THE SAFEGUARD HUB

Know the Signs

Classroom Lesson Pack for Key Stage 3

Teaching guides · Pupil workbooks · Quizzes · Parent letters

01
Knife Crime

02
County Lines and CCE

03
Online Safety and CSE

Three ready-to-teach safeguarding lessons for Years 7 to 9.
Every page is designed to be photocopied or printed from the PDF.
Aligned with KCSIE 2026 and Keeping Learners Safe.

One copy per school · Free to photocopy within your school

How to use this pack

This pack contains three complete lessons for Key Stage 3. Each lesson has the same four parts, and every page is designed to stand on its own so you can photocopy exactly what you need.

Part	Pages per topic	Who it is for	How to copy it
Teaching guide	3	Teacher	One copy for the teacher
Pupil workbook	4	Each pupil	One set per pupil, ideally double sided
Quiz	1	Each pupil	One per pupil, as an exit ticket or homework
Parent and carer letter	1	Families	Add your school's details, then copy or email home

Printing and photocopying

- Copy at 100% on A4. Do not use 'fit to page', or the writing lines will shrink.
- Every page works in black and white. Colour is only used to help you find each topic quickly.
- To print from the PDF, choose only the pages you need, for example pages 7 to 10 for the Knife Crime workbook. Download the PDF free from safeguard-hub.org.
- Keep this master copy clean. Please do not write in it.

Before you teach

- Tell your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) when each lesson will be taught, and check whether any pupils have direct experience of the topic. Give them a choice about how they take part.
- Send the parent and carer letter home about a week before the lesson.
- Make sure pupils know who they can talk to afterwards, and give everyone the Where to Get Help sheet (page 32).
- Plan for disclosures. If a pupil tells you something worrying, listen, do not promise secrecy, write down their words and tell your DSL the same day.

Ground rules to agree with your class

We listen to each other with respect.	We don't use names or talk about real people.
Nobody has to share anything personal.	It's fine to pass or ask a question privately.
We don't judge or laugh at anyone's question.	If something worries us, we talk to a trusted adult.

England: these lessons support the safeguarding and online safety education expected under Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and statutory RSHE. **Wales:** they support Keeping Learners Safe, the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience and the RSE Code. Schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland can use them within their own PSHE or wellbeing frameworks; note that knife law references are for England and Wales.

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Each topic is colour coded and labelled at the top of every page, so you can find it quickly in the booklet. The Teaching guide pages are for staff only; all other pages are designed to be copied for pupils or families.

Knife Crime: Myths, Risks and Safer Choices

A single lesson that helps pupils understand why some young people carry knives, why carrying makes them less safe, and what they can do instead.

Lesson at a glance

Key stage	KS3 (Years 7 to 9, ages 11 to 14)
Time	50 to 60 minutes. A shorter 35 minute version is shown in the lesson plan.
Curriculum links	England: PSHE education and statutory RSHE (Being safe; Health). Wales: Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience; RSE Code. Supports safeguarding education expected under KCSIE 2026 (England) and Keeping Learners Safe (Wales).
You will need	Pupil workbook (pages 7 to 10), one per pupil. Quiz (page 11). Where to Get Help sheet (page 32). Parent letter (page 12), sent home a week before.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson pupils will be able to:

- explain the main reasons some young people carry a knife, especially fear;
- explain why carrying a knife increases, rather than reduces, the risk of being hurt;
- tell the difference between common myths and the facts about knife law;
- name trusted adults and know how to share information safely, including anonymously.

Key messages to leave pupils with

- **Most young people never carry a knife.** Carrying is not normal, even if it can feel that way online.
- **Carrying makes you more likely to get hurt,** not less. It changes how a fight goes and can be used against you.
- **Feeling unsafe is a real problem that adults should fix.** Telling someone is a strength, not snitching.
- **Being made to carry or hold a knife for someone else is a sign of exploitation.** That young person needs help.

Background figures for teachers

Around 53,000 offences involving a knife or sharp instrument were recorded in England and Wales in the year to March 2025 (ONS, as compiled by the House of Commons Library, briefing SN04304). Young people under 25 make up a large share of victims. Rates vary greatly between areas, so check your local picture before quoting national figures, and always balance them with the fact that the overwhelming majority of pupils will never carry.

Lesson plan

Time	Activity	Teacher notes
5 min	**Ground rules and starter.** Agree ground rules (page 2). Pupils complete **Activity 1** (rate the statements) quietly on their own.	Say clearly that nobody will be asked to share personal experiences, and remind pupils where they can talk privately after the lesson. Keep Activity 1 private; it is used again at the end.
10 min	**Why do some young people carry?** Class discussion, then **Activity 2**.	Draw out that fear is the most common reason. Others include being made to by older people, wanting status, and wrongly believing everyone carries. Ask: what could an adult do to make someone feel safer?
10 min	**Myth or fact?** Pupils complete **Activity 3** in pairs, then you reveal the answers.	Answers and talking points are on the next page. Correct the 'everyone carries' myth firmly.
5 min	**Why carrying is riskier. Activity 4**, then take three or four answers.	Key points: a knife can be taken and used against you; it turns an argument into something with a weapon already there; you may feel braver and stay in danger instead of walking away.
10 min	**Jay's walk home.** Read the scenario aloud. Pupils answer **Activity 5** in small groups.	Steer towards options that keep Jay safe without a weapon: telling a parent or teacher, changing route, walking with others, reporting. Praise answers that show what a good friend would say.
8 min	**My safety plan.** Pupils complete **Activity 6** on their own.	Pupils fill in their own trusted adults. Point to the Where to Get Help sheet and Fearless.org.
5 to 10 min	**Quiz and reflection.** Pupils do the quiz (page 11) and **Activity 7**.	Use the quiz as an exit ticket. Answers are on page 31. Compare Activity 7 with Activity 1 to see how views have changed.

