

UNFILTERED

unhackchildhood.com

A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR THE FEED

ISSUE
#1



FREE*

*Apps say that too. Then they charge you in attention.

WARNING: CONTAINS THE TRUTH



HOW THE HOOK WORKS



NO BOTTOM

Infinite scroll means there's never a natural place to stop. That's on purpose.



THE SLOT MACHINE

Likes and alerts land at random times, so your brain keeps checking. Slot machines use the same trick.



AUTOPLAY

The next video starts before you decide if you even want it.



YOU'RE THE PRODUCT

The app is free because your attention is what gets sold to advertisers.

13+

Most apps' legal minimum (U.S. law, COPPA). Australia says 16. Families here are teaming up to say high school.

2×

Teens on social media more than 3 hours a day had double the risk of depression and anxiety symptoms.

U.S. Surgeon General, 2023

4.8h

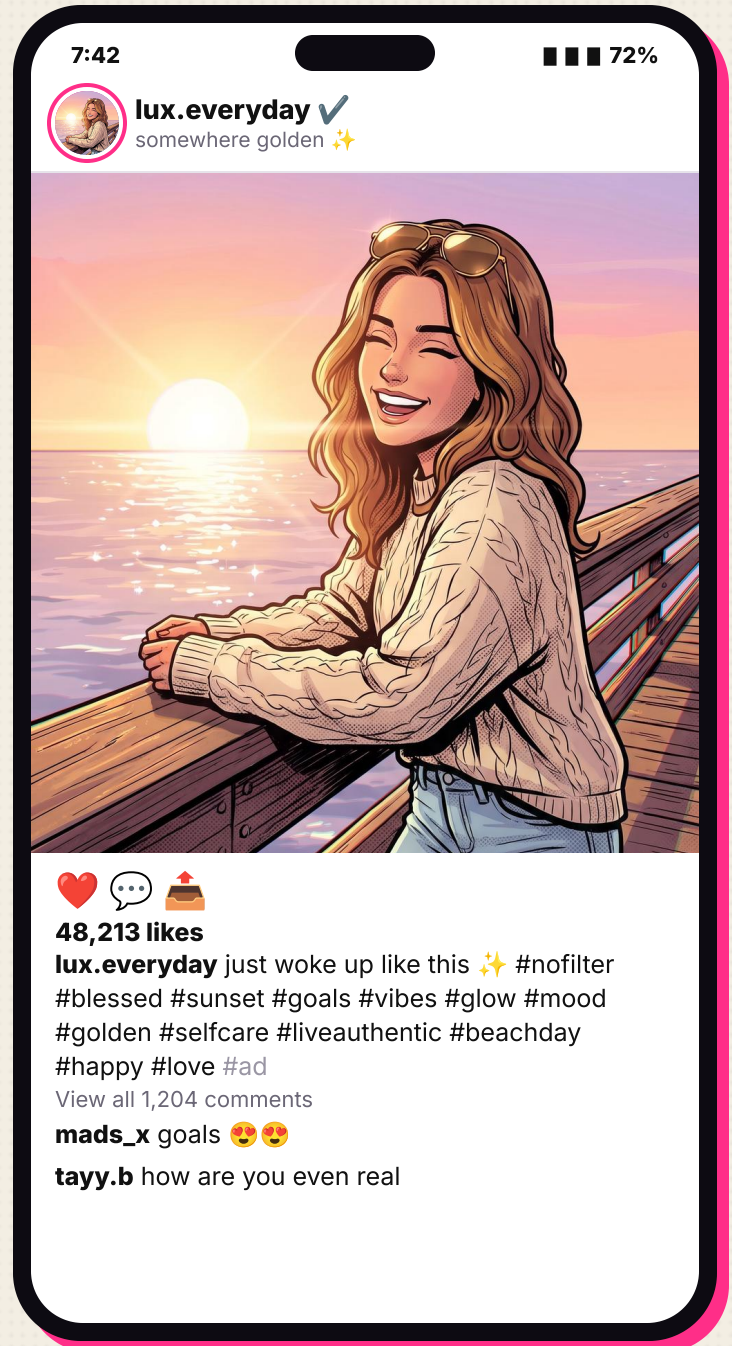
Teens say they spend about 4.8 hours a day on social media apps.

