गृह मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
HOME AFFAIRS
सत्यमेव जयते

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre

Protecting Children from Online Crimes and Exploitation

Understanding who a child is, how online offenders operate, what the law requires of you, and what to do the moment you suspect harm.

1098	1930	112	cybercrime.gov.in
CHILD HELPLINE LINE	CYBER FINANCIAL / CRIME	EMERGENCY	REPORT ONLINE

1 Who is a child?

The legal definition of a child in India and why the number 18 decides everything that follows.

2 The digital reality

Where children actually spend time online and what makes them easy to reach.

3 How offenders operate

Grooming, sextortion, CSEAM, bullying, gaming, deepfakes, trafficking.

4 Warning signs

What changes in a child's behaviour and on their device - and why they stay silent.

5 Law and reporting

POCSO, IT Act, BNS, JJ Act, DPDP - and your legal duty to report.

6 Prevention and Q&A

Practical steps for parents, students, schools, and the whole community.

PART 1

Who is a child?

Before we can protect children, we must be exact about who the law is protecting - and why that single number, 18, changes everything.

In Indian law, a child is any person below 18 years

POCSO Act, 2012

Section 2(1)(d): a 'child' means any person below the age of eighteen years. The Act is fully gender-neutral - boys, girls and children of any gender identity are protected equally.

Juvenile Justice Act, 2015

A child is a person who has not completed eighteen years of age - covering both children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection.

IT Act, 2000 - Section 67B

For the offence of child sexual abuse material, a 'child' is defined as a person who has not completed eighteen years of age.

DPDP Act, 2023

A child is an individual who has not completed eighteen years. Platforms need verifiable parental consent before processing a child's data.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 1: every human being below the age of eighteen years. India ratified the Convention in 1992.

Indian Majority Act, 1875

The general age of majority in India is eighteen. Below that age a person cannot give legally valid consent in these matters.

Why that one number decides everything

Four consequences that flow directly from the definition.

A child cannot consent

Below 18, consent has no legal meaning for sexual acts or sexual content. 'She agreed', 'he sent it himself', 'they were in a relationship' are not defences.

If age is in doubt, the court decides

POCSO Section 34 requires the Special Court to determine age and record its reasons. An offender cannot escape by claiming the child looked older.

The image is the crime

Any sexual image or video of a person under 18 is child sexual exploitative and abuse material - even if the child produced it themselves, even if it was shared willingly.

Silence is itself an offence

POCSO Section 19 obliges any person with knowledge of an offence to report it. Failure to report is punishable under Section 21.

Six things' people say - and what the law actually says

WHAT PEOPLE SAY	WHAT THE LAW SAYS
“They were in a relationship, so it is not a crime.”	Below 18 there is no valid consent. The adult, or the person who obtained the material, commits an offence regardless.
“Only girls are protected by POCSO.”	POCSO is gender-neutral. Boys are victims in a large and badly under-reported share of cases.
“He only watched it; he did not make or share it.”	In September 2024 the Supreme Court held that downloading, storing or even viewing such material is an offence under POCSO and the IT Act.
“It is just an edited photo, nothing really happened.”	Morphed and AI-generated sexual images of a child are treated as abuse material. The harm to the child is real and so is the offence.
“It happened online, so it is not real abuse.”	POCSO and the IT Act apply whether the material was created online or offline. Online grooming, threats and exploitation are prosecutable crimes.
“It is a family matter; we will handle it ourselves.”	Reporting is a legal duty under POCSO Section 19. Settling privately protects the offender and leaves the child unprotected.

PART 2

The digital reality

A child today is reachable by a stranger within seconds, on a device that sits in their pocket, in a room where an adult believes they are perfectly safe.

Where children actually are - and how they get reached

Every one of these spaces has a direct-message or voice-chat channel a stranger can use.

Social media and messaging

Public profiles, story replies, DM requests, disappearing messages, anonymous question apps.

Online games

In-game chat, voice channels, guilds and clans, gifts of skins, coins and passes to build obligation.

Short video and livestreams

Comment sections, duets, gifting features, and the pull of going viral.

Learning and homework apps

Tutor chats, doubt-solving groups, unmoderated study groups on messaging apps.

Fan and interest communities

Servers and groups organised around a game, band, sport or fandom, often with adult members.

Family and shared devices

An old handset given to a younger sibling, a shared tablet, a phone with no lock and no supervision.

The common factor is not the app. It is a private channel between an adult stranger and a child, with no other adult watching.

PART 3

How offenders operate

Online exploitation is rarely a sudden attack. It is a patient process with recognisable stages - and that is exactly what makes it possible to interrupt.

The eight threats to know by name

Most real cases are a combination of two or three of these, not just one.

Online grooming

An adult builds trust with a child in order to sexually exploit them.

Sextortion

Threatening to publish a child's images unless they send more, or pay.

CSEAM

Creating, sharing, storing or viewing child sexual abuse material.

Cyberbullying

Sustained humiliation, exclusion, threats or trolling by peers.

Cyberstalking

Persistent monitoring, contact and location tracking against the child's will.

Deepfakes and morphing

AI-generated or edited sexual images of a real, identifiable child.

