

Most of us never got this talk ourselves.

If you grew up on MSN, MySpace, or the early years of Facebook, you learned the internet by stumbling through it. Some of it was useful. A lot of it was not. The stakes are higher now, but most of us are still parenting from the same playbook our parents used: don't talk to strangers, be home for dinner.

This deck assumes you're catching up at the same time your kids are growing up. That's fine. You don't need to be a tech expert. You need to be the person they come to when something feels off, and that has nothing to do with how much you know about Roblox.

Why "the want" actually matters

When a kid asks for an app, they're rarely asking for the app. They're asking for what the app does. Snapchat is filters and friends. Roblox is hanging out with mates. TikTok is feeling like part of the conversation at school. If you can name the real want, you can often meet it somewhere safer. If you can't, you end up saying no to a moving target.

Why scams are everyone's problem now

You're not paranoid. The game changed. Scammers used to need broken English and a sob story. Now they have AI that can write in fluent Australian, clone a voice from a 30-second clip, and put your face on a video call. The defence isn't being smarter than them. The defence is a simple habit: if anything feels urgent, financial, or off, verify on a different channel. Text feels weird? Ring them. Email from the boss? Walk over. That's the whole trick.

Why your kid's friend group matters more than the apps

The platforms change. The dynamics don't. The kid who'd peer-pressure your kid on Instagram would have done the same on MSN in 2003. The stranger who'd groom a teenager in a Discord server was running the same playbook in a Pokémon chat room twenty years ago. Tools where they help. Conversations where they matter.

THE ONE THING

If you take nothing else from this deck, take this: the kid who comes to you when something goes wrong is safer than the kid who hides it. Most kids who get caught up in something online weren't reckless. They were embarrassed. Make sure your kid knows the door is always open, no matter what they clicked.



WANT MORE THAN THE CARDS?

Scan for the printable deck and more starters.

The four-rules guide, age tips, and fresh questions as they drop.
theonlinesafetydeck.au

A DECK FOR FAMILIES



The Online Safety Conversation Deck

A deck of conversation cards in 4 colour-coded categories. Designed to help families talk about apps, identity, and trust online.

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HOW TO USE THE DECK

A few guidelines.

- 1 One card a week is plenty.
- 2 You ask. Then YOU answer first.
- 3 No wrong answers. Aim for the chat.
- 4 If a card opens something, follow it.

THE FOUR CONVERSATION TYPES

- Decode the Want
- Spot the Weird
- Trust & Verify
- The Long View



DECODE THE WANT

If you could only have one app, which would it be, and what does it actually do for you?

The app isn't the want. The thing it does is.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

What's a game you love because of who you play it with, not what the game is?

Most kids want the people. The game is the excuse.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

If everyone at school had a different phone, would you still want yours?

What's a real want, and what's a copy-the-others want.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

Name something fun on a phone that doesn't involve other people seeing it.

Filters, drawing, music, photography. All the fun, none of the strangers.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

What's something you wanted ages ago that you're glad you didn't get?

Helps everyone hear that 'not yet' isn't 'not ever.'

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

What's the youngest age you reckon a kid should have a phone? Why?

Their answer tells you what they think the rules are for.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

If your favourite app vanished tomorrow, what would you actually miss?

The feature or the feeling? The answer tells you what to replace it with.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

What's an app you begged for and barely use now? What happened?

Sometimes the want was just the wanting. Good to notice out loud.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

If you could design your own app, what would it do?

Their dream app is a map of the real want.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

What do you reach for on your phone when you're bored? What about when you're sad?

Different moods, different wants. Both worth knowing about.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

When a mate gets something new, how long before you want it too?

Naming the itch makes it easier to sit with.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

Would you still scroll it if nobody could ever see that you had?

Separates what they enjoy from what they perform.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



DECODE THE WANT

What's something you'd rather do with a person in the room than on a screen?

The offline want is a want too. Meet it.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

A friend you haven't spoken to in months messages 'can you help me?' What do you do?

Hacked accounts use real friend lists. Verify on a different channel.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

You 'won' something you never entered. What's actually going on?

The classic. Free stuff costs your data, your password, or both.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

Someone says 'do this right now, don't tell anyone.' Friend, stranger, anyone. What does that mean?

Urgency plus secrecy is the scammer's signature move.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

If a friend started typing in a way that didn't sound like them, would you notice?

