

Online Grooming

KS3 Session Guide

A 60-minute classroom session for Years 7, 8 & 9 · Differentiated throughout

KS3 · Y7 · Y8 · Y9

KCSIE 2024

PSHE ASSOCIATION

60 MIN · ADAPTABLE

DSL REVIEW RECOMMENDED

SAFEGUARDING RESOURCE

⚠ SAFEGUARDING NOTICE — READ BEFORE DELIVERING

This session may prompt a child to disclose online abuse. If a pupil discloses during or after this lesson:

- Listen carefully. Do not promise confidentiality.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Record their exact words as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Refer immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Do not inform the alleged perpetrator.

All staff delivering this session must have completed basic safeguarding training. This guide is aligned with KCSIE 2024, Part 1 and Part 5 (Child-on-child abuse and online safety obligations).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES — DIFFERENTIATED BY YEAR GROUP

YEAR 7 · AGES 11–12

- Understand what online grooming means in plain, age-appropriate terms.
- Identify the warning signs that someone online may not be who they say they are.
- Know who to talk to and feel confident asking for help from a trusted adult.

YEAR 8 · AGES 12–13

- Understand how grooming works in stages — and why it can be hard to recognise.
- Analyse the tactics used to build trust, create secrecy, and isolate victims.
- Understand why young people don't always report, and challenge that barrier.

YEAR 9 · AGES 13–14

- Critically evaluate online interactions and recognise coercive dynamics.
- Understand the psychological impact of grooming and the legal context (Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Discuss peer responsibility and bystander behaviour in online environments.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Printed or displayed scenario cards (see p.3)
- Student reflection sheets (p.4 — one per pupil)
- Pens / coloured pencils for traffic light activity
- Access to CEOP reporting link if using devices
- Display: Childline **0800 1111**

PSHE ASSOCIATION LINKS

- **H16–H18:** Asking for help; sources of support
- **H19–H20:** Online abuse; consent and coercion
- **R11–R14:** Healthy vs unhealthy relationships; grooming; coercive control
- **L8–L9:** Online safety; critical evaluation of digital content

60-MINUTE LESSON TIMELINE

TIME	PHASE	ACTIVITY & TEACHER NOTES	DIFFERENTIATION
0–5 min	Warm-Up	<p>Agree / Disagree cards. Display statements on screen — pupils move to Agree or Disagree corners (or show thumbs up/down):</p> <p>"I would always know if someone online was lying to me."</p> <p>"If someone is kind to me online, they must have good intentions."</p> <p>"Older people who want to talk to young people online are suspicious."</p> <p><i>No wrong answers — this is to surface existing thinking, not catch anyone out.</i></p>	<p>Y7: Focus on the first statement only.</p> <p>Y8–9: Use all three; prompt brief partner discussion before moving.</p>
5–12 min	Input	<p>What is grooming? Teacher-led explanation (3 min) covering: definition, where it happens, who is targeted. Emphasise it can happen to anyone — not a reflection on the victim. See Content Guide (p.3) for wording.</p> <p><i>Use the "5 Stages of Grooming" visual from p.3 if projecting on screen.</i></p>	<p>Y7: Keep definitions simple and concrete. Avoid using the word "sexual" without careful context-setting.</p> <p>Y9: Introduce the legal definition from the Sexual Offences Act 2003.</p>
12–25 min	Scenario	<p>Small group work. Assign each group the scenario matched to their year group (see p.3). Groups read the scenario and discuss three questions. Nominate one person to feed back.</p> <p><i>Walk the room and listen in. If a pupil becomes distressed or unusually quiet, check in quietly after class.</i></p>	<p>Y7: Prompt groups with "What feels odd about this?" if they get stuck.</p> <p>Y8–9: Push further — "What would you tell a friend in this situation?"</p>
25–35 min	Feedback	<p>Whole-class discussion. Groups share key points. Teacher facilitates — be ready to address victim-blaming language (e.g. "they should have known better"). Redirect to: "Groomers are skilled at manipulation. It is never the child's fault."</p>	<p>Y9: Introduce the concept of coercion and why it removes meaningful consent.</p>
35–48 min	Warning Signs	<p>Warning Signs + What to Do. Work through the "Warning Signs" section on p.3 as a class. Ask pupils to add any signs not listed. End with: "If any of this ever feels familiar — for yourself or a friend — you are not in trouble. You just need to talk to someone."</p>	<p>Y7: Focus on "who can you tell?" — list trusted adults including teachers, parents, Childline.</p> <p>Y8–9: Add CEOP reporting as an option. Explain what happens when you report.</p>
48–58 min	Reflection	<p>Individual: Student Reflection Sheet (p.4). Traffic light self-assessment + two written prompts. Pupils complete in silence. Collect sheets at the end — review for any disclosures before the next lesson.</p>	<p>Allow pupils who prefer not to write to draw a traffic light colour only. Both are valid.</p>
58–60 min	Close	<p>Display Childline number 0800 1111 on screen. Read aloud: "Before you leave — this number is free, confidential, available 24/7. You can also chat online at childline.org.uk. No question is too small."</p>	

⌚ TIME ADAPTATIONS

45-minute version: Remove the Warm-Up activity (save 5 min). Reduce scenario group work to 10 min. Keep reflection sheet — it is the most important safeguarding element.