Short on time? A 35 minute version

Use Activities 1, 2, 3 and 6, then set the quiz as homework. Cover the risks of carrying verbally when you reveal the Myth or Fact answers.

Delivery notes

- Do not show graphic images, real crime scene footage or videos of attacks. They can distress pupils and there is little evidence that fear-based messages change behaviour.
- Avoid using recent local cases involving real victims unless you have agreed it with your DSL and the family's wishes are known.
- Talk about knives in a calm, factual tone. Sensational language can make carrying seem more common, or more exciting, than it is.

Answers, safeguarding and next steps

Activity 3: Myth or fact answers

Statement	Answer	Talking point
1. Carrying a knife keeps you safe.	Myth	Carrying increases the chance of being seriously hurt. Weapons escalate fights.
2. Most young people do not carry a knife.	Fact	The overwhelming majority never carry. Believing 'everyone does' pushes some to start.
3. You only get in trouble if you use it.	Myth	Carrying a knife in public without good reason or lawful authority is an offence in itself.
4. 'It was for protection' is not a legal excuse.	Fact	Self-protection is not accepted as a good reason for carrying a blade in public.
5. Holding a knife for someone else is not your problem.	Myth	The person holding it is in possession. Being asked to hold one is also a sign of exploitation.
6. You can report knife crime without giving your name.	Fact	Crimestoppers (0800 555 111) and its youth service Fearless.org are completely anonymous.
7. Under 18s cannot be sent to custody for knife crime.	Myth	Young people can and do receive custodial sentences, particularly for repeat offences.
8. Shops must not sell a knife to someone under 18.	Fact	Selling a knife to an under 18 is an offence in England and Wales (very limited exceptions apply in Scotland).

Law notes refer to England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legislation with similar principles. This guide is not legal advice.

If a pupil discloses something

- Listen calmly and let them talk. Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Never promise to keep a secret. Explain that you must tell the person whose job it is to help, and name them.
- Write down what was said, in the pupil's own words, with the date and time, and pass it to your DSL the same day.
- If a pupil says they or someone else has a weapon now, or is in immediate danger, follow your school's emergency procedure and call 999. Never try to take a weapon from anyone.

Support and stretch

Support	Stretch
Read the Myth or Fact statements aloud. Allow pupils to answer Activities 4 and 5 by drawing, using sentence starters, or working with a partner. Pre-teach the words 'offence', 'exploitation' and 'anonymous'.	Ask pupils to design a short campaign message aimed at Year 7 that challenges the 'everyone carries' myth without using fear. Or research what your local police force and council are doing to keep young people safe.

After the lesson

- Look at Activities 1 and 7 for any pupil who says they feel unsafe or knows someone who carries, and pass concerns to your DSL.
- Let pupils know when and where they can speak to you or another trusted adult privately.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Knife Crime: Myths, Risks and Safer Choices

In this lesson you will find out why some young people carry knives, why it makes them less safe, and what you can do instead. You will not be asked to share anything personal.

1 What do I think right now?

Circle one number for each statement. This is just for you. You will come back to it at the end.

Statement	Disagree			Agree	
I know why some young people carry knives.	1	2	3	4	5
I think carrying a knife would keep someone safe.	1	2	3	4	5
I know what the law says about carrying knives.	1	2	3	4	5
I know who I could talk to if I felt unsafe.	1	2	3	4	5

2 Why do some young people carry a knife?

Use the word bank to write one reason in each box. Then explain it in your own words.

Word bank: fear · pressure from older people · wanting to look tough · thinking everyone else does · being threatened online

Reason 1:	**Reason 2:**
Reason 3:	**Reason 4:**

Choose one reason. What could a parent, teacher or the police do to help that young person feel safer, so they do not feel they need a knife?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

3 Myth or fact?

Tick one box for each statement. Then check your answers when your teacher reveals them.

Statement	Myth	Fact
1. Carrying a knife keeps you safe.	☐	☐
2. Most young people do not carry a knife.	☐	☐
3. You only get in trouble if you actually use a knife.	☐	☐
4. Saying 'it was for protection' is not a legal excuse.	☐	☐
5. If you are only holding a knife for someone else, it is not your problem.	☐	☐
6. You can report information about knife crime without giving your name.	☐	☐
7. People under 18 cannot be sent to custody for knife crime.	☐	☐
8. Shops must not sell a knife to someone under 18.	☐	☐

Facts about the law in this workbook apply to England and Wales.

4 Why carrying a knife makes you LESS safe

Many people who carry say it makes them feel safer. Explain why it actually puts them in more danger.

Reason it puts them in more danger:

Another reason:

Write one sentence you could say to a friend who thinks carrying would protect them:

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

5 Jay's walk home

Read the story, then answer the questions.

Jay's story

Jay is 13. Last week, on his way home from school, two older boys stopped him near the park, pushed him and took his headphones. Someone filmed it and the video has been shared in a group chat. Now Jay is scared to walk the same way home. A boy in Year 10 tells him: *"You need to carry something. Then they will leave you alone."* Jay has not told his mum or anyone at school what happened.

1. How do you think Jay is feeling right now? Give two feelings.

2. The Year 10 boy says carrying a knife will protect Jay. What could actually happen if Jay takes his advice?

3. Tick the choices that would help keep Jay safe:

- ☐ Tell his mum, dad or carer what happened
- ☐ Tell a teacher or the school safeguarding lead
- ☐ Find the boys and get them back
- ☐ Carry a knife just in case
- ☐ Walk home a different way, or with friends
- ☐ Report the video to the platform and to an adult

4. Jay is worried that telling an adult is 'snitching'. What would you say to him?

5. You are Jay's friend. Write down exactly what you would say to him.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

6 My safety plan

Fill this in for yourself. You can keep it somewhere safe.