Gallup, 2023



GLITCH

Oh, **THAT** post? Let me show you what the camera cut out. Turn the page. →



THE COMPARISON TRAP

**THEIR BEST
MOMENT**

×

**EVERYONE YOU
FOLLOW**

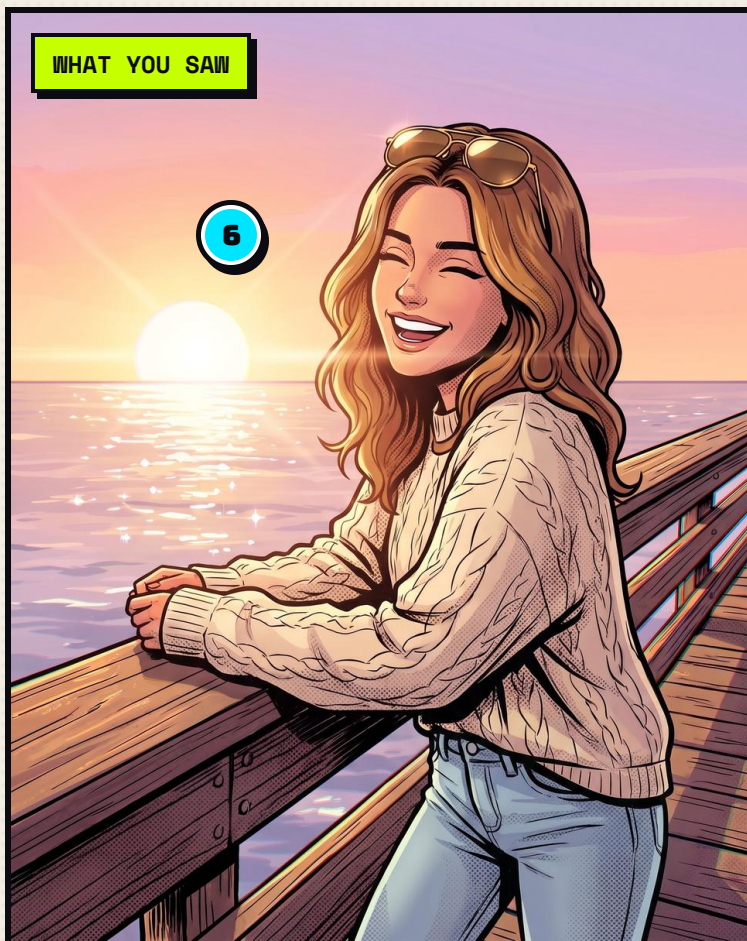
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**A “NORMAL” THAT
NOBODY ACTUALLY
LIVES**

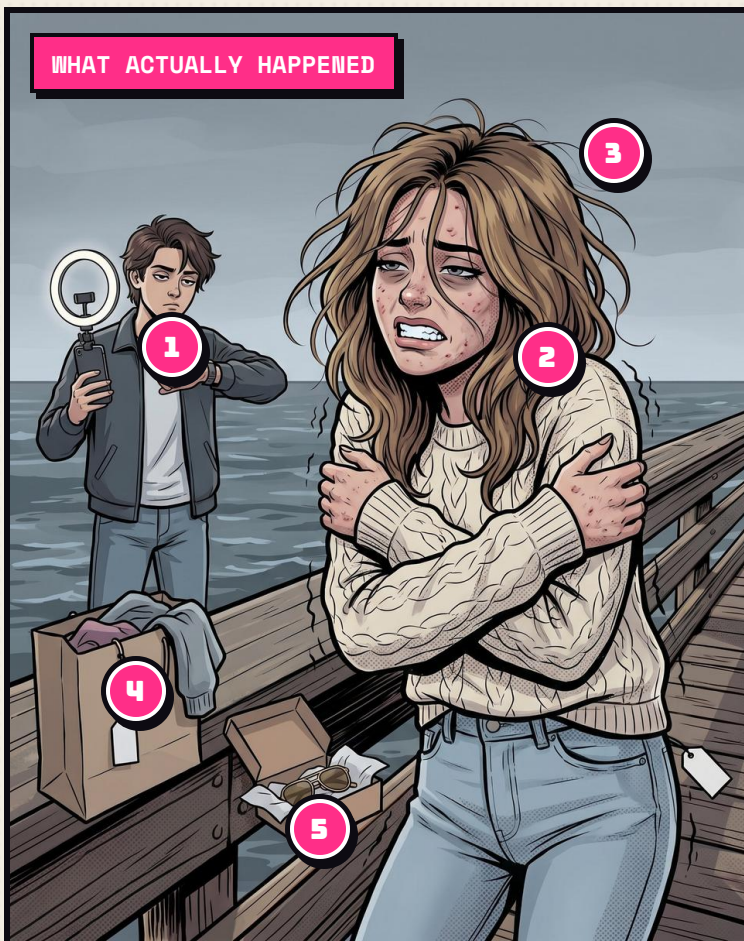
You only see what people **choose** to show. Your brain stacks that against your whole unedited day: the bad hair, the boring bus ride, the math test. That's not a fair fight, and it was never supposed to be one.