Luring and trafficking

Fake jobs, modelling offers, scholarships or love used to move a child.

Fraud and identity theft

Gaming scams, fake giveaways, account takeover, misuse of a child's data.

Grooming: the deliberate manufacture of trust

The abuse is the last step, not the first. Everything before it is preparation.

What grooming is

A process in which an adult deliberately builds an emotional connection with a child in order to lower their defences, isolate them from protective adults, and eventually exploit them sexually or commercially.

Groomers are patient. Weeks and months of ordinary, kind, attentive conversation are an investment, not an accident. By the time anything sexual is asked for, the child feels they are talking to their closest friend - and feels responsible for protecting that friendship.

It is slow by design

Trust built over weeks is far harder for a child to question than a single alarming message.

It is usually not a stranger in disguise

Many offenders are known to the child offline too - a relative, tutor, coach, neighbour or older peer.

It targets a need

Loneliness, family conflict, low confidence, a wish to be seen as grown up. The groomer supplies exactly what is missing.

Secrecy is the tell

Any adult who asks a child to keep their relationship secret from parents has crossed the line - regardless of what else has happened.

The six stages - and where you can break the chain

You do not have to catch the last stage. Interrupting any earlier one ends it.

1

Target

Picks a child who seems lonely, unsupervised or eager for attention. Public profiles make this easy.

2

Befriend

Ordinary chat. Shared interests. Compliments. Often poses as a peer or as a slightly older mentor.

3

Fill the gap

Becomes the one who listens. Gifts, game currency, recharge, mobile data, help with a problem.

4

Isolate

“Our secret.” Moves the chat to a private or disappearing-message app. Criticises parents and friends.

5

Sexualise

Tests the boundary with a joke, then a question, then a request for a photo. Frames it as normal and mutual.

6

Maintain control

Threats, blackmail, guilt. “You will be blamed too.” Demands escalate; the child feels trapped.

The break points

Stage 2 - a child who tells a parent about every new online contact.
Stage 3 - an adult who notices unexplained gifts, recharges or game currency.
Stage 4 - a family in which nothing has to be kept secret from parents.
Stage 5 - a child who knows that any request for a photo means stop and tell, immediately.

What it sounds like in a real chat

Teach children to recognise these sentences. Any one of them is a reason to stop and tell an adult.

"You are so mature for your age. You are not like other kids."

Flattery that separates the child from their peer group.

"Do not tell your parents, they will not understand us."

Manufactured secrecy - the clearest single red flag.

"Let us move this chat somewhere the messages disappear."

Moving to a channel with no record and no supervision.

"I sent you a recharge / skins / gift card. It is nothing, really."

Creating a debt the child feels obliged to repay.

"Turn your camera on for a second, I just want to see you."

The first boundary test, framed as trivial and harmless.

"I already have your photos. If you stop now, everyone sees them."

Sextortion has begun. This is the point to call for help, not to comply.

Sextortion: how the trap closes

Often within a single evening. Speed and shame are the offender's main weapons.

1 Contact

A friendly request from an attractive stranger, often with a stolen profile photo.

2 Escalate

The conversation turns flirtatious very quickly and moves to a video call or private app.

3 Capture

The child is persuaded to expose themselves, or a recording or screenshot is taken.

4 Threaten

A list of the child's contacts is shown. Pay, or send more, or everyone sees this.

5 Bleed

Demands never stop after payment. Each payment proves the threat works.

Do this

- Stop replying immediately.
- Screenshot everything first - profile, messages, demands.
- Tell a trusted adult tonight, not tomorrow.
- Report on cybercrime.gov.in or call 1930, and file a police complaint.
- Call 1098 for the child, and arrange counselling support.

Never do this

- Do not pay. Payment guarantees more demands, not silence.
- Do not send another image to buy time.
- Do not delete the chat - it is the evidence.
- Do not blame or punish the child. Blame is why the next child stays silent.
- Do not try to negotiate with or unmask the offender yourself.

CSEAM: not 'pornography', not a grey area

Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material - the term the Supreme Court asked courts to use in 2024.

What counts as CSEAM

Any photograph, video, recording, drawing or computer-generated image that depicts a person under 18 in a sexual manner. It does not matter who created it, whether the child agreed, whether it was ever shared, or whether the image is real or AI-generated.

Supreme Court, September 2024

The Court held that downloading, storing or watching such material is itself an offence under POCSO and the IT Act - the accused does not have to have created or shared it. The Court also urged that the phrase 'child pornography' be dropped in favour of CSEAM, because the old phrase makes the abuse of a child sound like a category of entertainment.

There is no private viewing

Every view creates demand. Every download is fresh circulation. A real child was harmed to make it.

It never fully disappears

Once material is circulating it is copied endlessly. This is why prevention matters more than deletion.

Forwarding is an offence

Sharing it 'to warn people' or 'to expose the person' still means transmitting CSEAM. Report it instead.

Finding it obliges you to act

If you come across such material, do not save it and do not forward it. Report it to the police or on cybercrime.gov.in.

Cyberbullying and cyberstalking

The abuser here is often a classmate, not a stranger - which makes it harder for the child to escape.

Harassment and trolling

Repeated abusive messages, comments and pile-ons across accounts and groups.

