



**Title: Going out**  
**Part 2: Meeting and dating online**

**Level: SENIOR**

**Links to Curriculum for Excellence**

In terms of Curriculum for Excellence, this level is concerned with extending or deepening what is described at Fourth Level.

Experiences and Outcomes	Benchmarks
<p>I am developing skills for making decisions about my relationships and sexual behaviour. I am able to apply these to situations that may be challenging or difficult. HWB 4-46c</p> <p>I reflect on how my attitudes, beliefs, values and morality can influence my decisions about friendships, relationships and sexual behaviour. HWB 4-46a</p> <p>Using what I have learned I am able to make informed decisions and choices that promote and protect my own and others’ sexual health and wellbeing. HWB 4-47b</p> <p>I am aware of the need to respect personal space and boundaries and can recognise and respond appropriately to verbal and non-verbal communication. HWB 4-45b</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the skills needed to manage challenging situations within relationships, including sexual relationships, for example, compromise, empathy, decisiveness.</li> <li>• Understands the rights and responsibilities required for safe and enjoyable sex.</li> <li>• Distinguishes between a balance of power and abuse of power in relationships, for example, respect, trust, coercion, consent.</li> </ul>

**Learning intentions**

- Young people acknowledge their growing independence and exposure to different and difficult social situations - face-to-face and online.
- Young people consider personal safety, and that of friends.
- Young people reflect on their behaviour toward others.

**Success criteria**

- I can talk about my own safety and wellbeing in social situations – face-to-face and online.
- I can plan and respond in social situations in order to ensure my own safety and wellbeing and that of others.
- I am building understanding, skills and capacity to assert myself and express what I want and don’t want.
- I am aware of how my behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal, can impact on others.

**Resources to support this activity**

- PowerPoint slides
- How are dating apps changing relationships? CBS News (11 minutes 7 seconds) <https://youtu.be/Sj78ZO-mBkU>
- Thinkuknow Digital dating [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/Need-advice/Online-dating/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Need-advice/Online-dating/)
- Thinkuknow: Worried about a friend: [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/Worried-about-a-friend/Online-friends/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Worried-about-a-friend/Online-friends/)

## Activity

1. Start with a quick review of the last session – reminding young people that the session explored going out and keeping both yourself and others safe. Introduce this session as being about another aspect of meeting people and dating – this time online. Explain that the session will look again at how we look after ourselves, but also again how we look after friends.  
Explain that this session, as with much of our RSHP learning, asks people to respect privacy and confidentiality – so no sharing of private information that belongs to others. Also that in conversation you don't expect young people to share private information about what they do online.
2. Use the slide to pose the questions, thinking about it as a group: **Do you feel freer or braver when you are online? Does meeting someone online feel different to meeting face-to-face?** After some contributions ask the young people to keep in the back of their minds how they feel when they are interacting online.
3. **Exploring your identity online.** Share the slides, acknowledge that older people probably don't understand that young people explore and experience who they are online as much as they might do in other social situations. Share the slide:

**Exploring your identity online:** We all feel different sometimes. It can feel like it's hard to find people who get you: people who are into the same things, share the same experiences, and know where you're coming from.

Then pose a question for the class/group: *How true is this statement do you think?*  
Then: *Do you think there are some young people who particularly look to online relationships to meet others and explore who they are?* (Young people might identify people with a particular interest or a shared characteristic, such as being LGB or T).

Share the next slides:

### Exploring your identity online

Apps, websites and social networks make it easy for people to connect. When you do find someone who gets you and knows what you're going through, it feels great.

For LGBT young people being online can be particularly useful. 96 per cent of LGBT young people say the internet has helped them understand more about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and 93 per cent say they found the advice and support they needed through the internet.

Young people with autism can find it easier to meet and connect to other people online and develop relationships. It allows them to socialise and express themselves.

Then discuss, in doing so ask: **What do you think the advantages might be for any young person exploring and meeting people they think are like them online?** Then: **What are the risks?** (The class/group will return to this again, so just take some initial thoughts).

4. Use the slide to ask the next question. Keep in mind that young people might think about platforms like Instagram or Facebook that everyone has and where you can meet people, but also 'dating' apps. **What apps do people use to meet others? And specifically if they are wanting to 'date'?**

Also, when thinking about social media platforms like these, most have minimum age requirements, but they are not necessarily legal, most dating apps expect users to be at least 17 or 18, something called age verification. Thinking about the sites/apps mentioned ask: *Do young people pay attention to age rules/verification? Do they work?*