TRY THIS: NEXT TIME A POST MAKES YOU FEEL WORSE, ASK YOURSELF, “WHAT DIDN'T THEY POST?”

WHAT YOU SAW



WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED



- 1 **Take #47.** Her friend shot 46 others first.
- 2 **No face-editing app here.** Real skin looks like this. So does yours. So does everyone's.
- 3 **It was gray, windy and cold.** She was freezing the whole time.
- 4 **A "haul" for the camera.** Tags still on. It all goes back to the store tomorrow.
- 5 **A brand sent the sunglasses.** The #ad was buried after 13 other hashtags.
- 6 **That sunset?** Added later with an app. So was the glow. So was "#nofilter."

3 THINGS THE FEED WON'T TELL YOU

- 1 **EVERYONE POSTS THE HIGHLIGHTS.** Nobody posts the 46 bad takes, the fight with their mom, or the pimple they edited out.
- 2 **SOME "PEOPLE" AREN'T REAL.** AI can make faces, bodies and whole accounts that never existed. Some influencers are just software.
- 3 **LIKES AREN'T A SCORE.** They measure what the algorithm decided to push, not what you or anyone else is worth.

8 IN 10

girls had used a filter or photo app to change their looks by age 13.

Dove Self-Esteem Project, 2021



GLITCH

You're comparing your behind-the-scenes to everyone else's **highlight reel**.

TUESDAY. SOMEONE POSTED A VIDEO OF KAI WIPING OUT AT THE SKATEPARK.