Outing and doxxing

Publishing private photos, chats, address, phone number or a secret shared in confidence.

Exclusion

Deliberately removing a child from class groups, servers and events, and making sure they see it.

Impersonation

Fake profiles in the child's name posting content designed to humiliate or provoke.

Stalking and tracking

Constant monitoring, location tracking, fake accounts to keep watching after being blocked.

Non-stop exposure

Unlike school bullying, it follows the child home, into their bedroom, at 2 a.m., with an audience.

It is not 'just kids being kids'. Online stalking is an offence under BNS Section 78, criminal intimidation under Section 351, and publishing a private image without consent under IT Act Section 66E. Where the target is a child, POCSO may apply as well.

Two fast-growing routes: gaming and generative AI

These are where the newest cases are coming from.

Online gaming and livestreams

- Voice and text chat with adult strangers, with no record kept once the session ends.
- Gifts of skins, coins, passes and recharges used to create obligation and secrecy.
- Account boosting offers that ask for the child's login, then hold the account hostage.
- Livestream gifting, where a child is rewarded in real time for doing what viewers ask.
- Fake tournament and giveaway links that harvest logins, contacts and photos.
- Long unsupervised night sessions - the hours when a child is least likely to be interrupted.

AI, deepfakes and morphing

- An ordinary school or festival photo taken from a public profile is enough raw material.
- Free apps can now place a real child's face into sexual imagery within minutes.
- Cloned voices are used to fake a distress call from a child, or a message from a friend.
- Fabricated images are used for sextortion even when the child never sent anything at all.
- In law this is still abuse material. A morphed or AI-generated sexual image of an identifiable child attracts POCSO and IT Act Section 67B.
- Practical defence: keep children's photos off public profiles and out of open groups.

Luring, trafficking and fake opportunity

The offer is always something the child or the family badly wants.

Modelling and audition offers

“Send photos for a screen test.” Payment is promised, a portfolio is requested, then the demands change.

Part-time job and internship offers

Fake work-from-home offers aimed at teenagers, collecting documents, photos and bank details.

Scholarship and admission scams

Fake forms harvesting Aadhaar, marksheets, family details and photographs.

Romantic recruitment

A months-long online relationship ending in a request to travel and meet - alone, in secret.

Runaway support offers

A stranger who offers shelter or a ticket to a child in family conflict. This is a common trafficking route.

Family impersonation calls

Cloned voices or spoofed numbers claiming a child is in trouble, to extract money or movement.

One family rule handles most of these: no meeting, no travel, no document, no photograph and no payment arranged through an online contact - ever - without an adult in the family verifying it independently first.

PART 4

Warning signs

No single sign proves anything. A cluster of them, appearing together and recently, is a reason to gently start a conversation.

Signs in the child

Look for change, clustering and timing - not for one dramatic symptom.

Emotional

- Sudden anxiety, tearfulness or anger, especially right after being on the phone
- Withdrawal from family, friends and activities they used to enjoy
- Sleep and appetite changes; exhaustion from being awake at night
- Talk of being trapped, worthless or wanting to disappear - treat this as urgent

Behavioural

- Secrecy about the phone; screen turned away or hidden the moment anyone enters
- Panic or aggression when asked to hand over the device
- New unexplained money, recharges, gifts, game currency or a new device
- Refusing school, tuition or an activity where a particular person is present

Relational

- A new online friend they will not name or talk about
- Adult language, sexual knowledge or behaviour that does not fit their age
- An older person taking an unusual interest, giving lifts, gifts or private time
- Dropping their existing friends in favour of one intense online contact

Signs on the device - and why children stay silent

The second half of this slide explains why the first half is often all you will get.

On the device

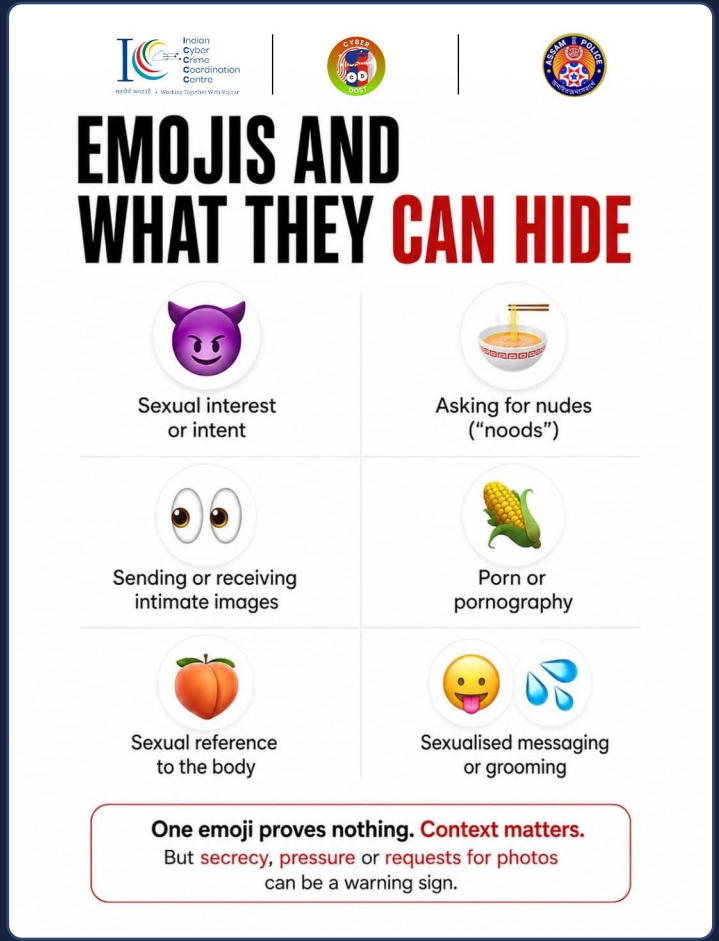
- New apps the family did not know about, especially disappearing-message or hidden-vault apps
- Chats, call logs or galleries repeatedly cleared
- Multiple or secret accounts on the same platform
- A large jump in data use, or heavy use late at night
- Messages, friend requests or video calls from adults the family cannot identify
- Payment app activity, gift-card purchases or in-game top-ups the child cannot explain

