent.

eSafety have put together some tips and advice to help keep you and your friends safe online during lockdown. This includes things like staying connected with friends; online bullying and social exclusion; managing your time online; managing mental health; fake news; and being cautious of online relationships.

Whatever you may experience online during this time, the team at eSafety have advice and reporting options to help you out at esafety.gov.au.

