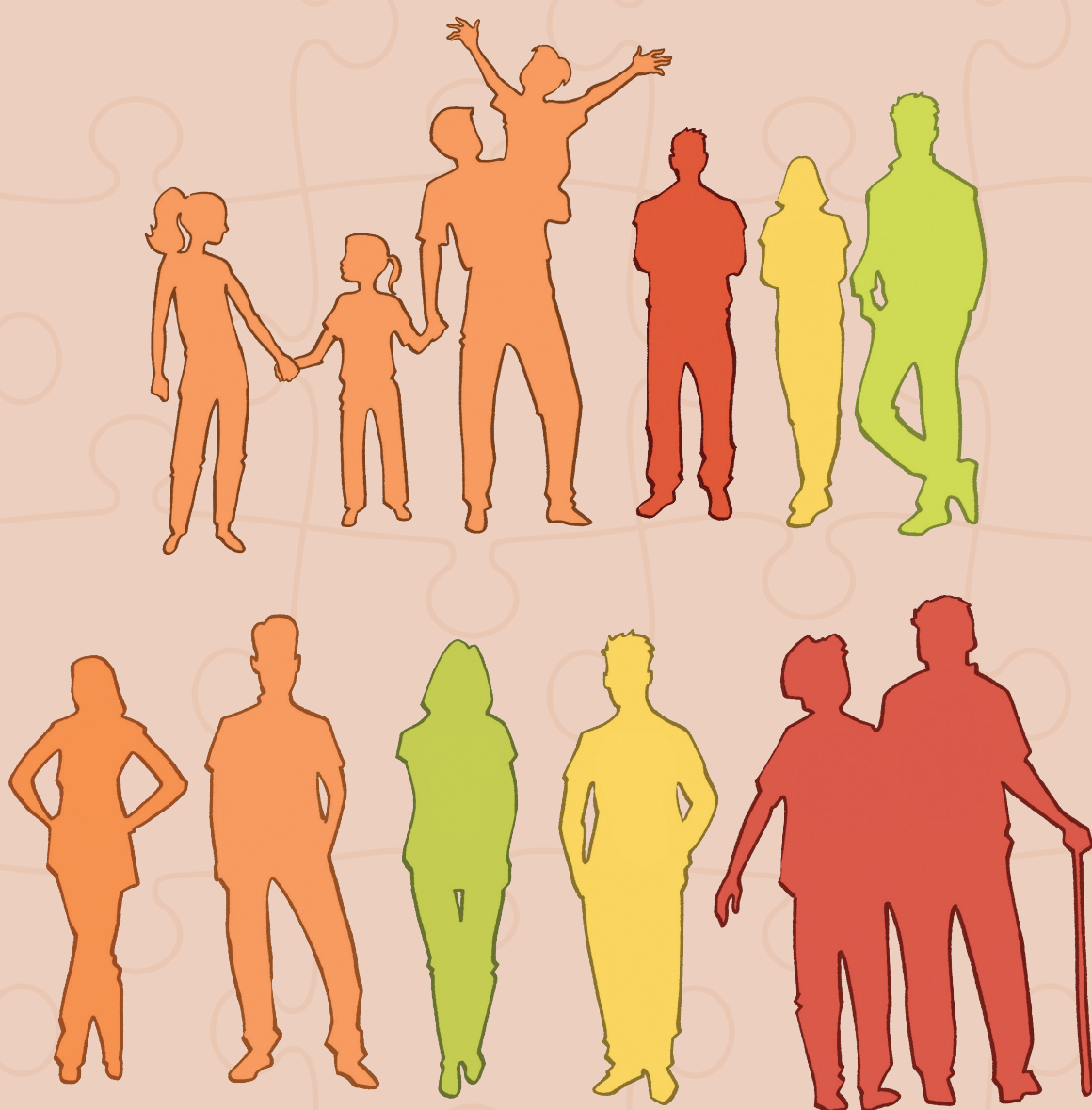


SAFE USE OF TECHNOLOGY



РЦСЕ

Ресурсни центар за специјалну едукацију

INTRODUCTION

This lesson plan is for educators and support people working with young people with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It focuses on *Staying safe online*, following the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) framework under the theme of *Violence and staying safe*. The lesson teaches students how to use technology in safe and respectful ways. It covers important topics like how to protect personal information, use privacy settings, spot online dangers (like cyberbullying, unsafe content, or strangers trying to contact them), and what to do if something feels wrong. This education is especially important, as students with intellectual disability may face higher risks online due to fewer supports and increased vulnerability.

This lesson plan uses evidence-based practices (EBPs), which are recognised as best practice for teaching students with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. It supports teacher delivery through structured resources, scenario-based activities that incorporate peer modelling, task analysis, and age-appropriate educational videos developed by [Amaze.org](https://amaze.org).

This lesson is part of *Sex education for students with intellectual disability and on the autism spectrum: A practical methodology guide*, a resource that supports educators to deliver accessible, inclusive, and trauma-informed sex education to students aged 15 and over with intellectual disability and/or on the autism spectrum. Grounded in evidence-based practices, the Guide promotes the rights of students to sexual autonomy, safety, and well-being, aligning with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals, which call for inclusive education, gender equality, and good health for all. The lesson content also reflects the key concepts outlined in the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE), ensuring that teaching is comprehensive, rights-based, and responsive to the learning needs and aspirations of students with disability.

[Full Guide](#)

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Safe use of technology



What does it mean?

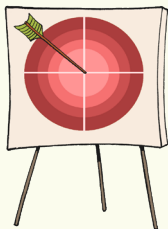
Technology is now a part of our everyday lives. It is important that we learn to use technology responsibly and how to protect our personal information. It includes knowing the importance of privacy settings on social media, recognising and avoiding online predators, and understanding the risks of sharing personal information or explicit content. Educating students about these aspects helps ensure their safety and well-being in the digital world.