Why they do not tell

- Shame - they believe they caused it by replying, or by sending something
- Fear of losing the phone, the internet or the freedom they have
- Fear of the reaction at home more than fear of the offender
- Threats - the offender has told them their family will see everything
- Loyalty - they still think of the offender as a friend who understands them
- They do not know it is a crime, or that anything can be done about it

HIDDEN EMOJI MEANINGS EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

(How online predators can use them to groom a child).



PART 5

The law and how to report

India has a strong legal framework for this. Its weakest link is that most citizens do not know reporting is a duty, or where to report.

NCRP (NATIONAL CYBER CRIME REPORTING PORTAL

The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) is a government platform that lets citizens report all types of cybercrimes online.

Key Features for Citizens

- ✔ **Report Anywhere:** File cybercrime complaints online from any location.
- ✔ **Financial Fraud Helpline:** Call **1930** to report online money theft through the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System.
- ✔ **Anonymous Reporting:** Report sensitive crimes against women and children securely without revealing your identity.
- ✔ **Check Suspects:** Use the "Report and Check Suspect" tool to verify suspicious website links, phone numbers, or social media handles.
- ✔ **Track Status:** Monitor the progress of your submitted complaints online.

The NCRP is divided into two operational parts:

For Citizens

To file complaints related to cybercrimes through **cybercrime.gov.in.**

For Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA):

To monitor, investigate, and take legal action through **cyberpolice.nic.in**

The Citizen Section is further categorized into three parts:

Women and Child Related Crimes

Allows citizens to report incidents **ANONYMOUSLY**.

Provides options to **REPORT AND TRACK** complaints.

Financial Fraud

For reporting online financial frauds such as UPI scams, card frauds, Crypto Currency Fraud and banking-related crimes.

Other Cybercrimes

Covers offences like cyberbullying, stalking, impersonation, and cyber terrorism etc.

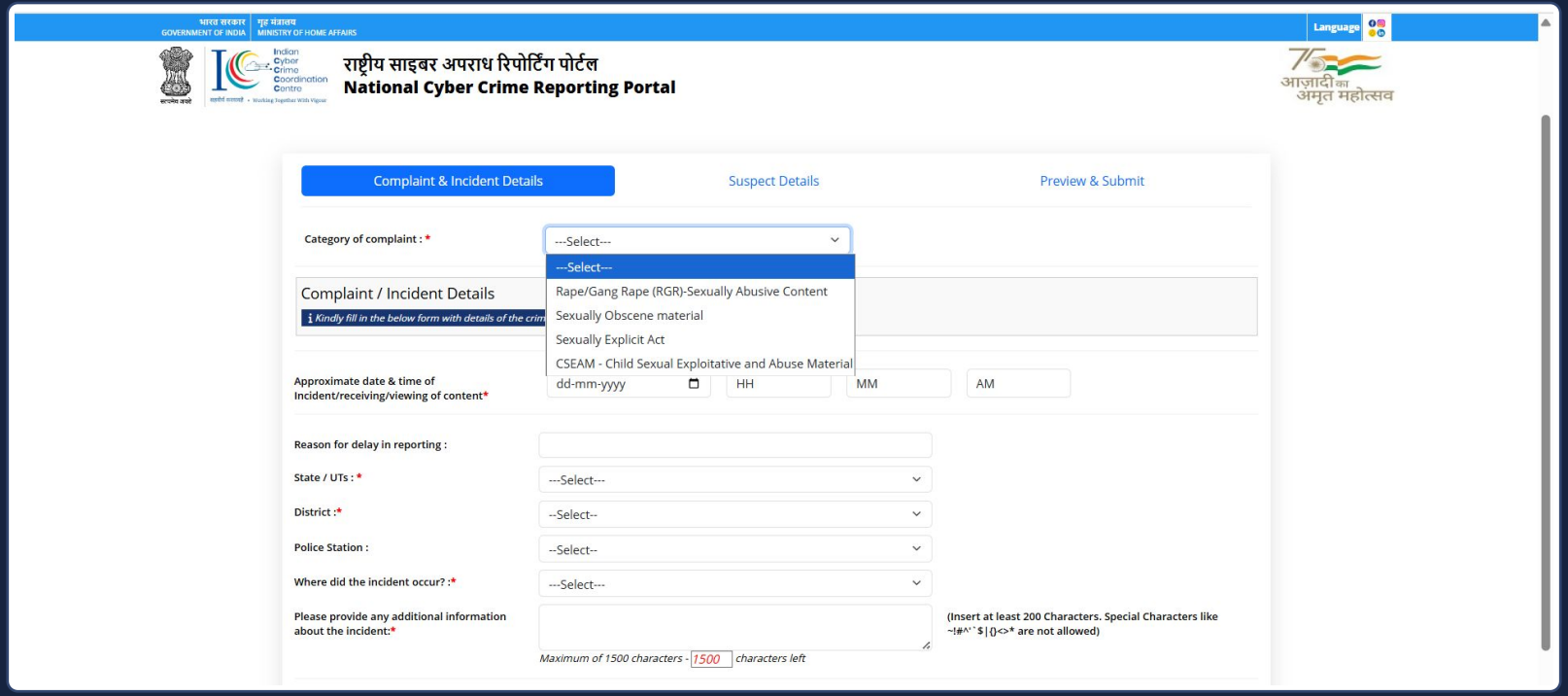
For Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA):