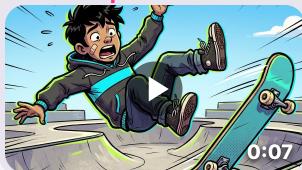
12:09

■■■ 34%

**8th grade ONLY**

214 members

dev.on.top



dev.on.top

LMAOOO 🤔🤔🤔

mads_x

he fell like a folding chair

jj.2012

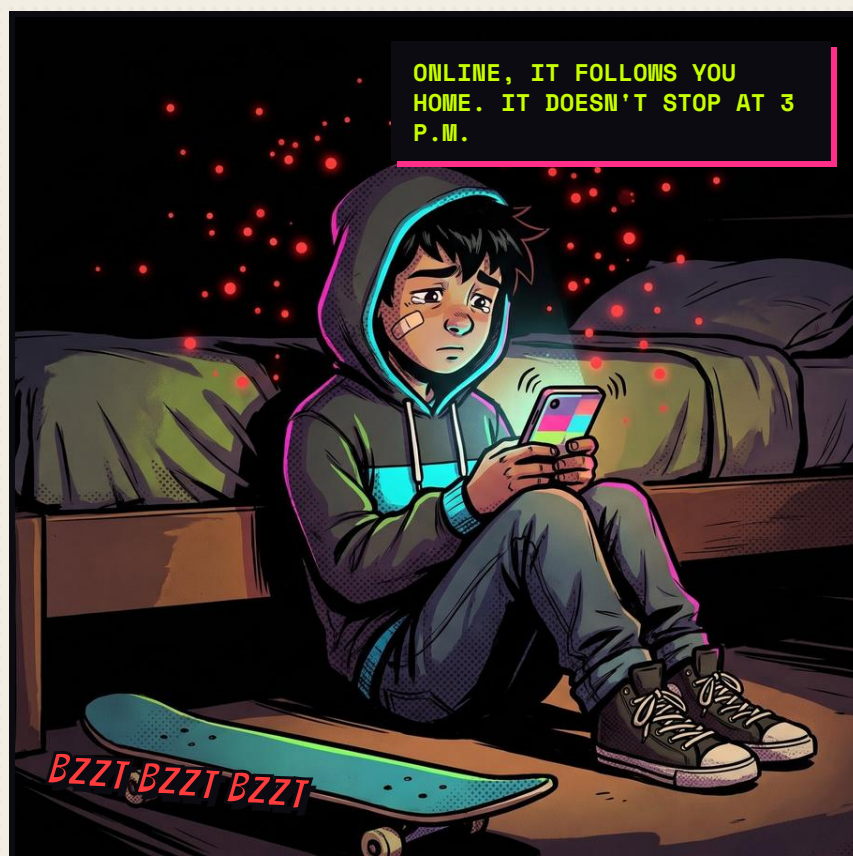
someone make it a meme

kai_fails_daily

new account just for kai 🤡 daily fails

kai_flips left the chat

ONLINE, IT FOLLOWS YOU
HOME. IT DOESN'T STOP AT 3
P.M.



CYBERBULLYING LOOKS LIKE...

MEAN COMMENTS & DMS

EMBARRASSING PICS OR VIDEOS

FAKE ACCOUNTS THAT MOCK YOU

SPREADING RUMORS

LEAVING YOU OUT ON PURPOSE

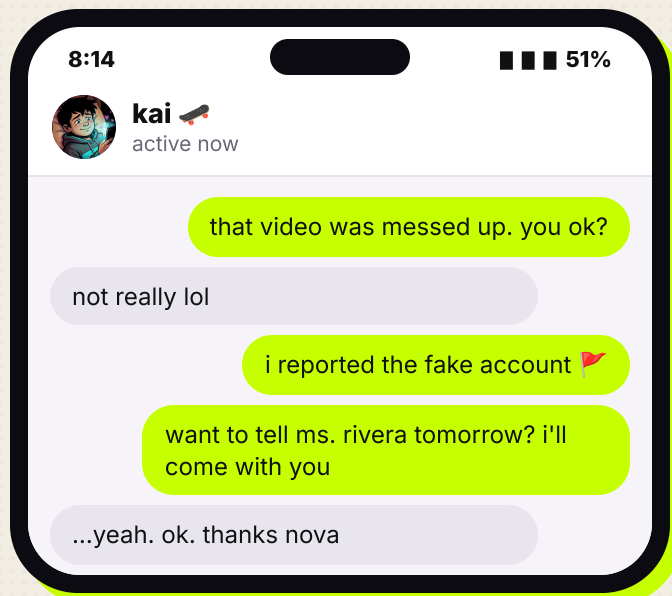
THREATS

IT'S NOT "JUST A JOKE" IF ONLY ONE PERSON ISN'T
LAUGHING.

46%

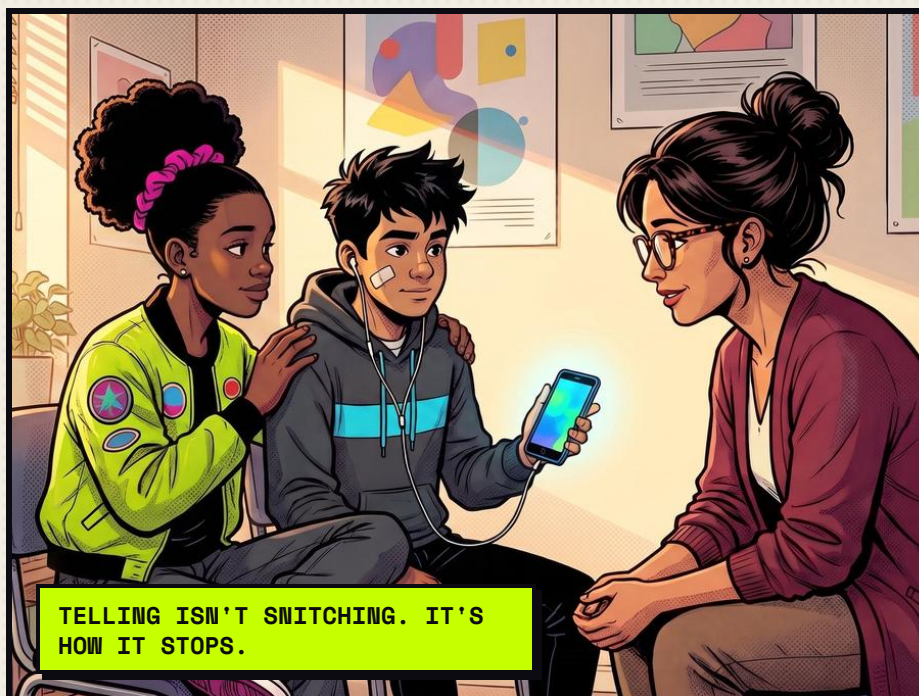
of U.S. teens have been cyberbullied.
The most common kind: being called
mean names (32%).