Adults at home I could tell:	**Adults at school I could tell:**
Other adults I trust (coach, youth worker, relative):	**If I ever feel unsafe on my way somewhere, I could:**

In an emergency, call 999. To talk to someone in confidence, call **Childline on 0800 1111** (free, any time). To pass on information about knife crime **without giving your name**, use **Fearless.org** or call **Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111**.

If a friend told me they had started carrying a knife, I would:

7 What do I think now?

Circle one number for each statement again (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I know why some young people carry knives.	1	2	3	4	5
I think carrying a knife would keep someone safe.	1	2	3	4	5
I know what the law says about carrying knives.	1	2	3	4	5
I know who I could talk to if I felt unsafe.	1	2	3	4	5

The most important thing I learned today is:

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Knife Crime Quiz

Tick one answer for each question.

1. **What is the most common reason young people give for carrying a knife?**
   - ☐ **A** To look cool
   - ☐ **B** Because they feel scared or unsafe
   - ☐ **C** Because they are bored
   - ☐ **D** To use for school projects

2. **Carrying a knife makes it ____ likely that you will be seriously hurt.**
   - ☐ **A** More
   - ☐ **B** Less
   - ☐ **C** No more or less
   - ☐ **D** Impossible

3. **Is 'I carry it for protection' a legal reason to carry a knife in public?**
   - ☐ **A** Yes, always
   - ☐ **B** Yes, if you are under 16
   - ☐ **C** No, it is not accepted
   - ☐ **D** Only at night

4. **How old do you have to be to buy a knife from a shop in England and Wales?**
   - ☐ **A** 14
   - ☐ **B** 16
   - ☐ **C** 17
   - ☐ **D** 18

5. **What does Fearless.org let young people do?**
   - ☐ **A** Buy safety equipment
   - ☐ **B** Pass on information about crime without giving their name
   - ☐ **C** Chat to police officers live
   - ☐ **D** Report bullying to their school

6. **A friend tells you they have started carrying a knife. What is the best thing to do?**
   - ☐ **A** Keep it secret
   - ☐ **B** Tell a trusted adult
   - ☐ **C** Start carrying one too
   - ☐ **D** Post about it online

7. **An older person asks a young person to hold a knife for them. This could be a sign of:**
   - ☐ **A** Friendship
   - ☐ **B** Exploitation
   - ☐ **C** Good trust
   - ☐ **D** Nothing important

8. **Which number should you call if someone is in immediate danger?**
   - ☐ **A** 101
   - ☐ **B** 111
   - ☐ **C** 999
   - ☐ **D** 0800 1111

9. **Which of these is true?**
   - ☐ **A** Most young people carry a knife
   - ☐ **B** Most young people never carry a knife
   - ☐ **C** Half of all young people carry a knife
   - ☐ **D** Only adults carry knives

10. **Straight after someone has been robbed or attacked, they are:**
    - ☐ **A** Less likely to need help
    - ☐ **B** At higher risk and need support from adults
    - ☐ **C** Safe, because it is over
    - ☐ **D** Best left alone

My score: _____ / 10

School name: _____

Date: _____

School logo

Dear Parent or Carer,

As part of our personal, social and health education, your child's class will soon take part in a lesson about **knife crime**. We are writing to let you know what the lesson covers and how you can support your child at home.

What the lesson covers

In a calm, factual way, pupils will learn why some young people carry knives, why carrying a knife makes someone more likely to be hurt, what the law says, and how to get help if they or a friend feel unsafe. The lesson does not use graphic images, and no pupil will be asked to share personal experiences.

How you can help at home

- Ask your child what they learned, and whether anything surprised them.
- Ask, without pressure, whether they ever feel unsafe getting to or from school, or online. If they say yes, ask where, when and who, and then do something visible about it, such as changing a route or contacting the school. Seeing that telling you leads to action is one of the strongest protections a child can have.
- Let them know they will never be in trouble with you for telling you that someone else is carrying.
- Notice if kitchen knives go missing, or if your child seems newly frightened of a place or a person.

If you are worried about your child or another young person, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, _____, on _____. You do not need proof to share a concern. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

> **Useful numbers:** Crimestoppers (anonymous): 0800 555 111 · Police non-emergency: 101 · Emergency: 999 · NSPCC Helpline for adults: 0808 800 5000 · Childline for young people: 0800 1111

If you would like to see the lesson materials, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

_____ _____

Signed Name and role

County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation

A single lesson that helps pupils recognise how criminal groups groom young people, understand that exploited young people are victims, and know there is always a way to get help.

Lesson at a glance

Key stage	KS3 (Years 7 to 9, ages 11 to 14)
Time	50 to 60 minutes. A shorter 35 minute version is shown in the lesson plan.
Curriculum links	England: PSHE education and statutory RSHE (Being safe; Respectful relationships). Wales: Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience; RSE Code. Supports safeguarding education expected under KCSIE 2026 (England) and Keeping Learners Safe (Wales).
You will need	Pupil workbook (pages 16 to 19), one per pupil. Quiz (page 20). Where to Get Help sheet (page 32). Parent letter (page 21), sent home a week before.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson pupils will be able to:

- explain what county lines and child criminal exploitation (CCE) are;
- describe the stages of grooming, including gifts, small favours and debt;
- recognise warning signs that someone their age may be being exploited;
- explain why an exploited young person is a victim, and how they can get help safely.

Key messages to leave pupils with

- **Nothing is free.** Gifts, money and attention from older people can be the start of grooming.
- **Debts are a trap.** Groups often set up robberies or 'losses' on purpose so a young person feels they owe them.
- **A young person who is exploited is a victim,** even if they have been made to break the law.
- **Threats are a tool.** Groups tell every young person their family will be hurt if they talk. Police and services deal with this every day.
- **It is never too late to get help.**

Background for teachers

A county line is the mobile phone number used to sell drugs from a city into another area. Criminal groups use children to carry drugs and money because they are cheaper, easier to control and less likely to be suspected. Home Office figures estimate more than 15,000 children were identified as at risk of CCE in the year ending March 2025. The Crime and Policing Act 2026 created a specific offence of child criminal exploitation; check legislation.gov.uk for whether it is in force before referring to it in class.