The **same categorization** is available for **Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA)** on their portal to facilitate **monitoring, investigation, and appropriate legal action** under each category.

CITIZEN REPORTING PORTAL

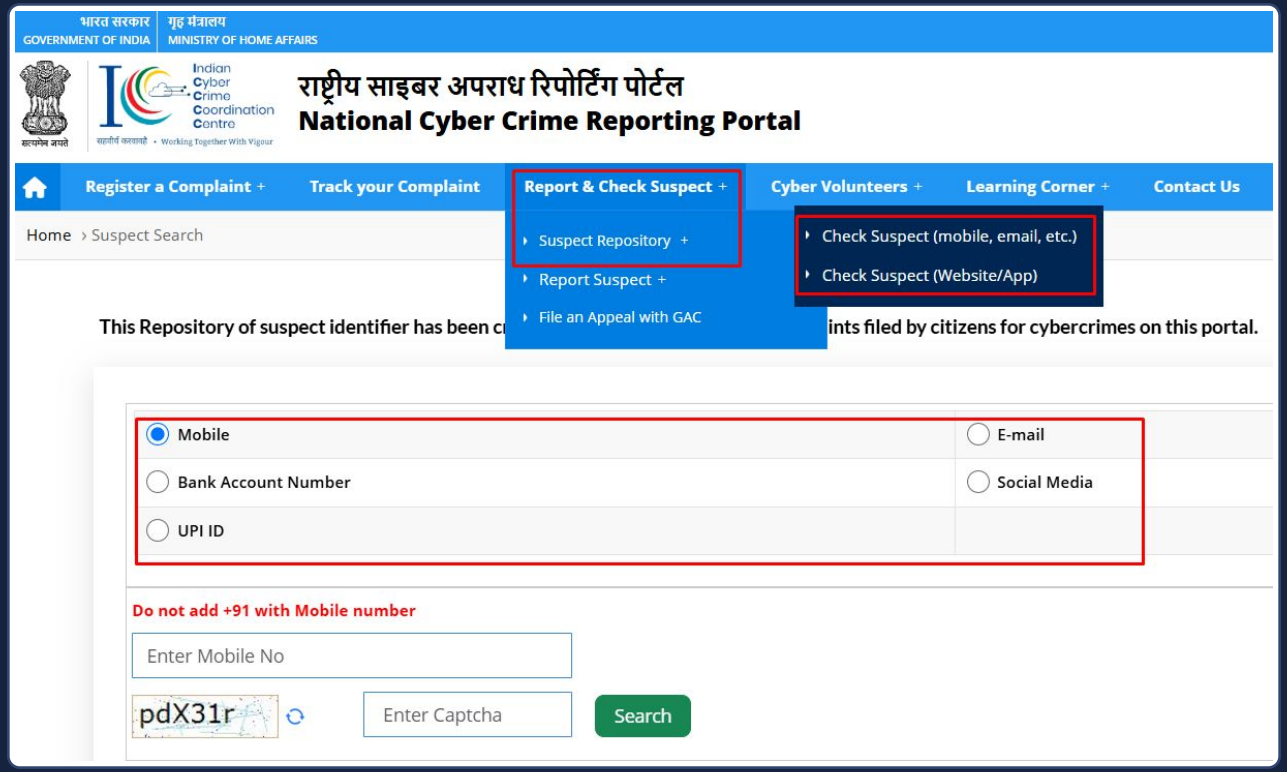
(URL: www.cybercrime.gov.in)

A citizen can choose the relevant category from the drop-down menu.



CITIZEN REPORTING PORTAL

(URL: www.cybercrime.gov.in)



The Action taken by OCWC, I4C:

We monitor the Online Crime Against Women and Children (OCWC) complaints on a daily basis. Whenever we receive an active link or account containing obscene material, we immediately recommend its takedown through the Sahyog portal. The same procedure is followed by all States and Union Territories.

