PSHCE Bulletin

Edition 3. How do we manage relationships online?

At UCL Academy, our community is really important to us and that includes our online community and your online community. This week we are asking, "*How do we manage relationships online?*" We hope that this edition will help you think about how you approach your relationships online and give you the tools to get the most out of them.

The relationships we have online are of varying importance to different people but most of us would agree that as social distancing has continued, our need to maintain online relationships has increased.Relationships online are not the same as our relationships in person and, as a result, can present some challenges that might be heightened or different.

As ever, there are suggested links for further advice at the end. Remember that if you come across anything online that makes you uncomfortable you should speak to a trusted adult or you can report it straight to CEOP: https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/

What are online relationships?

Online relationships can be categorised into two types:
- Another place for the people you already know IRL (in real life) to socialise
- New people you have met on online platforms

Both types of online relationships may be important to you and both types of online relationships carry different risks and rewards.

What are the risks and rewards with online relationships?

Have a think about the risks and rewards online relationships carry with them. Can you challenge yourself and think about how these risks and rewards might vary by the type of online relationship?

Rewards with online relationships	Risks with online relationships

How do you manage relationships online?

Most of the time we don't put as much thought into our relationships online as we should. There are many situations where it would help to give online relationships some more thought. These are our top tips for managing relationships online:

1. **Think before you post** - Think about why you are posting before you post it - are you going to get out of your post what you had planned? Who are you posting it for (if the answer isn't you then you probably shouldn't be sharing it)? P.S. Don't post anything that you wouldn't want your future employer, teacher or older relative to see! Remember that everything you do online can be traced back to you using your IP address.
2. **Make sure you are enjoying online communication** - If a particular network, app or website gives you enjoyment then go for it but if it starts to feel unpleasant then take a break. They are there for your enjoyment so make sure it is enjoyable.

3. **Take a break!** - If you feel overwhelmed or distracted by the number of online messages you get, remember you can always use airplane mode, mute for x hours, turn off notifications, etc to turn off the flow of messages until you are mentally ready to reengage or have finished that really important task.

4. **Keep comments positive** - We don't need any more negativity online! If you see something you don't agree with, it's best to ignore it online and talk about it in person. This prevents causing conflict and upset. It also saves your time and energy! #positivevibesonly

5. **Remember that people's online personas are only a part of their personality** - You will never see the whole person online. Online profiles often read like a highlights reel, and people are often creating an online persona very unlike the real them, so it is impossible to get to know somebody fully behind a screen.

6. **Remember that you can never guarantee that someone is who they say they are** - This is especially true if your relationship is entirely online but also true when you think you are speaking to your friend online. Enjoy the conversations you have but do not share anything too personal just in case! Any doubts be sure to report them .

7. **Beware of criminal groups operating online** - This is always a risk but the amount of crime operating online has increased during lockdown, so there is an even greater risk now. Criminal groups including gangs and terrorist organisations look online specifically for young people they can groom and encourage to join their group. Their intentions won't be obvious at first because they use a slow and steady method to gain your trust. Anyone you meet online who seems to be going out of their way to make you feel special may have a harmful motive.

8. **Keep your personal and private details personal and private** - Your personal data is really valuable and should only be owned by you. Ensure that your privacy settings mean that your profile is private. If you are speaking to someone you only know online then don't share your full name, address, school name and be really careful about any photos you share - sometimes they include personal and private details you might not have considered.

9. **Keep evidence of anything that makes you uncomfortable** but only forward it to a responsible adult (e.g. at home or school) if they specifically ask you to when you discuss the incident which made you feel uncomfortable

10. **Clarify what people meant -** remember that you can't usually read tone or context in a post online so before jumping to conclusions check that they meant what you think they meant

11. **Use the report and block functions** - Hopefully this won't be necessary but you have the option if someone is out of order

12. **Enjoy some offline communication too!** You can pick up the phone (or even go old school with a letter) and when this is all over we'll really appreciate seeing people IRL! "It is never a good idea to meet up with someone you meet online without taking a trusted adult with you. Any meetings should be in public and you should share details with trusted people.

Suggested activities:

- Write a guide for managing relationships online for the year below. Send your guides through to Ms Davies and the winning entries will be used with the years below (she will send to a primary school if you are in foundation) - email c.davies@uclacademy.co.uk

- Check your screen time, if your phone allows you to track it, what apps do you spend the most amount of time on? Does the quality of connection match up with the quantity of time you spend on each app?

- Keep a log of your posts - what have you posted and why have you posted them?

Extra reading/listening/watching:

- Short film about online relationships
- Article and video about how the internet can be used to connect during Ramadan
- Short film about fights starting online
- Article about finding video chats exhausting during COVID
- Article about the increased risks to children online during COVID

Further advice:

- Reporting anything that made you uncomfortable
- Advice on staying safe online on CEOP website.
- NSPCC website with search function to check safety of many apps
- Shout - text service when you're feeling stressed, worried or anxious: 85258
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Online and text counselling and support www.kooth.com - Watch an explanation of the service here
- COVID specific advice for your parents or carers https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online#parents