

# Safe Internet

SPHE STRANDS:

**Myself – Personal safety –  
Safety issues –  
Making decisions**

**Myself and Others –  
Relating to others**

**Myself and the Wider World  
– Media education**

## **My Internet Usage**

Invite the children to brainstorm on what they use the internet to do:

- Play games
- Find information
- Social media
- Send messages
- Watch short videos, etc.

Invite them to think of one really good thing about each of these and one potential danger.

## **Video**

Visit [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) and watch the 'Vicky's Party' primary school video.

After the video discuss the following:

- Do you think the girls were mean to Vicky?  
Why or why not?





- How do you think Vicky felt when she realised her friends weren't coming to her party?
- In what way did the girls use the internet in the video?
- Have you ever felt left out because of other's internet usage?
- Can you think of ways we can be kinder to each other when using the internet?

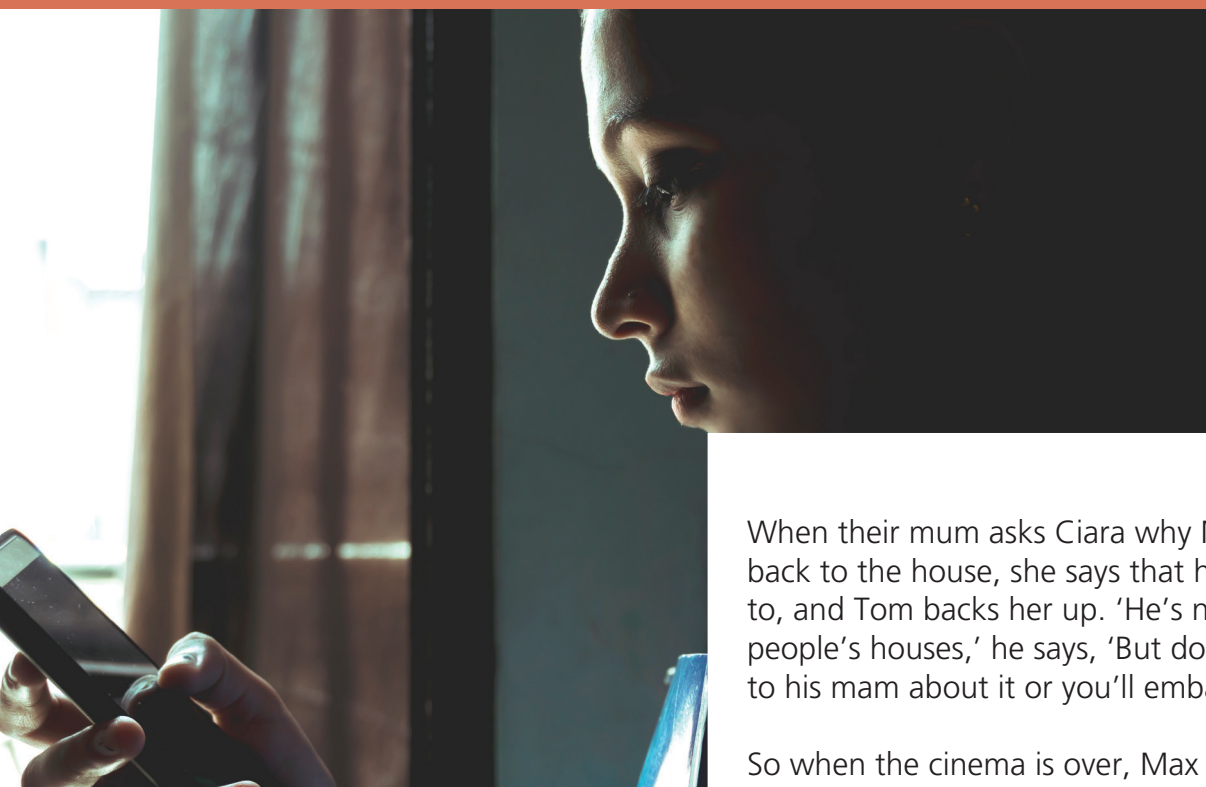
### Safety Exercise

- Break the class into groups of three. Ask them to imagine that they will be giving advice to younger children and their parents about safe use of the internet, and to devise five important rules.
- Invite feedback and compile a list on the whiteboard of the top seven/eight guidelines.
- If the children haven't suggested them ensure that the following are included:
  - Never share personal details with a stranger.
  - Limit your screen time.
  - Talk to your parents about your use of the internet.
  - Be careful about posting photos online.
  - Only share information and photos that you are happy to let the whole world see.
  - Report on-line bullying.

### Cyber-bullying

Read the following story and ask the children to reflect on it.

Ciara and Tom are twins and they are both in fifth class in St Xavier's Primary School. It's their birthday on Friday and they're bringing three friends each to the cinema. Everyone is invited back to their house afterwards, except Max. They haven't told him and he thinks that everyone is going home after the cinema.



When their mum asks Ciara why Max isn't coming back to the house, she says that he's not allowed to, and Tom backs her up. 'He's never allowed to people's houses,' he says, 'But don't say anything to his mam about it or you'll embarrass him.'

So when the cinema is over, Max gets into his mother's car and all the children wave at him. He thinks he's just been collected first, until an hour later.