Whenever we receive any information related to Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) offenders, the information is shared with the concerned State Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) for appropriate legal action.

We provide technical and legal assistance to all States and Union Territories (UTs) in the investigation and handling of OCWC cases.

The **Online Crime against Women and Children (OCWC)** wing of I4C, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India aims at combating the rising menace of cybercrime targeting vulnerable sections of society, particularly women and children. With increasing internet penetration, cases of online harassment, sextortion, cyberstalking, CSEAM, and exploitation have become widespread, necessitating focused action and preventive mechanisms.

Reporting is not a choice. It is a legal duty.

POCSO Section 19 applies to every person - not only to parents, teachers and doctors.

Section 19

Any person who has an apprehension that an offence against a child is likely to be committed, or who has knowledge that one has been committed, must report it to the Special Juvenile Police Unit or the local police. A child may report directly, and the police must record the information in simple language the child understands.

Section 21 - the cost of staying quiet

Failing to report, or failing to record, an offence is itself punishable with imprisonment of up to six months, or fine, or both. Where the person in default is in charge of a company or an institution - a school, hostel, coaching centre or care home - it extends to one year and fine.

Good faith is protected

A person reporting in good faith does not incur civil or criminal liability, even if the case is later not proved.

The child's identity is protected

Media disclosure of the identity of a child victim is prohibited, and POCSO trials are held in camera.

There is no time limit

A survivor can report child sexual abuse at any age. Delay does not extinguish the offence.

Report even if unsure

You are not required to investigate or to be certain. Apprehension is enough. Assessing the case is the job of the police and the Child Welfare Committee.

Where to report - keep these on your phone

You do not need to choose the perfect channel. Use any of them and the system will route it.

1930

National Cyber Crime Helpline

For cyber financial fraud and cybercrime assistance. Fastest route for money already lost.

1098

CHILDLINE

24x7 national helpline for children in need of care and protection. Free, and a child can call it themselves.

112

Emergency Response

When a child is in immediate physical danger, or is missing right now.

cybercrime.gov.in

National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal

Has a dedicated category for reporting crimes against women and children, including abuse material. Reports can be made anonymously.

POCSO e-Box

NCPCR complaint box, ncpcr.gov.in

A simple confidential online complaint route for a child, parent or any other person.

Local police / SJPU

Nearest police station

An FIR can be filed at any police station regardless of where the offence occurred. Zero FIR provisions apply.

The first hour: what to do, and what never to do

In sextortion cases especially, the first hour decides how much harm follows.

1 Stay calm and stay with the child

Your first reaction becomes the child's memory of disclosure. Say: I believe you, this is not your fault, we will fix it together.

2 Stop all contact with the offender

No more replies, no payment, no further images. Do not block yet if it would destroy access to evidence.

3 Preserve the evidence

Screenshot chats, profiles, URLs, usernames, payment details and timestamps. Note dates. Do not delete anything.

4 Report

cybercrime.gov.in or 1930, plus a complaint at the police station. Call 1098 for support, or 112 if the danger is immediate.

5 Secure the accounts

Change passwords, enable two-step verification, review linked devices and lock down the profile - after evidence is saved.

6 Get support for the child

A counsellor or the school counsellor. Watch for withdrawal or hopelessness and seek professional help early.

Never

- Never pay. It funds and guarantees the next demand.
- Never send one more image to buy time.
- Never delete the chats - that is the evidence.
- Never confront, threaten or bargain with the offender yourself.
- Never punish the child by taking the phone away as a response to their disclosure.
- Never share the material with anyone, even to warn people - forwarding is itself an offence.
- Never post the child's photo or name publicly while seeking help.

PART 6

Prevention

None of this requires technical skill. It requires a small number of habits, agreed openly, and one relationship in which a child is never punished for telling the truth.

For parents, teachers and guardians

Supervision without surveillance. The goal is a child who chooses to tell you.

Make the first conversation early and calm

Talk about online risks before there is a problem, in short conversations, without lecturing. A child who has never discussed it will not raise it in a crisis.

Give one unbreakable promise

“If anything, online frightens or confuses you, you can tell me and I will not take your phone away and I will not be angry.” Then keep that promise the day it is tested.

Devices live in shared spaces

Charging overnight outside the bedroom, screens visible in common rooms. Not a punishment - a household rule that applies to adults too.

Set up the account together

Private profile, restricted DMs, comment controls, location off, two-step verification. Do it with the child so they learn it, not to them.

Know the online circle

Ask who they play and chat with, the way you would ask about school friends. Treat a friend they refuse to name as you would an adult who visits the house in secret.

Reduce the public supply of photos

Think before posting your child's photos, school name and uniform publicly. That material is exactly what morphing and AI abuse relies on.

For students: rules that keep you in control

None of these make you rude, boring or a bad friend. They make you hard to exploit.

Lock down the profile

Private account. Only people you know offline. DMs and comments restricted. Location and precise-location off, everywhere.

Never send an intimate photo. To anyone.

Not to a partner, not to someone who sent one first, not as a joke. Once it leaves your phone it is not yours any more.

You may leave any chat, any time

You owe no reply, no explanation and no politeness to someone who makes you uncomfortable. Block and report - that is what the buttons are for.