Why is it important?

Learning how to safely use technology is of particular importance for young people with intellectual disability, as they are at greater risk of online abuse than those without intellectual disability¹. Challenges with social skills, limited social networks, wanting to be accepted, and higher rates of loneliness and depression are highlighted as increasing the risk of online abuse and exploitation for people with intellectual disability. Research has highlighted three potential online risks for people with intellectual disability. These include 1) engaging in antisocial and criminal behaviour, 2) experiencing negative contact online (such as bullying or private information being stolen), and 3) being exposed to harmful, manipulative and exploitative content¹.

Learning outcomes based on teacher's and student's perspectives



Learning outcomes

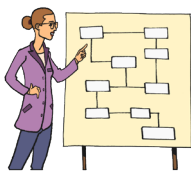
Students can list the basic rules for the safe use of technology.

Students can describe the potential risks and dangers associated with unsafe technology use.

Accessible learning outcome

I know the basic rules for how to stay safe while using technology.

I can explain some of the risks of being unsafe while using technology.



EXAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Topic: **Safe use of technology**

Note for teachers:

Most, if not all, students in your class would have regular access to technology. Often technology use is not well supervised, and it has been harder to supervise now that most teenagers have their own mobile phones. Students must know how to make safe choices when using technology.

It is common for students to have experienced bullying or harassment online, ensure that you are sensitive to students' experiences and discuss with them ways they can get support if they have experienced bullying or harassment.

Some students may require individually tailor supports and interventions. Teachers can use social narratives as an intervention to target these behaviours. Refer to [Appendix 1: I only write to girls who say "yes"](#).

Learning outcomes	EBP/teaching strategy	Resources needed
Students can list the basic rules for the safe use of technology.	Task analysis Peer modelling	Video player Appendix 1: I only write to girls who say “yes” Appendix 2: Four rules to stay safe online
Students can describe the potential risks and dangers associated with unsafe technology use.		Pens Glue Scissors Appendix 3: How to stay safe online

Lesson sequence

Introduction: Ask the class what they know about staying safe online and why it's important.