Lesson plan

Time	Activity	Teacher notes
5 min	**Ground rules and starter.** Agree ground rules (page 2). Pupils complete **Activity 1** (key words) in pairs.	Go through the answers quickly so everyone shares the same vocabulary. Remind pupils nobody has to share personal experiences.
8 min	**What is county lines?** Explain briefly, then pupils complete **Activity 2**.	Keep the explanation simple: a phone line, a group selling drugs, young people used to move them. Stress that the group chooses young people on purpose.
12 min	**The grooming staircase.** Pupils order the stages in **Activity 3** and add what the young person might be thinking.	Correct order is on the next page. Ask: at which step would it be easiest to get out? (Usually early, before any debt.) Ask: why does the young person stop asking for help at the end?
12 min	**Sam's story.** Read it aloud. Groups answer **Activity 4**.	The key discussion is question 4: criminal or victim? Draw out that Sam was groomed, trapped and threatened, and that the law recognises children cannot consent to their own exploitation.
8 min	**Spot the signs and get help.** Pupils complete **Activity 5** and **Activity 6**.	Discuss why one sign alone is not proof, but several together mean it is worth telling an adult. Introduce Missing People SafeCall (116 000) and Fearless.org.
5 to 10 min	**Quiz and reflection.** Quiz (page 20) and the reflection box on page 19.	Use the quiz as an exit ticket. Answers are on page 31.

Short on time? A 35 minute version

Use Activities 1, 3, 4 and 6, and set the quiz as homework.

Delivery notes

- Do not teach street slang to pupils. It changes quickly, varies by area, and teaching it can make the lifestyle seem familiar or appealing. Staff can find common terms in the Know the Signs handbook on safeguard-hub.org.
- Avoid images or videos that glamorise money, weapons or 'trap' lifestyles, including drill videos.
- Some pupils may already be involved, or have family members who are. Keep the tone non-judgemental and focus on the young person as someone who can be helped.

Answers, safeguarding and next steps

Workbook answers

Activity	Answers
1. Key words	1 C · 2 E · 3 A · 4 F · 5 B · 6 D
2. Fill the gaps	phone, drugs, young people, older, owe, victims
3. Grooming staircase	Correct order: Targeting (C), Gifts and attention (E), A small favour (A), The trap (D), Too scared to speak (B).
4. Sam's story	Q3 signs: new trainers and phone; older friends; going missing; tired at school; a second phone; scared when his phone rings. Q4: Sam is a victim. He was targeted, groomed, trapped with a debt and threatened. He needs protection and support, even though he was made to break the law.
5. Spot the signs	Signs worth telling an adult about: a, b, d, e, f, h. Items c and g are ordinary on their own. Remind pupils that one sign is a question, several signs are a pattern.

If a pupil discloses something

- Listen calmly. Do not ask for names or investigate. Never promise to keep a secret.
- Record their exact words, with the date and time, and pass to your DSL the same day.
- If a pupil may be missing, is believed to be with a criminal group right now, or may be carrying drugs inside their body, treat it as an emergency and call 999.
- A child who may be a victim of trafficking or modern slavery should be considered for a National Referral Mechanism referral. Schools cannot make this directly; your DSL refers to the local authority or police, who can.

Support and stretch

Support	Stretch
Cut out the staircase stages so pupils can physically order them. Read Sam's story aloud in parts and pause after each. Offer sentence starters such as 'Sam is a victim because…'.	Ask pupils to write the next part of Sam's story, showing how he gets help and who supports him. Or design a leaflet for Year 6 pupils explaining why gifts from older strangers can be a trap.

After the lesson

- Check reflections for any pupil who mentions owing money, older friends or feeling trapped, and pass concerns to your DSL.
- Cross-check with attendance: patterns of missing days can be an early sign of exploitation.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

County Lines: Don't Get Caught in the Trap

In this lesson you will learn how criminal groups trick and trap young people, how to spot the signs, and how to get help. You will not be asked to share anything personal.

1 Key words

Match each word to its meaning. Write the letter in the middle column.

Word	Letter	Meaning
1. County line		A. When someone builds trust with a young person so they can use or harm them
2. Exploitation		B. Taking over a vulnerable person's home to use it for crime
3. Grooming		C. A phone number used by a criminal group to sell drugs in another area
4. Debt bondage		D. An adult you feel safe with who will listen and help
5. Cuckooing		E. Using someone for your own gain, often by tricking or scaring them
6. Trusted adult		F. Being told you owe money and must work to pay it back

2 What is county lines?

Fill the gaps using the word bank.

> **Word bank:** victims · phone · older · drugs · owe · young people

A county line is a mobile _____ number that a criminal group uses to sell _____ in towns and areas away from where the group is based. The group uses _____ to carry the drugs and money, because they are less likely to be noticed. Young people are often approached by someone _____ who seems friendly and generous. Later, they may be told they _____ money and must keep working to pay it back. Young people who are used in this way are _____, not criminals.

Why do you think criminal groups choose to use young people rather than adults?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

3 The grooming staircase

Criminal groups usually draw young people in step by step. Number the stages in the order you think they happen (1 = first). Then write what the young person might be thinking at each stage.

Stage	Order (1 to 5)	What might the young person be thinking?
A. **A small favour.** They are asked to do something that seems easy, like holding a bag or taking a parcel somewhere.		
B. **Too scared to speak.** They believe they are in too deep and that nobody will help them.		
C. **Targeting.** Someone notices a young person who is lonely, short of money or wanting to fit in.		
D. **The trap.** Drugs or money 'go missing' and they are told they owe a debt. Threats begin.		
E. **Gifts and attention.** They get food, money, trainers or lifts, and are made to feel special. Nothing is asked for yet.		