Secrecy from parents is the alarm

Any person who wants your friendship kept secret from your family is not protecting you. That single rule catches most groomers.

Verify before you trust

Reverse-search the profile photo. Check the account age and mutuals. An offer that is too good, urgent and secret is a scam.

If it goes wrong, tell someone the same day

You will not be in trouble. Screenshot, stop replying, and tell a parent, teacher or 1098. It gets solvable the moment an adult knows.

For schools, colleges and the community

Institutions carry a higher duty - and a higher penalty for failing it.

A written child protection policy

Code of conduct for staff, coaches and volunteers. No private one-to-one messaging between staff and students on personal accounts.

A named, visible protection officer

Every student should know who to go to and how. Post the name, the room and the helpline numbers where children can see them.

A reporting protocol, not a judgement call

Under POCSO the institution reports to the police. It does not investigate internally, and it does not weigh reputational damage.

Digital safety in the curriculum

Age-appropriate sessions each year for students, and separate sessions for parents. The Supreme Court has specifically urged this.

Community vigilance

Resident associations, panchayats, youth clubs and places of worship can circulate helpline numbers and normalise reporting.

Support, not exposure

Protect the identity of the child absolutely. Provide counselling. Ensure the child is not made to repeat their account to a queue of adults.

Tonight's checklist - photograph this slide

Fifteen minutes of setup, once, on every device a child uses.

Accounts

- Set every profile to private
- Restrict who can send direct messages
- Turn off location and precise location
- Turn on two-step verification
- Remove followers the child cannot name

Device

- Screen lock and app-store password known to the parent
- Disable installs and purchases without approval
- Review app permissions - camera, mic, location, contacts
- Turn on the platform's teen or supervised account mode
- Charge devices outside the bedroom overnight

Habits

- Save 1098, 1930 and 112 in every family phone
- Agree screen-time and night-time rules together, in writing
- Review the friend and follower list once a month, together
- Know how to block, report and take a screenshot on each app
- Repeat the promise: telling me will never cost you your phone

If you suspect something: how to open the conversation

Get this right and the child tells you. Get it wrong and they close the door for years.

1

Pick the moment

Sideways, not face to face - in the car, on a walk, while cooking. No audience, no phone in your hand, no time pressure.

2

Describe, do not accuse

“I have noticed you seem low after you have been on your phone.” Not “Who have you been talking to?”

3

Ask open questions and then be quiet

“What is going on?” Then wait. Silence is uncomfortable for you and useful for them. Do not fill it.

4

Believe first, react later

“Thank you for telling me. This is not your fault. You are not in trouble.” Save your own shock for after they leave the room.

5

Do not interrogate for details

You need enough to act, not a full account. Repeated questioning damages the child and can weaken the case.

6

Say what happens next

Explain that you will get help, who you will contact, and that you will stay with them. Then follow through the same day.

Ten things to carry out of this room

If you remember nothing else.

1. In India, a child is any person below 18 - in POCSO, the JJ Act, the IT Act and the DPDP Act alike.
2. Below 18 there is no valid consent. “They agreed” is not a defence in law.
3. POCSO is gender-neutral. Boys are victims too, and they report far less.
4. Grooming is a slow process with six recognisable stages. You can break it at any of them.
5. Manufactured secrecy between an adult and a child is the clearest single red flag.
6. In sextortion: never pay, never send more, save the evidence, tell someone tonight.
7. Viewing, downloading or forwarding child abuse material is a crime - not a private act.
8. Reporting is a legal duty under POCSO Section 19; silence is punishable under Section 21.
9. Good faith reporting is legally protected. You do not have to be certain, or to investigate.
10. 1098, 1930, 112, cybercrime.gov.in - save them now, share them with three people this week.

CYBER SECURITY TIPS :

Do's

Model Good Habits:

Use strong, unique passwords and show students how to enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) on their own accounts.

The “Pause and Think” Rule:

Teach students to never click on suspicious links or download files from unknown sources—especially on gaming platforms.

Keep Software Fresh:

Explain that software updates are like “digital armor” that fix safety holes in apps and devices.

Privacy first:

Regularly review the privacy settings on classroom apps and encourage students to do the same for their personal social media and gaming profiles.

Open Communication:

Create a “no-judgment zone” where students feel safe reporting if they've seen something strange or made a mistake online.