Prompts:

- What devices and platforms/apps do you use to talk to people online?
- Do you like being in contact with your friends and family?
- What are some things we should be careful about when we are online?
- Why is it important to stay safe online?



Activity 1: How stay safe online

As a class, watch the [Being safe on the internet](#) video on Amaze.org.

What did we learn from this video?

Prompts:

- What are some of the things we can do to stay safe online?



Activity 2: Introduce the 4 rules for staying safe online

These are some guiding rules that can help students stay safe online. Introduce these rules and ask the students to think about what they could do differently to follow each rule.

1. Protect personal information.
2. Create strong and secure passwords.
3. Recognise and avoid online scams or phishing.
4. Understand what cyberbullying is and how to deal with it.



Activity 3: Rules for staying safe online

The teacher distributes [Appendix 2: Four rules to stay safe online](#) to the class. Students will be given activity sheet with the four key rules for staying safe online.

Think: Students will write and draw ideas for what they could do under each of the rules.

Pair: Students will partner up and discuss what they wrote on their worksheets. They can then add to their worksheets if they liked something their partner had.

Share: On a large piece of paper or on the whiteboard in the class, the teacher displays the 4 rules for staying

safe online. Students will share what they had written on their worksheet. The teacher will write or draw under the 4 rules.



Activity 4: How to stay safe online

The teacher will remind students of the 4 rules to stay safe online.

1. Protect personal information.
2. Create strong and secure passwords.
3. Recognise and avoid online scams or phishing.
4. Understand what cyberbullying is and how to deal with it.

The teacher distributes [Appendix 3: How to stay safe on the internet](#) to the class and reads the scenarios aloud to the class. Students can volunteer to come up and practice how to deal with each of these scenarios. Teachers will prompt students to refer to the [Appendix 2: Four rules to stay safe online](#) worksheet they have created.

Scenario 1: Strangers on the internet	Scenario 2: Scam messages	Scenario 3: Cyberbullying
Alex receives a friend request on social media from someone they don't know. The person claims to have similar interests and wants to chat. What should Alex do in this situation?	Emily receives an email from an unknown sender claiming she has won a free vacation. The email asks for personal information, including her full name, address, and credit card details. What should Emily do in this situation?	Sophia is chatting online with a classmate, but the conversation takes a negative turn. The classmate starts sending hurtful and mean messages. What should Sophia do in this situation?

Conclusion: Recap the key concepts discussed in the lesson.

Ask students if they can list the 4 rules for staying safe online.



Teacher reflection

Reflect on the lesson asking yourself:

- Did the lesson cater to the diverse learning preferences and needs of the students?
- How can I build on this lesson to support students to continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills?
- Were there any parts of this lesson that should be recapped or repeated to help students consolidate their learning?

References

- 1 Chadwick, D. D. (2022). 'You want to know that you're safe': Experiences of risk, restriction and resilience online among people with an intellectual disability. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 16(3), Article 8. <https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2022-3-8>

Appendix 1: I only write to girls who say “yes”

[BACK](#)

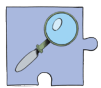
Who is Paul?

Paul is a young person on the autism spectrum who attends high school. He has strong communication skills and can express his thoughts verbally. Academically, he performs well and enjoys technical subjects, computer games, and learning languages—he is fluent in two foreign languages.

Paul is introverted and prefers smaller group interactions over large social gatherings. He sometimes struggles with how to engage with his peers. Recently, he has shown interest in his female classmates and has attempted to contact them through online messages, text messages, and handwritten notes.

Recommendations made by Paul’s school counselling centre

Based on recommendations from the school’s counselling team, Paul receives primarily level one support (DSM-5, 2022). While he excels academically and has strong verbal communication skills, he benefits from additional guidance in developing social and emotional skills. A teacher’s assistant supports Paul in class, focusing on strengthening his social interactions, emotional regulation, and communication strategies to help him navigate peer relationships with confidence.