Pew Research Center, 2022



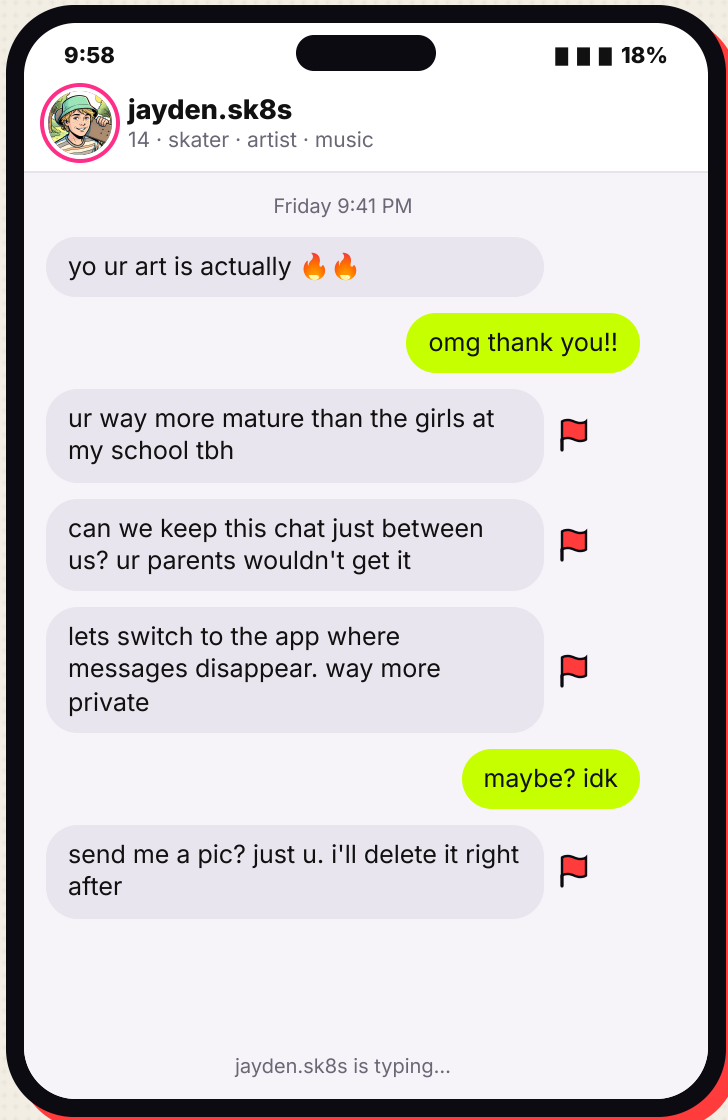
IF IT'S HAPPENING TO YOU

- 1 **DON'T REPLY.** Clapbacks are fuel. They want a reaction.
- 2 **SCREENSHOT** everything: usernames, dates, messages.
- 3 **BLOCK** the accounts so they can't reach you.
- 4 **REPORT** the posts and fake accounts to the app.
- 5 **TELL AN ADULT YOU TRUST:** a parent, teacher, counselor or coach. You don't have to fix this alone.



IF YOU SEE IT HAPPENING

- ✓ **Don't like, share or laugh.** Every view is an audience.
- ✓ **Report it.** It's anonymous on most apps.
- ✓ **Check on them.** One private "you ok?" can change someone's whole week.
- ✓ **Show up in real life.** Sit with them at lunch. Walk with them to class.



WORD OF THE DAY

CATFISH (noun)

Someone who fakes who they are online. The photo, the age, the name, the "we like all the same stuff": all borrowed. Some are just trolls. Some are adults trying to trick kids.

