



Fact sheet

Identifying and managing online risks

This fact sheet provides information for organisations managing their child and youth risk management strategy.

Organisations are using online methods to communicate and deliver services to children and young people more than ever before. Organisations must ensure they have policies and procedures in place to keep kids safe during these interactions.

Safe environments don't just happen

If your organisation is providing online services to children during the COVID-19 pandemic, now is a good time to review your child and youth risk management strategy by considering:

- What services can be continued face-to-face and what needs to be moved online?
- Will children and young people have a choice in how they receive this service?
- What risks are involved with the continuation of these services, both face-to-face and online?

- How will any identified risks be minimised and closely monitored in this changing environment?
- Does your organisation have a comprehensive online policy?

Questions to consider about your Risk Management Strategy

- Do you require parents and caregivers to be present during online contact?
- If they are not required to be present, what other safeguards do you have in place?
- Is parental consent required prior to any contact with a child or young person and how frequently is this required? (each interaction, weekly, monthly, once-off etc.)
- Who in your organisation can make contact directly with the child or young person? Are staff permitted to be friends with children and young people on their personal social media platforms?



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- Will staff need additional training and how will they be made aware of your organisation's online policies?
- How will a staff member deal with a disclosure or a suspicion of harm if it is raised during an online session?
- Will parents and caregivers need additional training and support to use your online services?
- How will your organisation provide a copy of your new online policy to parents, caregivers, children and young people?
- Have you nominated a contact person that parents, caregivers, children or young people can speak to if they have any concerns about your new online policy?
- Does your organisation promote eSafety messages and resources for children, young people and their parents/caregivers? Information and resources on eSafety are available visiting: [esafety.gov.au/](https://www.esafety.gov.au/)
- Will children receive education about how to stay safe online (tailored to their level of understanding) such as cyber safety, cyber bullying, online scams or phishing schemes and online grooming?
- Does your organisation provide links to support services for children and young people to access should they feel unsafe or need to talk to someone about how they are feeling?
- Has your organisation developed and distributed an expected behaviour sheet for children and young people to read prior to participating in an online session? For example: Can children wear pyjamas to a Zoom session? Can the session take place in their bedroom? If so, what are the rules about that?
- Do you have a policy in place about confidentiality and what that means for sessions that take place online? For example: If the session is via Zoom, can the session be recorded? If so, how is the recording filed and who has access to it?

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