# THE ONLINE RISKS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The use of technology or the internet to facilitate the sexual abuse of a child, including the production and sharing of child sexual abuse material online.

It's important to note that the vulnerabilities and risk factors are no different to offline.

Online child sexual exploitation includes a wide range of behaviours and situations. Most commonly this includes grooming, live streaming, consuming child sexual abuse material, and coercing and blackmailing children for sexual purposes.

This could include:

- Engaging a child in a chat about sexual acts
- Sending nude or pornographic images of themselves to a child or exposing themselves via live streaming
- Asking a child to view pornographic images/videos
- Asking a child to perform sexual acts, expose themselves or share a sexual image
- Taking or making and sharing or showing indecent images of children
- Online child sexual exploitation is often thought of as adults abusing children, however, research indicates that more and more child exploitation material is being shared via social media and is being produced by children themselves. This is sometimes called self-generated sexual content and often takes the form of 'sexting' which is requesting, capturing, and sharing of explicit material (ACCCE). It is important to note that the design and administration of online platforms can facilitate online grooming namely **Snapchat.**
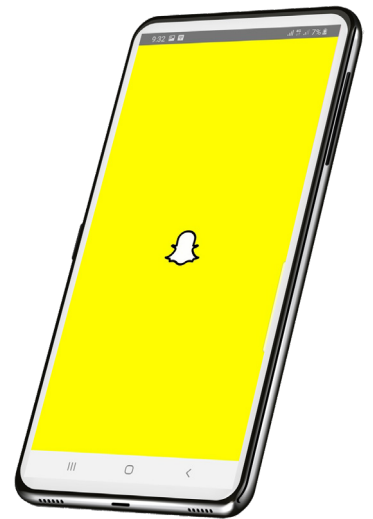
Research indicates that there has been a significant increase in the sharing of material peer to peer on dark and social media as well as self-generated illegal content on perpetrator platforms (Europol, 2020).

Research on online risks:

Australian Federal Police report incidences of online child sexual exploitation has doubled since 2018 (ACCCE, 2022)

Research indicated that girls are at increased risk than boys of online grooming

▶ **16%** GIRLS / **9%** BOYS

Aged 12-15 years (Salter, 2017).

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What can be done?

Recognition:

Recognise the signs of online abuse:

- spending dramatically more or less time online
- getting upset, agitated, angry or withdrawn after being online or receiving a message
- being secretive about who they are communicating with or what they are doing online.

Understand CSE and its characteristics, avoid myths and stereotypes by remaining open.	Use consistent language and definitions.	Understanding that sophisticated grooming and exchange elements act as barriers to disclosure.

Staying connected

For parents and carers, talk with your child about their online activities. Take an interest in what young people are doing online and offline. Online learn about the apps, games, and sites that they are accessing. Take time to research their features so that you can understand what precautions can be put in place to protect your child. E safety commissioner, ThinkUKnow have several resources available to help parents and carers with navigating parental controls, protection software and how to turn off chat functions.

**Be available and accessible, supervision of your child/ren is paramount.
Encourage open and non-judgemental conversations about technology use.**

EDUCATION

- **Get informed.**
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions.**
- **Be a voice of change within your community.**

How to Help

If you believe a child is in immediate danger, or you have immediate concerns for the welfare of a child, call **"000"** or local police on **131 444.**

If your concern is about online child exploitation and abuse you can report directly to the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation at **www.accce.gov.au/report**

If you would prefer to report in-confidence visit Crime Stoppers at **www.crimestoppers.com.au** or by phoning **1800 333 000.**

24 hour support is also available for children and young people at Kids Helpline **1800 55 1800** or **kidshelpline.com.au**