Social Life

(Key Stage 3)

Points to note: Promotion of sex education in schools is not to encourage premature love affairs or premarital sexual relationship of students. On the contrary, we expect teachers can take a prudent and objective attitude, be open-minded and listen carefully to understand the needs or problems of their students, so as to help them discuss sexuality issues with a responsible attitude.

**Learning Objectives:**

* To help students recognise the shortcomings of making friends via mobile apps and hold a cautious attitude towards online social activities
* To equip students with the skills of protecting their own privacy and reject suspicious invitation
* To beware of the risks behind making friends via mobile apps and learn to deal with suspicious app users, so as to avoid falling into sexual traps

**Life-Event Exemplar: Love on the Line**

**(Mobile Apps and Social Networking Traps)**

**Values & Attitudes:**

Respect for others, Prudence, Rationality

**Learning Materials:**

1. Animation: “Love on the Line” (Please refer to the animation file)
2. Appendix I: “Love on the Line” Animation Summary and Discussion Questions
3. Appendix II: Worksheet “The Pros and Cons of Social Networking via Mobile Apps”
4. Appendix III : Worksheet “The Unrecognisable Imposter”
5. Appendix IV: Worksheet “What if you meet an imposter…”
6. Appendix V: Reference for Teacher “Love on the Line”

**Procedures:**

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| **Procedures (for reference)** | **Key Learning Points** |
| **Activity 1: “The Pros and Cons of Social**  **Networking via Mobile Apps”**   1. Ask and let students tell their experiences and what they hear about mobile apps for making friends. Also, ask how popular those apps are among young people. 2. Let students watch the animation “Love on the Line” Scene 1 and 2 in groups. (Appendix I) 3. Give each student a worksheet (Appendix II) and discuss the pros and cons of social networking via mobile apps. 4. Regarding students’ answers, bring out how students’ preference toward social networking via mobile apps will let their guard down and overlook the hidden perils. Instead, introduce to students other safer channels to make friends for their development of healthy interpersonal relationships. (Appendix V) | * To let students share their views, and understand the pros and cons of mobile social apps. * To equip students with vigilance in acquiring friendship with mobile apps, and enhance the awareness of self-protection by discerning the hidden perils of those apps. |
| **Activity 2:** “**The Unrecognisable Imposter”**   1. Let students watch Scene 3 of the animation “Love on the Line”. (Appendix I) 2. Have each group work with the worksheet. (Appendix III) Sort the app users according to their reliability, and discuss whether the characters in the animation were using appropriate ways to distinguish the imposters. Give a verbal report after the discussion. 3. Teachers respond to the verbal reports made by each group to highlight the difficulties of recognising imposters in the world of mobile apps. Remind them about the points to note in using mobile apps. (Appendix V) | * Through analysing the mentalities of the characters in the animation, let students recognise the misconceptions about making friends via mobile apps among teenagers, in order to remind them about the importance of rationality when using those apps. |
| **Activity 3: “What if you meet an imposter?”**   1. Let students watch Scene 4 of the animation “Love on the Line”. (Appendix I) 2. Have each group work with the worksheet. (Appendix IV) Role-play the characters’ situations, and discuss what to do if they meet a suspicious imposter. Give a verbal report after the discussion. 3. Teachers respond to the verbal reports made by each group to highlight the points to note when going out to meet someone we know only via mobile apps, how to refuse a date, and the importance of seeking help when difficulties are encountered. (Appendix V) | * Through analysing the thinking of the characters in the animation, students can learn to stay cautious when they are to meet people they know only via mobile apps, and stay respectful to each other when they refuse a date. |

**Teacher’s conclusions: (for reference)**

1. Due to the popularity of communication devices, making friends via mobile apps has become more convenient. **There are advantages in some aspects, yet users must stay vigilant if they do not want to be victims.** **If teenagers overlook the hidden dangers,** e.g. going astray or encountering lawbreakers, **they may end up with financial loss, sexual harassment, or even sexual abuse.**
2. Therefore, when making friends via mobile apps, teenagers must be prudent and rational. **Do not be easily convinced by others and promise a date.** **Do not assume that you are capable of identifying imposters, as most imposters would have well thought-out plots and fabricated identities, making them difficult to be uncovered**. Share your experience of making friends through mobile social apps with trusted elders, listen to their advice and introduce to them your friends.
3. Many young people like making friends via mobile apps for their convenience and novelty. It is especially handy for teenagers who do not have a lot of friends to expand their social network. Yet it is hard to confirm the identity of app users. Many apps connect users to all members of the public, which means this kind of social networking has no difference from making friends with complete strangers in an unsupervised cyber world. **In fact, there are many reliable and healthy ways of social networking in real life.** It is not necessary to take those risks.
4. If teenagers decide to meet in person someone they know only via mobile apps, they have to put up their guard and take safety measures. For instance, avoid meeting the stranger alone. If so, arrange the date at familiar places where more people are around, and inform your trusted elders about the date beforehand. Bear in mind that **imposters always try their best to deceive their prey, and leave no ways for it to escape.** Therefore, do avoid any last-minute change in the date, such as changing the venue to the others’ home, or any situation in which there will be only two of you if other friends don’t show up. If you are in doubt, you should turn down the date and leave at once. Do not put yourself in danger just because you are embarrassed, soft-hearted or unwilling to spoil the fun.