At which stage do you think it would be easiest for the young person to get out? Why?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

4 Sam's story

Read the story, then answer the questions.

Sam's story

Sam is 14. He has not been getting on with his family and money is tight at home. An older guy called Kai starts chatting to him outside the chicken shop. Kai buys him food, gives him lifts and says Sam is "one of us". Soon Sam has new trainers and a phone. One day Kai asks him to drop off a parcel across town. It seems easy.

A few weeks later, Sam is robbed while carrying a bag for Kai. Kai tells him he now owes £800 and must "work it off". Sam starts missing school and is sent to a town he does not know for days at a time. He is always tired, he has a second phone, and he jumps every time it rings. Kai tells him that if he talks to anyone, his little sister will get hurt.

1. How did Kai win Sam's trust at the start?

2. When did things change for Sam? What made him feel trapped?

3. List three signs that a friend or teacher might have noticed.

4. Is Sam a criminal or a victim? Explain your answer.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

5 Spot the signs

Tick the signs that could mean a young person is being exploited and it would be worth telling a trusted adult. Remember: one sign on its own does not prove anything.

- ☐ a. New expensive clothes or a phone they cannot explain
- ☐ b. New older friends nobody knows
- ☐ c. Joining an after-school club
- ☐ d. Going missing from home or school
- ☐ e. Having more than one phone
- ☐ f. Seeming scared, tired or jumpy
- ☐ g. Getting a birthday present from a grandparent
- ☐ h. Travelling to places they have no reason to go

6 Getting help

Sam is scared that nobody can help him. Fill in the boxes.

Who could Sam talk to?	What would you say to Sam if you were his friend?

In an emergency, call 999. Childline: 0800 1111 (free, any time). **Missing People SafeCall: 116 000** (free, confidential, for young people worried about county lines, by call or text). **Fearless.org** lets you pass on information about crime without giving your name.

7 Reflection

One thing I will remember from today is:

If an older person offered me gifts or money for 'small favours', I would:

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

County Lines Quiz

Tick one answer for each question.

1. **Where does the name 'county line' come from?**
   - ☐ **A** A train line between counties
   - ☐ **B** The mobile phone line used to sell drugs
   - ☐ **C** A line of police officers
   - ☐ **D** A border between two towns

2. **Why do criminal groups often use young people?**
   - ☐ **A** Young people ask to be involved
   - ☐ **B** They are less likely to be noticed and easier to control
   - ☐ **C** It is legal for under 18s
   - ☐ **D** Young people are paid more

3. **What usually comes first in the grooming process?**
   - ☐ **A** Threats
   - ☐ **B** Being sent to another town
   - ☐ **C** Gifts and attention
   - ☐ **D** A debt

4. **What is debt bondage?**
   - ☐ **A** Saving money in a bank
   - ☐ **B** Being told you owe money and must work to pay it back
   - ☐ **C** Borrowing money from a parent
   - ☐ **D** A type of loan for students

5. **A young person who is exploited by a criminal group is:**
   - ☐ **A** A criminal who chose this
   - ☐ **B** A victim who needs help
   - ☐ **C** Just being rebellious
   - ☐ **D** Old enough to know better

6. **What is cuckooing?**
   - ☐ **A** Staying up late
   - ☐ **B** A type of bird-watching
   - ☐ **C** Taking over a vulnerable person's home to use for crime
   - ☐ **D** A secret code word

7. **Which of these could be a warning sign of exploitation?**
   - ☐ **A** Joining a sports team
   - ☐ **B** Having a second phone they will not explain
   - ☐ **C** Doing homework on time
   - ☐ **D** Going on a family holiday

8. **What is the free, confidential Missing People SafeCall number?**
   - ☐ **A** 999
   - ☐ **B** 101
   - ☐ **C** 116 000
   - ☐ **D** 0800 555 111

9. **A group tells a young person their family will be hurt if they talk. What is true?**
   - ☐ **A** They should never tell anyone
   - ☐ **B** Groups say this to everyone to keep them quiet, and help is available
   - ☐ **C** Telling will always make it worse
   - ☐ **D** Only the young person can sort it out

10. **What is the best thing to do if you think a friend is being exploited?**
    - ☐ **A** Confront the older people
    - ☐ **B** Keep quiet
    - ☐ **C** Tell a trusted adult
    - ☐ **D** Post about it online

My score: _____ / 10

School name: _____

Date: _____

School logo

Dear Parent or Carer,

As part of our personal, social and health education, your child's class will soon take part in a lesson about **county lines and child criminal exploitation**. We are writing to let you know what the lesson covers and how you can support your child at home.

What the lesson covers

Pupils will learn how criminal groups use gifts, attention and debt to draw young people into carrying drugs or money, how to recognise the warning signs, and that a young person who is exploited is a victim who can always get help. The lesson does not teach street slang or use glamorising images, and no pupil will be asked to share personal experiences.

How you can help at home

- Ask your child what they learned, especially about how grooming starts with gifts and favours.
- Be curious, not accusing, about new clothes, phones or money you cannot account for. Try: "I noticed this and it worried me" rather than an accusation.
- Signs worth noticing include going missing, new older friends, a second phone, being frightened of their phone, tiredness and falling attendance. One sign is a question; several together is a pattern.
- Tell your child clearly that whatever has happened, they will not be in trouble with you and you will help them get out of it.

If you are worried about your child or another young person, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, _____, on _____. You do not need proof to share a concern. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

> **Useful numbers:** Missing People SafeCall: 116 000 · Crimestoppers (anonymous): 0800 555 111 · Emergency: 999 · NSPCC Helpline for adults: 0808 800 5000 · Childline for young people: 0800 1111

If you would like to see the lesson materials, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

_____ _____

Signed Name and role

Online Safety and Child Sexual Exploitation

A single lesson that helps pupils recognise the tactics online groomers use, understand the law on nude images, and know exactly what to do if someone pressures or threatens them.