The rule: if you haven't met them in real life, you don't actually know who they are. No matter how nice they seem.

No phone yet? Catfish also show up in game chats and on tablets. Same rules apply.

**GLITCH**

Count the red flags in that chat. **Four.** In seven messages. Turn the page before you type anything.

SOMEONE ONLINE IS A RED FLAG IF THEY...

- 🚩 Flatter you a **lot**, really fast.
- 🚩 Say you're "so mature for your age."
- 🚩 Want to move to a private or disappearing-message app.
- 🚩 Ask you to keep secrets from your parents or other adults.
- 🚩 Ask for photos, even "just your face" at first.
- 🚩 Offer gifts, game credits or money.
- 🚩 Get angry, guilt-trip you or threaten you when you say no.



GLITCH

Real friends don't ask you to keep secrets from **every adult in your life**.

IF SOMEONE THREATENS TO SHARE A PHOTO OF YOU

IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT. YOU ARE NOT IN TROUBLE.

Sextortion is when someone tricks or pressures you into sending a private photo, then threatens to share it unless you pay or send more. It's a crime, and the person doing it is the only one who did something wrong.

- 1 STOP REPLYING.** You don't owe them an answer.
- 2 DON'T PAY. DON'T SEND MORE.** Paying rarely makes it stop.
- 3 KEEP THE EVIDENCE.** Screenshot the messages, then block and report the account. Don't delete the chat.
- 4 TELL A TRUSTED ADULT** right away. This is exactly what they're there for.
- 5 GET IT TAKEN DOWN.** takeitdown.ncmec.org is free and helps remove private images taken of you before you turned 18. Your photo never leaves your phone. Report it at report.cybertip.org or **1-800-843-5678**.

In 2025, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children received about **137 reports of this scam every day**. If it happens to you, you are not the first and you are not alone.

NCMEC, 2026

FEELING HOPELESS?
CALL OR TEXT 988

THURSDAY. KAI'S ACCOUNT STARTS POSTING SCAMS TO ALL HIS FOLLOWERS.



I DIDN'T POST THAT!!

**GLITCH**

Your password was your name plus your birth year. And you **told Marcus**.

**KAI**

HE'S MY BEST FRIEND!

**GLITCH**

Was. Remember last month? Friendships change. Passwords shouldn't be a friendship bracelet.

PASSWORD GLOW-UP

kai2012



Kai2012!



neon-taco-glacier-banjo



WEAK. Name + birth year is the first thing anyone guesses.

STILL WEAK. A capital letter and a "!" fool nobody.

STRONG. Four random words. Long beats complicated. (Don't use this one. It's in a comic now.)

Aim for 15+ characters. The U.S. password standard (NIST) tells websites to require at least 15 when a password is the only lock. Meanwhile, the world's most common password in 2025 was **123456**. It can be cracked in under a second.

NIST SP 800-63B, 2025 · NordPass, 2025

TURN ON 2-STEP LOGIN

PASSWORD

+

CODE
ON
YOUR
PHONE

=



Even if someone steals your password, they can't get in without the code. It's in your settings under Security. Takes two minutes.

In a Microsoft study, 2-step login stopped **over 99%** of account break-ins.

Microsoft Research, 2023

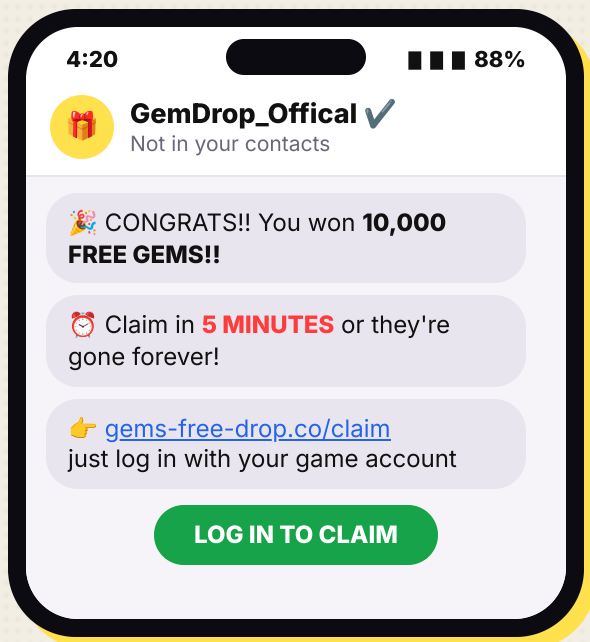
NEVER SHARE YOUR PASSWORD

Not with your best friend. **Not** with your crush. **Not** with someone who says they're "from the app." Your parent or guardian is the only exception.