Voice is a fingerprint. The way someone writes is part of who they are.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

When does a video ask you to log in again, and why?

Fake login pages are everywhere. Real ones don't show up mid-video.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

If you saw a video of me asking for money, would you believe it?

Deepfakes need a phone and an afternoon now. Hang up. Ring back on the number you already have.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

Someone you've only met in a game asks to chat somewhere else. Why would they want that?

Moving platforms means moving to fewer eyes. That's the point of it.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

A deal online says 'ends in 10 minutes.' Why the timer?

Countdown clocks exist to stop you thinking. That's their whole job.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

A stranger offers you free skins, coins, or game money. What do they get out of it?

Nobody gives stuff away online. Follow the why.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

A message says your account gets deleted unless you click. Real or not?

Real companies don't threaten by link. Open the app itself and check.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

Someone online asks you to keep the chat secret from your family. What does that tell you?

Safe people don't need secrecy. Full stop.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

Someone new online seems to like every single thing you like. Sweet, or a bit much?

Mirroring builds trust fast. Real friendship takes longer.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



SPOT THE WEIRD

If a post makes you instantly furious, what should you check before sharing it?

Outrage is the easiest thing on the internet to fake.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

If something feels off in a message, what's the next move?

Different channel. Phone for text. Text for email. Walk over if you can.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

Name three people you'd ring at 10pm if something online went sideways.

Make the list before you need it. Practice ringing them.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

What's something you'd come to me about even if you thought I'd be cross?

The most important card in the deck. The faster they tell you, the more options you have.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

If your password got out, what's the first thing you'd do?

Change it from a different device. Tell someone. Don't pay anyone.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

What does 'don't follow links in messages' actually mean?

Type the website in fresh, or use a bookmark. Don't trust the link in the message.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

What's a healthy reaction to feeling embarrassed about something online?

Embarrassment keeps kids quiet. Quiet makes it worse. Talking makes it smaller.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

What's our family code word if a call sounds like one of us but feels off?

Voices can be cloned now. A code word can't. Pick one tonight.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

If I got a weird message that looked like it came from you, what should I do?

Verifying works both ways. Ring each other.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

Who's an adult, other than me, you could tell if something online went wrong?

More open doors, safer kid. Name them out loud.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

A mate sends you a link with no message attached. Click or check?

Real friends say something with a link. Silence is the red flag.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

Before buying from a site you've never heard of, how would you check it's real?

Search the name plus the word 'scam.'
Two minutes, whole wallet saved.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

You see a mate getting piled on in a group chat. What could you actually do?

Screenshot, back them up privately, tell someone. Bystanders have more power than they think.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



TRUST & VERIFY

Why would a torch app want your contacts?

Permissions are a trade. If they don't need it, don't give it.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

If a photo of you today turned up in 10 years, would you mind?

The internet has a memory. Today is forever.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What's the difference between a username and your real name online?

One protects you, one identifies you. Pick the right one for the place.

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What would a future boss see if they searched your name today?

Frame it positively. What do you WANT them to find?

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What's the best thing about being online?

Don't make the deck all doom. They love it because it's brilliant.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What's something you saw online this week that turned out to be wrong?

Practising the muscle that says 'check before share.'

AGES 10+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What rules about the internet should change as you get older?

Rules grow with the kid. Let them have a say in their own.

AGES 12+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What's something you've learned online that made your life genuinely better?

Keep score of the good stuff too. It's most of it.

AGES 8+ THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What's something kind you could do online this week?

The internet is also a place to practise being good at being good.

AGES 8+

THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

How do you want to feel after an hour on your phone? How do you actually feel?

If those two don't match, that's not a failure. That's information.

AGES 10+

THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

What would you tell a younger kid getting their first phone?

Teaching it is how you find out you know it.

AGES 10+

THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

Would you be happy for your group chat to be read out at school assembly?

Write like it might get forwarded. Because it might.

AGES 12+

THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

Are you the same person online as offline? Do you want to be?

Neither answer is wrong. Knowing which is the point.

AGES 12+

THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



THE LONG VIEW

If you had kids one day, what would you let them do online?

Their rules for an imaginary kid show you their real values.

AGES 12+

THE ONLINE SAFETY DECK



YOUR OWN QUESTION



YOUR OWN QUESTION



YOUR OWN QUESTION



YOUR OWN QUESTION



YOUR OWN QUESTION



YOUR OWN QUESTION