Lesson at a glance

Key stage	KS3 (Years 7 to 9, ages 11 to 14)
Time	50 to 60 minutes. A shorter 35 minute version is shown in the lesson plan.
Curriculum links	England: statutory RSHE (Online and media; Being safe; Respectful relationships) and PSHE education. Wales: Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience; RSE Code; Digital Competence Framework. Supports online safety education expected under KCSIE 2026 (England) and Keeping Learners Safe (Wales).
You will need	Pupil workbook (pages 25 to 28), one per pupil. Quiz (page 29). Where to Get Help sheet (page 32). Parent letter (page 30), sent home a week before.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson pupils will be able to:

- tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy behaviour from people online;
- identify common grooming tactics such as flattery, gifts, secrecy and moving to private apps;
- explain what the law says about nude images of under 18s, including fake and AI-made images;
- describe exactly what to do if someone pressures or threatens them, and where to report it.

Key messages to leave pupils with

- **It is never the young person's fault** if someone pressures, tricks or threatens them.
- **You will not be in trouble for asking for help.** Adults and police focus on keeping you safe.
- **If someone threatens to share an image: do not pay, stop replying, keep the evidence, tell an adult.**
- **Images can be removed.** Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation run Report Remove for under 18s.

Background for teachers

KCSIE 2026 refers to the 'making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes' and makes clear this includes images that are digitally altered or wholly generated by AI. Financially motivated sextortion has risen sharply and disproportionately targets teenage boys. Staff should follow the UKCIS guidance on sharing nudes and semi-nudes and never view, copy or forward a suspected image.

Lesson plan

Time	Activity	Teacher notes
5 min	**Ground rules and starter.** Agree ground rules (page 2), with extra emphasis on not naming anyone. Pupils start **Activity 1**.	Tell pupils at the start that some of today's lesson is about pressure to send images, and that nobody in a story is ever to blame.
8 min	**Green flag or red flag?** Finish **Activity 1**, then discuss. Pupils complete the privacy checklist in **Activity 2**.	Draw out that healthy friends respect 'no', do not ask for secrets and do not rush. Use Activity 2 to show practical steps pupils can take today.
12 min	**Spot the tactics.** Pupils read Jake's messages and label each tactic in **Activity 3**.	Answers are on the next page. Ask: why does Jake want to move to a different app? Why might Mia find it hard to say no by the last message?
8 min	**Know the facts.** Pupils complete **Activity 4** (true or false).	Be clear that the law exists to protect young people. Emphasise that a young person who asks for help will be supported, not punished.
10 min	**What should Alex do?** Read the scenario and complete **Activity 5**.	Model the order: do not pay, keep the evidence, stop replying and block, tell a trusted adult, report (CEOP or police) and use Report Remove. Repeat: Alex is the victim of a crime.
5 to 10 min	**My plan, quiz and reflection. Activity 6**, then the quiz (page 29).	Use the quiz as an exit ticket. Answers are on page 31.

Short on time? A 35 minute version

Use Activities 1, 3 and 5, and set Activity 6 and the quiz as homework.

Delivery notes

- Never ask pupils whether they have sent or received images, and do not ask them to show you anything on a device.
- Sextortion has been linked to young people taking their own lives. Make the message 'you are not in trouble, tell someone' as clear and as warm as you can, and make sure pupils know where to get help today, including Childline and Samaritans.
- Avoid naming specific apps as 'bad'. Platforms change quickly; focus on behaviours and tactics.
- Boys are targeted too and are less likely to tell anyone. Make sure examples are not all about girls.

Answers, safeguarding and next steps

Workbook answers

Activity	Answers
1. Green or red flag	Green: 1, 4, 7. Red: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8.
3. Spot the tactics	Message 1 flattery · 2 flattery and making her feel special · 3 gifts and secrecy · 4 moving to a private app · 5 turning her against her family (isolation) · 6 pressure and guilt. Note: Jake claims to be 15, but people online are not always who they say they are.
4. Know the facts	1 True · 2 False · 3 False · 4 True · 5 False · 6 False
5. What should Alex do?	Do: b, d, e, g. Do not: a, c, f, h. Delete nothing until the evidence is saved, and never pay: paying almost always leads to more demands.

If a pupil discloses something

- Stay calm and tell them they are not in trouble and you are glad they told you.
- Do not view, copy, print, forward or ask to see any image. If a device is involved, follow your school's procedure and pass straight to the DSL, who follows the UKCIS guidance.
- Do not promise to keep it secret. Record their words and pass to your DSL immediately.
- If a pupil is being blackmailed, treat it as urgent: do not leave them alone, and take any sign of hopelessness seriously. If there is a risk to life, call 999.

Support and stretch

Support	Stretch
Give pupils the list of tactic words for Activity 3 on the board. Read Alex's story aloud. Allow pupils to answer Activity 6 with a partner.	Ask pupils to write advice for a younger sibling starting to use a new game or app. Or research how Report Remove works and explain it to the class.

After the lesson

- Remind pupils, in person and by display, of Childline (0800 1111), CEOP and Report Remove.
- Pass any concerns from workbooks or conversations to your DSL the same day.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Staying Safe Online: Pressure, Tricks and Getting Help

In this lesson you will learn how to spot when someone online is trying to trick or pressure you, and exactly what to do if it happens. Nothing that happens to you online is ever your fault.

1 Green flag or red flag?

A green flag is a sign of a healthy, safe friendship. A red flag is a warning sign. Tick one box for each.

Behaviour from someone online	Green flag	Red flag
1. A friend from your class messages you about homework.	☐	☐
2. Someone you met in a game asks you to chat on a different, more private app.	☐	☐
3. Someone you have never met sends you game credits and says not to tell anyone.	☐	☐
4. Someone accepts it straight away when you say you don't want to video chat.	☐	☐
5. Someone asks which school you go to and what time you leave.	☐	☐
6. Someone says you are more mature than other people your age.	☐	☐
7. A cousin you know in real life comments on your photo.	☐	☐
8. Someone says your parents would not understand your friendship.	☐	☐

2 My privacy check

Tick the things you already do. Circle one you will start doing this week.

