

Being aware of risky situations



What is misinformation?

Misinformation is misleading information, either created or disseminated without manipulative or malicious intent. An example of this might be a family member sharing false information on social media without realizing it's untrue.

What is disinformation?

Disinformation is a deliberate attempt to confuse or manipulate people through dishonest information. For example, a video channel designed to look like a news source that actually broadcasts untrue information to convince people of a particular agenda.

What is hate speech?

Some content on the internet is designed to misinform or cultivate hate. Help students to recognize and avoid hateful content on websites – for example, derogatory references to race, religion or sexual orientation; swastikas; and mean-spirited cartoon depictions.

Class discussion: how can you tell real news from fake?

Encourage them to try a bit of digital sleuthing before they jump to any conclusions:

- See if the article contents have been reported at other outlets and compare their coverage and angles.
- See if the article is written in a way that feels designed to provoke a reaction.
- Research to find fact-checking sites and organizations.

- Note when the piece was published, who wrote it, whether you've heard of the outlet and whether there is an evident bias.
- Check whether the site looks normal and whether the URL is standard. If not, it could be a copycat site.
- Consider whether the number of ads and pop-ups could indicate it's a clickbait site.

Sending sexual pictures, videos and messages

What are the risks?

It can be easily forwarded, shared online, or even used for bullying or blackmail. Once shared, it could remain online forever, which might damage future employment prospects or put students at risk of a criminal record.

What does the law say?

The possession and/or sharing of sexual content depicting minors might be illegal under your local law, even if the minor in question is the person who created and shared the content.

Class discussion: how can you say no?

Remind them that this isn't 'something everyone's doing'. Explain that they can set their own boundaries and find a casual way to tell the asker they are uncomfortable. Humor can be a useful deflection tactic. No one should ever feel pressured. If you're worried, talk to a friend or trusted adult.

Help students stay alert to online grooming

What is it?

- You may have heard of grooming as a way pedophiles lead young people down a path toward online sexual exploitation.
- A similar process is used by terrorist and extremist recruiters to enlist young people to their causes.

What are the warning signs?

- Showering them with personal attention – flattery, sympathy, promises of modeling jobs or gifts like money and clothing.
- Asking them to keep a relationship or communication secret.

Class discussion: how can you avoid it?

- Prompt them to ask questions about who they meet online.
- Let them know that sexually suggestive comments and messages or requests for intimate images can be reported to social media services as well as to teachers and authorities.
- Teach them to trust their instincts – if a situation makes them feel uncomfortable, speak to a trusted adult.

Quiz

Page 2 of this document features a short quiz. Use it as a departure point to see how much students understand or as a summative assessment to see how much they have learned. Answers are below so that they do not appear on the sheet.

1. Once you share, it can be shared on to anyone. It could be posted publicly on the internet. It can exist forever online, potentially damaging your future.
2. You could get a criminal record. It could harm your future job prospects.
3. It is published on a site with a URL you don't recognize or looks weird. It is written in a way that tries to provoke you. It looks like a mainstream news website but different.
4. Fact-check it with an expert, your teacher or a fact-checking website.
5. Someone asks you not to tell your friends about your relationship. A fellow gamer asks for your address. Someone sends or requests sexual images.

Detecting the risks

What's normal and what isn't?

1. Which three of the following can happen to the content you share?

- Only the person you shared it with can see it
- Once you share, it can be shared on to anyone
- It can easily be traced, and all copies deleted
- It could be posted publicly on the internet
- It will be automatically deleted after a few months
- It can exist forever online, potentially damaging your future

2. What are two risks of sending or possessing sexual pictures?

- You could get a criminal record
- You might become more popular and get invited to parties
- It could harm your future job prospects
- There are no risks, everyone does it

3. What are three warning signs of 'fake news'?

- It is published on site with a URL you don't recognize or looks weird
- It covers a sensitive or political issue
- It is written in a way that tries to provoke strong feelings
- It has been reported in a similar way by other mainstream outlets
- It looks like a mainstream news website but slightly different

4. What should you do if you find information you think is fake?

- Ignore it and move on
- Share it with your friends to see if they notice, then you will know if you were right
- Fact-check it with an expert, your teacher or a fact-checking website

5. Which three of the following do you think could indicate grooming?

- Someone asks you not to tell your friends about your relationship, because 'they won't understand'
- A fellow gamer asks for your address or email so they can send a gift
- A Facebook post invites girls aged 12-14 to sign up for a local soccer team
- Someone sends you or requests sexual images