30-minute version (form time / assembly): Input (5 min) + Scenario read-aloud (5 min) + Warning signs (5 min) + Reflection sheet only — tick boxes, no written prompts (10 min) + Close (5 min).

📖 KEY VOCABULARY

- **Grooming:** Building trust with a child to exploit or abuse them.
- **Perpetrator:** The person doing the harm.
- **Manipulation:** Making someone feel or do something through deceit.
- **Coercion:** Using pressure, threats or control to make someone act against their will.
- **Consent:** Freely and knowingly agreeing to something.
- **CEOP:** Child Exploitation and Online Protection — part of the National Crime Agency.

WHAT IS GROOMING?

Online grooming is when someone – usually an adult, but not always – uses the internet to build a relationship with a child with the aim of exploiting or abusing them. It can happen on any platform: gaming sites, social media, messaging apps, even school forums.

Groomers are patient, skilled and deliberate. The process can take weeks, months or longer. The child often does not realise what is happening until they feel trapped.

Key message for pupils: If an online relationship ever makes you feel confused, special-but-secret, or pressured – that is not a normal friendship. Normal friendships do not ask you to keep secrets from your parents or carers.

THE 5 STAGES OF GROOMING

1. **Target** – Identify a child who appears vulnerable, isolated or seeking attention.
2. **Gain Trust** – Be kind, understanding, generous. Act like the best friend the child never had.
3. **Fill a Need** – Offer gifts, emotional support, validation, excitement.
4. **Isolate** – Encourage secrecy. Undermine the child's trust in family and friends.
5. **Exploit** – Once trust and secrecy are established, begin requesting images, meetings or other harmful acts.

SCENARIOS – USE THE ONE MATCHED TO YOUR YEAR GROUP

Year 7 Scenario · "The Gamer" · Ages 11–12

Amara, 12, has been playing an online game for a few weeks. A player called Jake messages her privately. He says he's 15, loves the same music as her and always cheers her on in the game. He sends her in-game gifts and says she's "one of the only good players" he's met. After a few days, he asks if she wants to move the chat to WhatsApp so they can "talk properly" away from the game.

Discuss: What warning signs can you spot? Why might Amara feel good about this friendship? What should she do next?

Year 8 Scenario · "The Older Guy" · Ages 12–13

Sophie, 13, has been chatting with someone called Ryan for three weeks. He says he's 16. He tells her she's "so mature for her age" and "different from other girls." He shares personal things about his life and says she's the only person who understands him. Now he's asked her to send a photo. When she hesitates, he says: "If you trusted me, you'd do it. I thought we were close."

Discuss: Identify the grooming tactics Ryan is using. Why might Sophie feel guilty or confused? What does "trust" actually mean in a healthy relationship?

Year 9 Scenario · "The Group Chat" · Ages 13–14

Tyler, 14, met some older lads through a local football group online. One of them, who says he's 17, has been messaging Tyler privately. He sends videos and screenshots and asks Tyler to "react" to them. The content makes Tyler uncomfortable, but he doesn't want to seem immature or "soft." The guy says: "Don't tell anyone about this – they wouldn't understand our friendship." Tyler's mood has changed and he's spending more time alone.

Discuss: What coercive tactics are being used here? Why is secrecy a red flag? As a bystander – if you noticed Tyler's change in behaviour, what would you do?

WARNING SIGNS – SHARE THESE WITH PUPILS

- Someone online asks you to keep the friendship secret
- They ask you to move to a more private platform
- They send gifts, money or game credits without reason
- They say you're "more mature" or "special" compared to others
- They ask for photos – of any kind – early in a conversation
- They make you feel guilty if you don't reply straight away
- They talk negatively about your family or real-life friends
- The relationship feels intense very quickly
- They ask where you are, where you go, who you're with
- You feel excited but also confused or uncomfortable

Online Safety: My Reflection

Online Grooming — What I know, what I'll do

HOW DO I FEEL ABOUT THIS TOPIC RIGHT NOW?

Circle or colour in the one that feels most honest. There is no right or wrong answer.



I NEED MORE SUPPORT

I feel worried or confused about something I've heard today. I'd like to talk to someone.



I HAVE QUESTIONS

I understand some of this but I'm not sure about all of it. I might have questions I haven't asked yet.



I UNDERSTAND THIS

I feel confident I know what grooming looks like and I know what to do if I'm worried.

1. One thing I learned today that I didn't know before:

2. If I was worried about myself or a friend online, I would:

3. One person I could talk to if I had a worry (name or role):

YOU CAN ALWAYS GET HELP

Childline — Free, confidential, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Call **0800 1111** | Chat online at [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

You do not need to give your name. You will not get in trouble.

CEOP Safety Centre — If someone online has asked for photos, threatened you, or made you feel unsafe, you can make a report at [ceop.police.uk](https://www.ceop.police.uk) — your teacher can help you do this.



TEACHER NOTE — COLLECT THIS SHEET

Please collect all reflection sheets at the end of the session. Review them before the next school day. A red traffic light response, or written content that suggests the pupil may have experienced harm, should be referred to the DSL. Do not leave sheets unreviewed. If a pupil has left the name field blank, honour that — the content of their response still matters.