Phase 1 IDENTIFY SKILL OR BEHAVIOUR

An individual intervention was introduced following a classmate’s concern about receiving repeated messages from Paul during class and on social media. When she did not respond, he continued to send messages. Recognising that Paul is developing his understanding of social interactions and boundaries, the teacher implemented an individualised intervention to support him in building these skills.

Working alongside the teacher’s assistant, the team used a simple recording sheet to track how often Paul contacted a classmate during class or when a student reported receiving unwanted online messages. This data was collected over two weeks to understand patterns in his communication.

The teaching team then reflected on the key question: What is the target skill we want Paul to develop through this intervention? From this, they formulated the following SMART objective:

Paul’s SMART target

At the end of the month, Paul will only message classmates who agree to it.

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time Bound



Phase 2 INVESTIGATE EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

To support Paul in developing his understanding of social interactions and boundaries, the teacher sought an evidence-based intervention. They consulted *AFIRM*—a free database grounded in rigorous international research—to identify an approach suited to Paul’s needs.



Phase 3 **SELECT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**

The teacher selected social narratives as an appropriate evidence-based practice to help Paul navigate social communication and peer interactions more effectively. Social narratives are an effective intervention to address social-emotional development for 16-year-olds on the autism spectrum.



Phase 4 **PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The teacher starts with the social narrative draft. This is Paul's social story: **I only contact people who say "yes"**

	I am in high school
	I want to have a girlfriend
	I like girls at my high school

	I want to message them
	Some people will • want to be messaged • not want to be messaged
	Some girls like my messages I can tell because • they write back to me • they say nice things to me
	This means • I can message them
	Some girls do not like my messages I can tell because they • do not message me back • say mean things to me • ask me to stop

	This means I • must stop messaging them • will not message them again
	If I am not sure, I need to ask • "Can I message you?"
	If a girl • does not answer • tells me to "stop"
	I need to • listen to them • respect when they say "no" or "stop"
	If I keep messaging them • it is harassment

	Harassment means bothering or hurting someone. It can make them feel • scared • upset • unsafe
	I will only message girls • who want me to message them



Phase 5 **IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE**

How was Paul involved?

intervention process. The teacher invited Paul to a meeting after class to discuss the situation with his classmate in a supportive and constructive way. She offered to help him better understand social expectations around dating and asked about his own thoughts on the topic.

To provide clear guidance, the teacher introduced a social narrative, which Paul read and engaged with. He agreed to meet weekly to review and adapt the story together. During these sessions, Paul contributed new ideas, and they collaboratively set goals. For example, they established a guideline: “I send a maximum of two messages per day to check in on a friend.” They then adjusted the story to reflect this.

Each week, they revisited the story, discussing progress and making updates based on Paul’s suggestions. After reading the story, the teacher posed reflective questions to encourage further discussion and understanding.



Phase 6 **MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION**

The teacher observes Paul and records changes in his behaviour. Once a week, Paul and his teacher reflect on his week’s behaviour and if he is implementing the correct behaviours described in the social narrative.

Appendix 2: Four rules to stay safe online

[BACK](#)

1. Protect personal information	2. Create strong and secure passwords
3. Recognise and avoid online scams or phishing	4. Understand what cyberbullying is and how to deal with it

Appendix 3: How to stay safe online

[BACK](#)

Scenario 1: Strangers on the internet

Alex receives a friend request on social media from someone they don't know.

The person claims to have similar interests and wants to chat.

Scenario 2: Scam messages

Emily receives an email from an unknown sender claiming she has won a free vacation.

The email asks for personal information, including her full name, address, and credit card details.

Scenario 3: Cyberbullying

Sophia is chatting online with a classmate, but the conversation takes a negative turn.

The classmate starts sending hurtful and mean messages.