Use a **different password for every account**, and let a password manager remember them for you.

If one account gets hacked, **change that password first**, then tell an adult and warn your friends not to click anything "you" sent.





PHISHING 101: HOW TO SMELL A SCAM

Too good to be true? It is. Nobody gives away 10,000 gems.

Rush + panic = scam. "Act now or lose your account!" is a trick to stop you thinking.

Check the spelling. "Offical." Fake links and fake names are almost right.

Don't tap. Go direct. Open the real app yourself. Real companies never ask for your password.



SPOT THE CLUES

5 WAYS THIS SELFIE SAYS WHERE NOVA LIVES

- 1 House number: her address.
- 2 School hoodie: where she is every weekday.
- 3 Street sign: her exact corner.
- 4 School bus: her stop, and when she leaves home.
- 5 Location tag + LIVE: where she is right now.

THE FIX

Post later, not live. Turn off location sharing. Keep your account private. Check the background before you post.

THE INTERNET IS WRITTEN IN PEN, NOT PENCIL.
SCREENSHOTS ARE FOREVER.



GLITCH

Your life isn't content. Nova and Kai learned all this **the hard way**. You get to skip that part.

✂ CUT THIS OUT. SIGN IT. STICK IT ON THE FRIDGE.

THE KID'S SIDE: I'M IN.

Families in Townsend, Ashby and Pepperell are teaming up to wait until high school for smartphones and social media, so nobody has to be the only one. This isn't a punishment. It's a team deal:

MY SIDE

- ☐ I get why we're waiting. It's about **timing**, not trust.
- ☐ If something online feels weird, mean or scary, I'll **tell my grown-up**.
- ☐ **No secret accounts.** No sharing passwords with friends.
- ☐ I'll look out for anyone who's getting picked on.

MY GROWN-UP'S SIDE

- ☐ If I tell you something went wrong, **you'll help first**. Questions later.
- ☐ When it's time for a phone, **we'll decide together**.
- ☐ You'll put your phone down at dinner too.
(Yes, grown-ups. That one's for you.)

ME

MY GROWN-UP

DATE

IN DANGER RIGHT NOW?

CALL 911FEELING HOPELESS OR
OVERWHELMED?**CALL OR TEXT 988**Or chat at chat.988lifeline.org

RATHER TEXT?

TEXT HOME TO 741741

Crisis Text Line. A real person texts back.

SOMEONE SHARED OR THREATENS TO
SHARE A PRIVATE PHOTO OF YOU?**TAKEITDOWN.NCMC.ORG**Report it: report.cybertip.org · 1-800-843-5678

BEING BULLIED ONLINE?

STOPBULLYING.GOVFree guides: cyberbullying.org

NOT SURE WHAT TO DO?

TELL A GROWN-UP

Parent, teacher, counselor or coach. Tonight.

✂ CUT THIS OUT. STICK IT ON YOUR MIRROR.

THE UNFILTERED CHEAT SHEET

- ☐ Wait until high school for a smartphone and social media. Families here are waiting together.
- ☐ Devices sleep outside your bedroom. Every night.
- ☐ Highlight reels aren't real life. Ask: what didn't they post?
- ☐ Bullied? Don't reply. Screenshot, block, report, tell.
- ☐ See bullying? Be an upstander, not an audience.
- ☐ Never send photos to someone you only know online. Game chats count.
- ☐ Nobody gets your password except your grown-up.
- ☐ Prize links are bait. Open the real app yourself.
- ☐ Location off. Account private. Post later, not live.
- ☐ Something feels off? Tell a grown-up. Telling is never snitching.

**GROWN-UPS: WAIT TOGETHER**

Families in Townsend, Ashby and Pepperell are teaming up to delay smartphones and social media. Learn more and take the family pledge at nmunplugged.com. There's a companion guide for you, too: *UNFILTERED: The Grown-Up Guide*.

Every illustration in this zine was made with AI. Could you tell? Exactly.

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SCAN FOR THE
PLEDGE