5. **Online relationships and dating:** share the slide:  
Seven million UK residents are registered on dating sites, and around one in three relationships in the UK now start online (source: Sky News). **Why do you think so many people meet and get together online?**
6. Watch the film: **How are dating apps changing relationships?** CBS News (11 minutes 7 seconds) <https://youtu.be/Sj78ZO-mBkU> In this US news interview couples counsellor and sex and relationship therapist Alyssa Siegel discusses how dating apps have changed the way people view relationships. Discuss any thoughts after viewing. NOTE: *If you do not want to watch this film you may make time for the additional focus/activity provided at the end of this Activity Plan which explores safety around actually meeting someone after online chats/dating.*
7. **So you are chatting online....** Explain that the next bit of the activity is looking at how we keep ourselves safe, whether just meeting and chatting online or thinking about dating having met online. Use the slide with the Sky News headline: *Dark side of online dating: Crimes rise dramatically in last five years.* And share the prompt for discussion – in pairs or as a group.

**So you are chatting online....** They seem nice. You have chatted a few times. Then there is something that doesn't feel right....  
What are the warning signs that someone could be fake or an abuser?

Discuss, get feedback, share the next slide and check against what has been said.

- **They are just too good to be true.** They share all your interests, they give you lots of attention, they make you feel special, things are moving fast...
- **Flattery.** They praise pictures on your profile, say you're sexy, fit.... It's hard to think critically because they are praising you.
- **Let's talk about sex.** They try to get you to talk about sex...
- **Got any sexy pictures?** They are asking you for pictures....
- **Can we go somewhere more private?** They ask for private chats....
- **Our little secret?** They don't want other people to know you are chatting.
- **Mood swings.** They flatter you and pay attention, then they ask for something, you hesitate or say 'no' so they take that attention away or turn nasty.
- **My camera's broken.** They don't want you to see them.

8. **Worried your friend has met someone dodgy online?** Continuing with the theme of not just looking after ourselves but looking after others too, pose the questions on the slide. Ask young people to work in pairs/groups to identify a number of things that might be a 'warning sign' and also some solutions or ideas about how to help. After some discussion share the slide with some suggestions, compare and chat.

**Worried your friend has met someone dodgy online? How would you know and what could you do to help?**

**Worried your friend has met someone dodgy online?**

**How would you know? What would be the warning signs?**

- Have they become very secretive? And stopped sharing messages or their profile?
- Are they distant?
- Have they mentioned someone new? Or someone older?
- Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?
- Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media?
- Are they thinking of meeting someone they have only met online?

**How could you help?**

- Listen, don't judge, be there for them.
- Help them understand the risks of chatting to people online – especially someone older.
- Show them how to get help and understand they won't be in trouble
- You should tell an adult you trust or contact a helpline for advice – don't keep a secret if a friend is in danger.

[https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/Worried-about-a-friend/Online-friends/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Worried-about-a-friend/Online-friends/)

9. **So what are the dangers of digital dating?** Share the final 2 slides and check understanding.

**So what are the dangers of digital dating?**

- Some people – men and women – use the internet to look for sex and target young people. They use sites and apps where they know young people go to look for love, flirt or find support.
- Some adults don't care who they have sex with but think young people are easier to trick, pressure or force into having sex.
- Online a person can pretend to be something they are not – a friend, a mentor, a boyfriend or girlfriend. You can even pretend to be a completely different person. It can be hard to tell the difference between someone genuine and someone dangerous.

**And remember....**

- Think about how you look and present yourself online. Fakers and abusers target young people with sexy images/names on their profiles.
- Keep private stuff private – don't share personal details like phone numbers or school or address.
- If someone claims to be a 'friend of a friend' check them out – have they actually ever met?

- Don't share sexual pictures/nudes and don't do anything on video chat with a stranger - they might share or threaten to share.
- ChildLine is always available for a chat
- Thinkuknow Digital dating [https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14\\_plus/Need-advice/Online-dating/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/Need-advice/Online-dating/)

**Additional activity/discussion:** If you do not watch the 11 minute film clip you may want to explore this question and aspect of keeping safe which asks young people to think about meeting up with someone they have met online.

**Question: If you decide to meet up what rules should you follow?**

**If you decide to meet up**

First, please remember, it's always risky to meet up with someone face-to-face. There are some common sense rules if you do.

- Always meet and stay in a busy public place.
- Take a trusted responsible adult with you, not a friend. If the person you are meeting isn't being honest, taking a friend will put you both at risk. (If you tell the person you are bringing an adult they shouldn't have a problem with that; if they do, don't go).
- Make sure someone knows who you are meeting, where you are going, and when you will be back.
- If your instinct tells you something is wrong, it probably is. If the person doesn't look like the person you expected then leave as soon as possible.
- Do not accept a lift from someone you meet.
- Stay sober.
- Take your phone, keep it switched on, with credit.
- Your personal belongings can be stolen, don't leave them unattended.
- If you are worried about your safety or think you are in danger do not hesitate, phone 999.

**Practitioner notes**