

# Could your child be tricked by a fake friend?

## What Is an Impersonation Scam?

Impersonation scams involve someone pretending to be a trusted person or organisation – the police, a bank, even a friend or family member. These messages sound urgent. They're designed to make people act fast and without thinking. **These scams are increasingly targeting young people.**

## Why it matters

Children and teens may receive these messages via social media, games, email or text. A scammer might say a relative is in danger or ask for help paying a bill. They often target children emotionally – through fear, sympathy or confusion.

## Watch for the Signs

- Your child receives a message asking for money or gift cards
- Messages urge secrecy
- They've downloaded a new app at someone else's request
- They're acting anxious, secretive, or panicked after using their phone
- They talk about someone online needing help or being in trouble

## Talk to your child about:

- Pausing before responding to urgent requests
- Always checking with a trusted adult before sending money or sharing information
- Never installing apps or clicking links they didn't request themselves
- Understanding that real authorities or family won't pressure them in secret

## Watch for the Signs

1. **Stay calm and reassure them.** Let them know they're not in trouble, and they're not alone.
2. **Don't blame them.** Perpetrators are often skilled manipulators, your child is the victim.
3. **Preserve the evidence.** Save all messages, usernames, images, and links. Do not delete accounts deactivate them instead.
4. **Block the abuser.** Do this on all platforms.
5. **Report it immediately to the authorities.**
6. **Seek emotional support.** Victims may feel deep shame, fear, or anxiety. Early support is vital.

## Did you know?

**In the UK, banks may refund victims of scams – up to £85,000 – if reported quickly and steps were taken to avoid it. Talking openly as a family is the best defence.**