

# What is Grooming?



## Key points to consider

- Beware of 'mutual friends'
- Watch out for grooming patterns in the conduct of others and in the lives of friends/family
- Online predators BEFRIEND, BUY and BEG
- When anyone online wants explicit/indecent images of you, or they want to meet, tell someone before the worst happens

Grooming is the befriending of a child under the age of 16 for the purposes of meeting to engage in sexual activity.

This can happen over months, weeks or days. Often the culprit is an unknown adult with previous experience of manipulating children.

Some of the children most at risk include those who:

- have lived through significant changes in their home lives
- may be looking for an older role-model
- are vulnerable due to learning difficulties
- spend most of their social lives online



Children may meet groomers online through unsecured social media accounts, child “dating” apps or via online gaming. Children who are regularly monitored or checked-on while doing these activities may be less likely to fall victim.

If you notice unusual behaviour in your child, if they try to hide things from you, or if any of the following sounds familiar, contact a Social Worker, your child’s school or the police.

In a typical online grooming scenario, the suspect does three things:

**They BEFRIEND**

**They BUY**

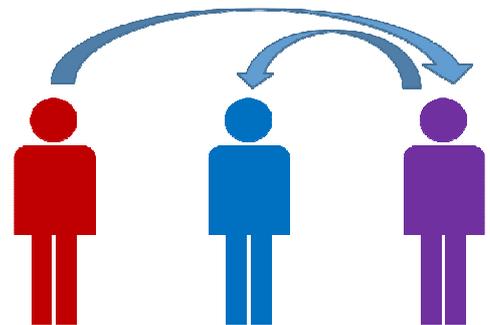
**They BEG**

**If you notice any of the following, contact the police.**

## Befriend

### The Mutual Friend

An expert in grooming targets your child’s friends first, hunting for the weak link in a group. Many children don’t question mutual friend requests. Do they really know them?



### A Good Understanding

They will claim an alleged mutual interest. Over time mutual understanding builds a level of trust. Who wouldn’t trust someone with the same values?

### Compliments

Everyone likes to be told they’re beautiful, handsome, charming, funny, clever. They shower the child with compliments so they feel good.

Buy

### **Mysterious Gifts**

A groomer will buy gifts, send the child clothes, a phone, money, in-game DLCs, etc. They might buy a gift and have it sent to their home address.

### **What Do They Want in Return?**

When someone receives a gift, their natural reaction is to give back. What does the groomer want from the child? What is the child willing to do when asked or when guilt-tripped?



### **Alienation or Inclusion**

Some will seek to alienate the child from their family and friends, leaving themselves as the final true friend.

Some will attempt to charm the parents and family of the child. If the family all like him, what's the danger?

Beg

### **Requests for Images**



It might be considered a game, a laugh or it may be somehow downplayed by the groomer but they will eventually ask for photos, possibly indecent photos of the child.

### **Online Sexual Activity**

The next step is mutual online sexual activity over voice or video calls. The child might be blackmailed due to sending a rude image before.

### **Arranging to Meet**

Progressing from distant, online sexual activity, the groomer will suggest the next logical step, which is to meet up for sexual activity. The consequences of this could be very severe.

**If you notice ANY of these signs, think...**





Sir Robert Peel created the Metropolitan Police in 1829. He set out nine principles for policing. The First Principle was:

**“To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment.”**

[Click here for further Crime Reduction Advice](#)



All your policing questions answered

<https://www.askthe.police.uk/content/>



**Secured by Design. (SBD)** The official UK Police flagship initiative combining the principles of 'Designing Out Crime' with physical security. We advise that you look on the SBD website for all of your Security products. <http://www.securedbydesign.com/>



More Security Products can also be found at:  
<http://www.soldsecure.com/>

**CrimeStoppers.**  
Speak up. Stay safe.

**0800 555 111**

100% anonymous, Always

Crime Stoppers is an Independent Charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

**VS VICTIM SUPPORT**

Help after crime—Contact Victim Support for free and confidential support  
<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

**Call us on 101. In an emergency always dial 999**



**SUFFOLK  
CONSTABULARY**