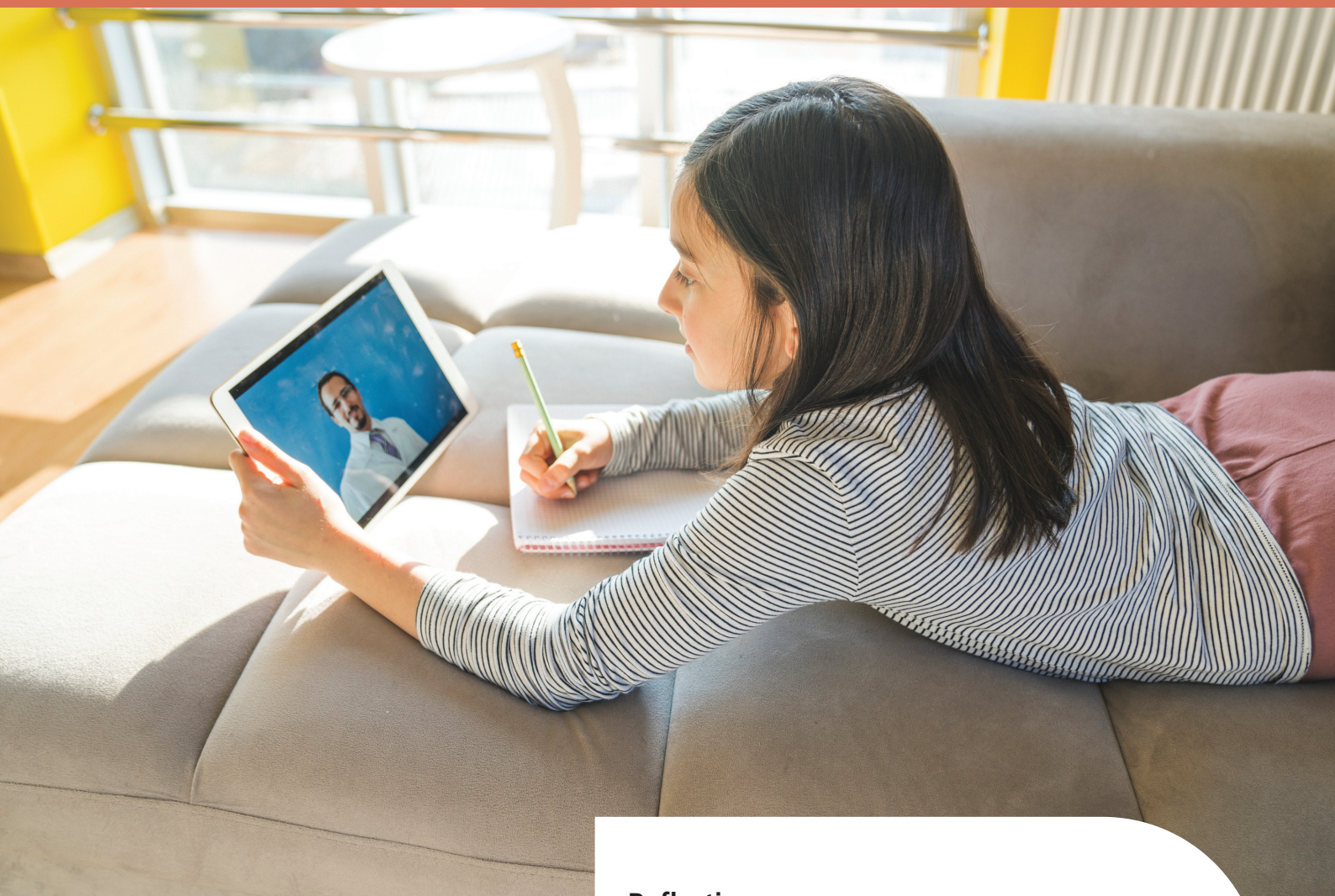
'Ping.' Max looks at his phone and can't believe what he sees. It's a selfie of all the friends with the caption 'Wish you were here! Not!' For a moment he freezes. Then a sick feeling rises in his stomach. 'Where are you?' he texts, and then he wishes he hadn't. 'Having fun without you,' came the reply.

Max threw his phone on the couch and ran into his bedroom. 'I'm sick,' he told his mam in the morning. 'I can't go to school.'

When you have read the story ask the following questions:

- How do you think Max felt when he realised what had happened?
- Has something like that ever happened to you? Would you like to talk about it?
- Is it easier or harder to hurt people using the internet than in real life? Why or why not?
- Do you think we have a responsibility to use the internet safely and kindly?
- What do you think Max should do now?
- Encourage the children to consider who Max should tell – his mother, father, another trusted adult, his teacher? Emphasise the importance of not trying to handle these situations alone.



**Reflection**

Invite the children to sit with their feet on the floor and to close their eyes. You may put on some quiet, reflective music if you wish. Then read the following slowly:

Think of the vastness of the world from the Arctic to the Antarctic, from east to west. Now imagine how difficult it was to get messages from one part of the world years ago. Think of how quickly information can be sent now. The internet is an amazing and wonderful thing. We can find our way using satnav. We can learn things in our own homes. We can communicate with family and friends no matter how far away they are. We can watch satellite TV and films. The possibilities are endless. But there is another side to it. It can be dangerous and we can use it to hurt other people. Everything on earth is a gift from God and he wants us to be kind and responsible in everything we do. We don't like having our feelings hurt. We all want to stay safe. We ask God to help us to use the internet in a way that is good for everyone. Amen.