Don’ts

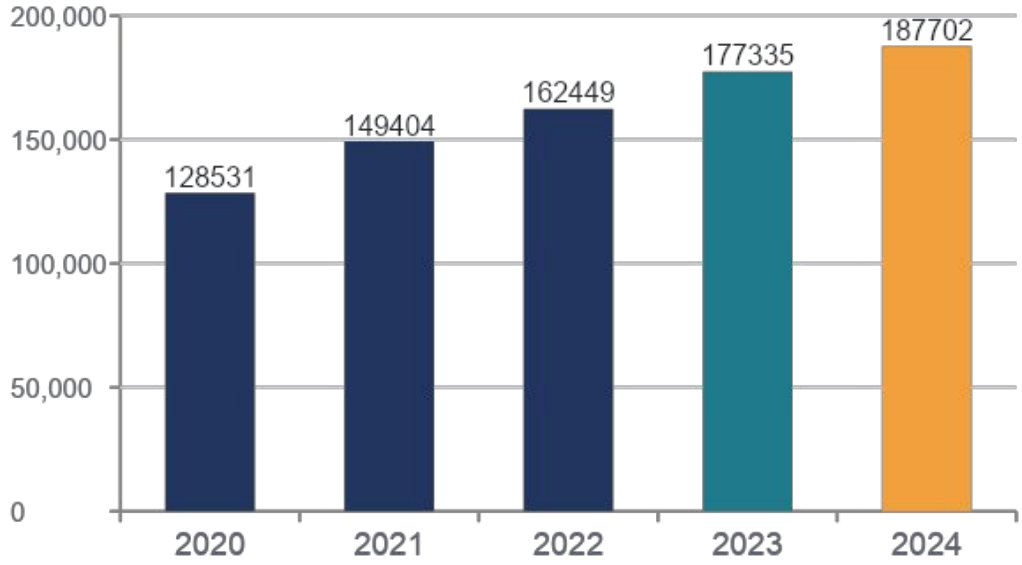
Don't share personal details like your full name, home address, or school name on gaming platforms like Roblox or Discord.

Don't click on links or download files from unknown senders, even if they look like friends (their accounts might be hacked!).

Don't use the same password for your school work that you use for your social media or games.

Crimes against children, 2020 to 2024

Total cases registered across India. Source: National Crime Records Bureau, Crime in India 2024.



1,87,702 cases in 2024

Up 5.8% on 2023, and up more than 46% since 2020.

Against a falling national trend

Overall crime in India fell about 10.8% over the same four years, from 66.01 lakh cases to 58.86 lakh.

69,191 POCSO cases

A crime rate of 15.6 per lakh children. Girls were 43,675 of the 44,567 victims under Sections 4 and 6.

CSEAM dominates child cybercrime in India

Of every ten cyber crime cases registered against children in 2024, roughly nine involved sexual material.

1,238

cyber crime cases against children registered under the IT Act in 2024

1,099

of them involved publishing or transmitting sexually explicit material depicting children

139

cases covered every other category of child cybercrime combined

SHARE OF CHILD CYBERCRIME CASES, 2024

There is no official 'CSEAM crime rate'

NCRB publishes rates per lakh population for broad heads only - the 15.6 figure is the POCSO rate. State CSEAM as a case count, not a rate.

Do not read these as a year-on-year series

Counting bases for child cybercrime have changed across NCRB editions, so 2022 and 2024 figures are not directly comparable.

1,099

CSEAM cases registered by police across India in 2024

Roughly 0.02 cases per lakh children

69,00,000+

NCMEC CyberTipline reports shared with Indian states and union territories by March 2025

Reports are not offenders - but the order of magnitude is the point

AND THE MATERIAL ITSELF IS CHANGING - NCMEC, 2025

7,000+

reports of users generating or possessing AI-generated CSEAM in 2025

30,000+

reports of users attempting to generate it from uploaded images and prompts

145,000+

reports of users altering existing CSEAM files with AI tools

Resource Page

Follow Cyber Dost on:

X (Twitter)

@Cyberdost

Facebook

CyberDostI4C

Instagram

@cyberdosti4c

YouTube

CyberDosti4c

WhatsApp Channel

CyberDost I4C

Website

https://i4c.mha.gov.in/

https://i4c.mha.gov.in/awareness.aspx

VIEW MORE →

CYBER AWARENESS PRINTABLE MATERIAL

Comic Story (English)

Comic Story (Hindi)

DOs & Don'ts (English)

DOs & Don'ts (Hindi)

Dos & Don'ts 2 (English)

Cyber Dhamaka (English)

Cyber Dhamaka (Hindi)

The Cyber Safety Club (English)

The Cyber Safety Club (Hindi)

Spot the Scam Brochure (English)

Spot the Scam Brochure (Hindi)

Book on Cybercrime against Women (English)

गृह मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
HOME AFFAIRS

Indian
Cyber
Crime
Coordination
Centre

CYBER SURAKSHINI

Your Guide to Staying Safe Online Available in English, Hindi & Regional Languages

STOP **THINK** **TAKE ACTION**

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Mantra for
Digital Safety

STOP. THINK. THEN TAKE ACTION.

Report any Cybercrime at
www.cybercrime.gov.in

or Call Helpline Number **1930**

Follow @CyberDost
for daily cyber safety tips and
easy reporting options.

Questions?

A child protected online is not the result of one clever setting or one strict rule. It is the result of adults who notice, who do not look away, and who know exactly what to do next.

1098
CHILDLINE - 24x7

1930
CYBER CRIME HELPLINE

112
EMERGENCY

Report online: cybercrime.gov.in | POCSO e-Box: ncpcr.gov.in | Nearest police station or Special Juvenile Police Unit

> A safer internet for children cannot be created by law enforcement alone. It requires teachers who recognize warning signs, parents who listen without judgement, schools that have effective safeguarding mechanisms, platforms that respond responsibly, and law-enforcement agencies that act quickly and sensitively.”

Thank you!