- ☐ My accounts are set to private
- ☐ I only accept friend requests from people I know in real life
- ☐ I don't share my school, address or location
- ☐ I know how to block and report on the apps I use
- ☐ My location sharing is turned off
- ☐ I would tell an adult if something online worried me

Look at statement 8 in Activity 1. Why might someone try to make you feel that your parents or carers would not understand?

Write one online safety rule you will follow from today:

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

3 Spot the tactics

Mia is 13. She met 'Jake' while playing an online game. He says he is 15. Over two weeks he sends her these messages. Use the tactic bank to label each one.

Tactic bank: flattery · gifts · secrecy · moving to a private app · turning her against her family · pressure and guilt

Jake's message to Mia	What tactic is Jake using?
1. *"gg! you're honestly the best player on this server"*	
2. *"you seem way more mature than other people your age"*	
3. *"sent you 1000 coins. don't tell anyone or they'll all want some lol"*	
4. *"this game chat is rubbish, add me on another app? messages disappear so it's more private"*	
5. *"your parents sound really strict. I get you way better than they do"*	
6. *"send me a pic of you? just for me. if you really trusted me you would"*	

Why do you think Jake wants Mia to move to a different app?

By message 6, why might Mia find it hard to say no?

What could Mia do now? Give two things.

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

4 Know the facts

Tick True or False for each statement.

Statement	True	False
1. It is against the law to take, make or share a nude or semi-nude image of anyone under 18.	☐	☐
2. The law does not apply to fake or AI-made images.	☐	☐
3. If someone is pressured into sending an image, it is their own fault.	☐	☐
4. If a young person asks for help with an image, adults and police will focus on keeping them safe.	☐	☐
5. Once an image is online, nothing can be done to remove it.	☐	☐
6. People online are always who they say they are.	☐	☐

5 What should Alex do?

Read the story, then tick Do or Don't for each action.

Alex's story

Alex is 14. Someone who said they were a girl the same age chatted with Alex for a few days and persuaded Alex to send a picture. Now the account says it will send the picture to everyone Alex follows unless Alex pays £100 in the next hour. Alex feels sick and panicked.

What should Alex do?	Do	Don't
a. Pay the money so they go away	☐	☐
b. Screenshot the messages and the account name	☐	☐
c. Delete everything straight away	☐	☐
d. Tell a trusted adult	☐	☐
e. Report it to CEOP or the police	☐	☐
f. Send another picture to make them stop	☐	☐
g. Use Report Remove to get the image taken down	☐	☐
h. Keep it to themselves and hope it stops	☐	☐

Write a message to Alex. What do you want Alex to know?

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

6 My online safety plan

Fill this in for yourself.

Trusted adults I could tell if something online worried me:	**Something I could say if someone pressured me to send a picture:**
Settings I will check or change this week:	**If a friend told me someone was threatening them online, I would:**

Help is always available

Childline: 0800 1111 (free, confidential, any time) or childline.org.uk

Report Remove: for under 18s, to get nude images taken down: childline.org.uk/remove

CEOP: to report online grooming or sexual abuse: ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Samaritans: 116 123 if you are feeling overwhelmed and need to talk, any time

In an emergency, call 999.

7 Reflection

The most important thing I learned today is:

One thing I will do differently online is:

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

Online Safety Quiz

Tick one answer for each question.

1. **Someone you have only met online asks you to move to a private app. This is:**
   - ☐ **A** Completely normal
   - ☐ **B** A warning sign
   - ☐ **C** A sign they are trustworthy
   - ☐ **D** Required by the game

2. **Which of these is a common grooming tactic?**
   - ☐ **A** Respecting when you say no
   - ☐ **B** Flattery, gifts and asking you to keep secrets
   - ☐ **C** Talking about homework
   - ☐ **D** Introducing you to their parents

3. **Making or sharing a nude image of someone under 18 is:**
   - ☐ **A** Fine if they agree
   - ☐ **B** Only illegal if it is real, not AI-made
   - ☐ **C** Against the law, including fake and AI-made images
   - ☐ **D** Only illegal for adults

4. **Someone threatens to share your image unless you pay. What should you do first?**
   - ☐ **A** Pay them quickly
   - ☐ **B** Send more pictures
   - ☐ **C** Don't pay, keep the evidence and tell a trusted adult
   - ☐ **D** Delete your account and tell no one

5. **Report Remove helps young people to:**
   - ☐ **A** Delete their own social media
   - ☐ **B** Get nude images of themselves taken down
   - ☐ **C** Report bullying at school
   - ☐ **D** Find out who an account belongs to

6. **What is CEOP for?**
   - ☐ **A** Reporting online grooming or sexual abuse
   - ☐ **B** Fixing your phone
   - ☐ **C** Reporting a missing pet
   - ☐ **D** Checking your privacy settings

7. **If someone is pressured or tricked into sending an image, whose fault is it?**
   - ☐ **A** The young person's
   - ☐ **B** Nobody's
   - ☐ **C** The person who pressured or tricked them
   - ☐ **D** Their parents'

8. **Which of these is a green flag in an online friendship?**
   - ☐ **A** They ask you to keep secrets
   - ☐ **B** They respect it when you say no
   - ☐ **C** They send you gifts
   - ☐ **D** They want to know where you live

9. **What is the Childline phone number?**
   - ☐ **A** 999
   - ☐ **B** 0800 1111
   - ☐ **C** 101
   - ☐ **D** 116 000

10. **Before blocking someone who is threatening you, you should:**
    - ☐ **A** Send them a picture
    - ☐ **B** Pay them
    - ☐ **C** Screenshot the messages and account name
    - ☐ **D** Delete the messages

My score: _____ / 10

School name: _____

Date: _____

School logo

Dear Parent or Carer,

As part of our personal, social and health education, your child's class will soon take part in a lesson about **online safety and child sexual exploitation**. We are writing to let you know what the lesson covers and how you can support your child at home.

