

Fact sheet for young people

DEALING WITH UNWANTED CONTACT

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What is unwanted contact?

Unwanted contact online is any type of communication that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. It can come from a random stranger or even someone you know.

Our research shows one in four young people are contacted by strangers online. Contact from a random stranger can be risky. But even online contact from someone you know can make you feel something is not quite right.

How to protect yourself from being contacted by strangers

Here are some things you can do to protect yourself from unwanted contact online:

- **Make your accounts private** - adjust your privacy settings to control who sees your posts and who contacts you. For example, update your settings to only accept messages from people on your 'friends' list. It's also a good idea to check how visible your location is to others — make sure only you or specific friends can see it.
- **Delete contacts you don't talk to** - tidy up your 'friends' list by deleting those you don't actually know. Birthday notifications can help - if you don't know them well enough to say HBD, think about deleting them.
- **Delete requests from randoms** - when you get a friend or follow request from someone you don't know, check if you have mutual friends. Remember, it's easy for people to pretend they're someone they are not online. If you're unsure, delete the request.

Signs to look out for

Some people who contact you genuinely just want to be friends or chat. The problem is that some others, both men and women, may try to scam you, trick you into giving them nude or sexual pictures or videos, or harm you in some other way.

The person contacting you online could be older than you or close to your age. It might be a stranger, or it might be someone you know. It could start innocently, with someone being very friendly and helpful, before things get uncomfortable or risky.

Here are some warning signs:

- You feel that something is not right - trust your instincts.
- Things don't add up - their online profile doesn't match what you see and hear when you talk or chat with them.
- They tell you their webcam is broken - sometimes a person who wants to harm you pretends to be your age and says their webcam is broken so you can't see what they really look like.
- They contact you frequently and in different ways - for example, you meet them on Instagram, then they switch platforms and start direct messaging you.
- They ask you who else uses your computer or tablet - or even which room of your house you are in.
- They ask you for favours and do things in return - they may even offer you money or followers, but then won't deliver what they've promised.
- They say they like your appearance or body - or ask very personal things like 'have you ever been kissed'?
- They insist on meeting - and try to make you feel guilty or threaten you if you don't agree.
- They want to keep your relationship secret - people who want to harm you often try to keep their friendship with you extremely private from the beginning.

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How to deal with unwanted contact

If contact with a stranger, or with someone you know, makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, stop responding to them straight away.

In situations like this, it is really important to talk to a trusted adult about what's been happening.

- **Screenshot evidence** - of anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- **Report and block** - once you have all your screenshots, report the person directly to the platform and then block their account.
- **Report to eSafety** - if the contact continues, get help. You might be able to make a cyberbullying report if you are under 18. If you are over 18, read eSafety's advice on adult cyber abuse. Visit www.esafety.gov.au/report.
- **Report to police** - you can make a confidential report about actual or suspected criminal information to Crime Stoppers on **1800 333 000** or at www.crimestoppers.com.au. If you feel you are in immediate danger contact your local police, or in an emergency call Triple Zero (000).
- **Get help and support** - contact Kids Helpline at www.kidshelpline.com.au or **1800 55 1800** or Headspace (online chat and support for young people aged 12 to 25) at www.headspace.org.au.

Any piece of information, anything you have seen or heard, may be crucial in preventing or solving a crime.
We don't want to know who you are; we just want to know what you know.

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