

# iSAFE

iSAFE is a way to teach children..

**S** How can I stay *SAFE* online?

**A** What does *APPROPRIATE* behaviour look like online?

**F** How can I be a good *FRIEND* online?

**E** How can I stay *EDUCATED* with changes online?

**As our children get older it's really important to teach them about how the brain behaves when we spend more and more time online and in a virtual world.**

## Disinhibition Online: Effect of anonymity, invisibility and lack of eye contact

**Online disinhibition** is the lack of restraint someone feels when communicating online in comparison to communicating in person. We will teach the children about the following six behaviours that may occur to anyone (adult or child) when they are in an online world and how to manage this.

### Anonymity

When you feel anonymous, you feel protected. Remaining anonymous, you do not have to "own" your behaviour, and you can instead keep it in an online identity that is not linked to your offline identity. Anonymity helps you feel less vulnerable about self-disclosing and engaging in antisocial behaviour.

### Invisibility

Because others can't see us online, we don't have to worry about how we look to others and what emotional signals we are sending through facial expressions. Face-to-face we see people's reactions to what we've said immediately. That tends to put us off upsetting them or risking their judgement.

### Stop/Start Communication

The stop/start nature of many forms of communication over the internet leads to disinhibition. Some online conversations do not happen in real time, e.g. you might write something without seeing any responses from others. This allows you to escape any potential negative reactions.

### Voices in Your Head

Without face-to-face cues, you experience online messages as voices in your head. You might assign imagined characteristics to another person based off of their messages and online persona. Your online companions become characters in your own psychic world, shaped by your personal expectations and needs.

### Imaginary World

The anonymity, invisibility and fantasy elements of online activities encourage us to think that the usual rules don't apply. Like a science fiction escape fantasy, the net allows us to be who we want and do what we want, both good and bad.

### No Police

We all fear disapproval and punishment, but this imaginary world appears to have no police or authority figures. Although there are people with authority online, it's difficult to tell who they are. There is no one person in charge of it all so people feel freer online: away from authority, social convention and conformity



*What you do  
online reflects  
who you are in  
the real world.*

I am  
*Safe*  
*Appropriate*  
*Friendly*  
*Educated*  
I am iSAFE.