What the lesson covers

Pupils will learn how to recognise the tactics people use online to groom young people, such as flattery, gifts and secrecy, what the law says about nude images of under 18s (including fake and AI-made images), and exactly what to do if someone pressures or threatens them. The lesson is age appropriate, and no pupil will be asked about their own experiences.

How you can help at home

- Ask your child what they learned, and which red flags they would look out for.
- Say this to your child, even if it feels awkward: *"If anyone ever gets a picture of you, or makes you do something online you didn't want to, you will not be in trouble with me. We'll sort it together."* Children who have heard this tell someone much sooner.
- If your child is ever threatened, do not pay, keep the evidence, and report it to the police or CEOP. Report Remove (childline.org.uk/remove) can help get images taken down.
- Signs worth noticing include secrecy about who they are talking to, gifts or game credits from unknown people, being online late at night, and seeming frightened of their phone.

If you are worried about your child or another young person, please contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, _____, on _____. You do not need proof to share a concern. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

> **Useful numbers:** CEOP: ceop.police.uk/safety-centre · Police non-emergency: 101 · Emergency: 999 · NSPCC Helpline for adults: 0808 800 5000 · Childline for young people: 0800 1111

If you would like to see the lesson materials, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

_____ _____

Signed Name and role

Quiz answers

For staff. Keep this page separate when photocopying quizzes.

Knife Crime Quiz (page 11)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B	A	C	D	B	B	B	C	B	B

County Lines Quiz (page 20)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B	B	C	B	B	C	B	C	B	C

Online Safety Quiz (page 29)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
B	B	C	C	B	A	C	B	B	C

Answers to the workbook activities are in each teaching guide, on pages 6, 15 and 24.

Using the results

A score of 7 or more suggests the key messages have landed. For pupils scoring lower, revisit the 'key messages' on the first page of each teaching guide. Pay most attention to wrong answers about **who is to blame** and **what to do next**, as these matter most for keeping pupils safe.

Where to Get Help

Whatever is happening, it is not your fault, and you do not have to deal with it on your own.

If…	Contact
If you or someone else is in danger right now	**999**
Talk to someone in confidence about anything, any time, for free	**Childline 0800 1111** childline.org.uk
Pass on information about crime without giving your name	**Fearless.org** or Crimestoppers 0800 555 111
Worried about county lines, for you or someone you know	**Missing People SafeCall** call or text 116 000
Someone online is asking for pictures, or grooming you	**CEOP** ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
A nude image of you is online and you want it removed	**Report Remove** childline.org.uk/remove
You feel overwhelmed and need to talk	**Samaritans 116 123** or text SHOUT to 85258
Report something to the police that is not an emergency	**101**

Trusted adults I can talk to

At home:	At school:	Somewhere else:

Remember

- You will not be in trouble for asking for help.
- One sign is a question. Lots of signs together mean it is time to tell someone.
- If someone says they will hurt your family if you talk, tell an adult anyway. Police and other services deal with these threats every day.
- If you tell an adult at school, they will listen. They cannot keep it secret, but they will only share it with people whose job is to help you.

Staff concern record

For use if your school does not use an electronic recording system, or as a quick note before you log it. Pass this to your DSL the same day. Do not give it to the pupil or keep it in a classroom.

Pupil name		**Year and class**	
Date and time of concern		**Your name and role**	

What did you see or hear? Write the pupil's exact words in quotation marks. Record facts, not opinions.

Where did this happen, and who else was present?

What did you do next? (For example: who you told, and when.)

Passed to DSL (name)		**Date and time**	
Signature		**DSL signature**	

If a child is in immediate danger, do not wait to complete this form. Follow your school's emergency procedure and call 999.

Sources and important information

Sources

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Department for Education (in force from 1 September 2026).
- Keeping Learners Safe, Welsh Government.
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education statutory guidance, Department for Education.
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings, UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS).
- Knife crime statistics: England and Wales, House of Commons Library briefing SN04304, drawing on ONS, Home Office, NHS England and Ministry of Justice data.
- Crime and Policing Act 2026 and Home Office factsheets on child criminal exploitation.
- Protecting children from county lines, NSPCC Learning.
- Know the Signs handbook, second edition, The Safeguard Hub (safeguard-hub.org/know-the-signs).

Important limits

This pack provides general safeguarding education resources for schools. It is not legal advice and does not replace your school's child protection policy, your local safeguarding partnership's procedures, or statutory guidance. Where anything here differs from your local procedures, follow your local procedures.

Law, statistics and statutory guidance change. Figures were correct at the time of writing and cover different periods. Before relying on any legal point, check the current position on legislation.gov.uk or gov.uk. Knife law references apply to England and Wales.

Helpline numbers and services were checked at the time of writing. If a number has changed, please let us know so we can update the pack.

Free extras online

- The full Know the Signs handbook for staff and parents.
- Free CPD modules for staff on county lines, knife crime, online safety and more, with certificates.
- Find your local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by postcode with the MASH Finder.

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Notes

Use this page to plan dates, record which classes have been taught, or note follow-up actions.

Class	Topic	Date taught	Teacher	Notes

Noticing early means the answer is still a conversation, not a crisis.

The Safeguard Hub is a free UK safeguarding resource for schools, parents, police and young people, focused on knife crime, county lines, exploitation and online harm.

Find more lesson plans, the full Know the Signs handbook, free CPD modules and the MASH Finder at safeguard-hub.org.

safeguard-hub.org

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

Childline: 0800 1111 · NSPCC Helpline for adults: 0808 800 5000

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