Appendix I

**“Love on the Line”**

**Animation Summary and Questions for Discussion**

Theme: Mobile apps and social networking traps

**Scene 1 (in front of the school notice board)**

Yan (junior secondary student) looks forward to watching a drama, but her classmate Ching won’t be free. Yan meets Sze Sze, noticing that she has many friends and is checking her mobile phone. She thinks she can also widen her social circle through mobile social apps.

**Scene 2 (at Yan’s home)**

Yan installs a mobile social app into her mobile phone. The app can look for friends nearby automatically. She replies to friend requests from strangers.

**Discussion Question:**

What do you think the pros and cons of social networking via mobile apps are?

**Scene 3 (school playground)**

Yan and Ching discuss their experience of using mobile apps for making friends. Yan says she only makes friends with female users. Ching thinks males are not necessarily villains. In fact, Yan is going to watch the drama together with Siu Man whom she meets through the app. Ching also has dated Kelvin, whom she meets through the app, to have a gathering tomorrow.

**Discussion Questions:**

Do you use the same approaches as Yan and Ching do when you are distinguishing who the imposters are? Can their approaches work perfectly?

**Scene 4 (In front of the shopping mall)**

Yan, waiting for Siu Man at the shopping mall, suddenly receives a message to change the venue of meeting from Siu Man and Siu Man’s friend is driving to pick her up. The car having arrived, Yan gets into it without any suspicion. At this moment, the TV news is reporting the statistics from the police showing a steadily increasing trend in deception involving mobile social apps. Ching considers if she should cancel the date.

Appendix II

**Worksheet:**

**“The Pros and Cons of Social Networking via Mobile Apps”**

* 1. According to Yan’s experience in the animation and your general observation, what do you think the pros and cons of social networking via mobile apps are? Please list at least 3 pros and cons respectively.

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* 1. Social networking via mobile social apps has become a new trend of social life. Will you make friends using those apps? Why?

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* 1. In your opinion, what are the safe channels of making friends? Why?

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Appendix III

**Worksheet: “The Unrecognisable Imposter”**

It is difficult to recognise who the imposters are, when we are using mobile social apps. Here are the self-introduction of some app users:

I am April. Lovely face, 15 years old, 165cm, 53kg. Add me now!



I am Siu Man, a drama lover. Looking forward to chatting with someone with a common interest!



Kelvin, a student from a boys’ school, wants to chat with girls aged 13-15.



Anyone running out of pocket money? I, Phoebe, can refer some part-time jobs to you!

1. Please rank the above people according to their likelihood to be an imposter.

I think the one who is most likely an imposter is:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please explain your ranking.

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1. Do you use the same approaches as Yan and Ching do when you are distinguishing who the imposter is? Can their approaches work perfectly? What are the advantages or problems with their approaches?

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Appendix IV

**Worksheet: “What if you meet an imposter?”**

Both Yan and Ching met a suspected imposter separately through mobile social apps.

（1）If you were Yan…

You were already inside the car as told by Siu Man, a friend known only through a mobile app. What did you do in the whole process which the imposter could take advantage of? Please list at least 5 things not safe enough.

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（2）If you were Ching…

Would you reject the date with Kelvin, a friend known only through a mobile app? If you insisted on the date, what should you note to better ensure your own safety? If you were going to reject the date, what would you need to note? Based on your choice, please suggest at least 5 points to note. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Appendix V

**Reference for Teacher: “Love on the Line”**

In the story “Love on the Line”, the two characters were in their puberty, longing for social network or love relationships. Due to the limitations in their original social circle and character, they chose to use mobile social apps to fulfil their needs. Nevertheless, if they made unwise decisions impetuously, they might put themselves into unexpected troubles and harm eventually. The following are some suggested ideas for students’ reference:

**Pros and Cons of Social Networking via Mobile Apps:**

Pro 1: Users who are not articulate or confident enough can also express themselves well in mobile apps.

Con 1: Users will be at a loss when facing other people if they are immersed in the self-isolated world of mobile apps, without any real life experience of social networking.

Pro 2: Friends can be made anytime with your mobile phone on hand.

Con 2: Mobile social app addicts may pay no attention to other aspects of their life, losing more than they gain from those apps.

Pro 3: Help is always available with mobile apps by sharing views and experience readily.

Con 3: Users may trust other app users and disclose their own personal information, resulting in financial losses or identity being stolen by lawbreakers.

Pro 4: More choices of friends are available in mobile apps, which make it easier to look for dating partners.

Con 4: Names, gender and photos can be fake, think twice before taking the “love relationships” seriously.

Pro 5: Meet friends, and even lovers with common interests and sincerity.

Con 5: Sweet talk and delightful dates may turn into sexual assaults.

Pro 6: Meet foreigners online and foster the language and cultural exchange.

Con 6: Being lured into naked chat, naked photo-taking or video recording which may be the trap of blackmailers.

In fact, there are a lot of safer channels for making firends in our daily life. For example, students can participate in various social activities, like volunteering, exchange programmes, and interest classes. Through these activities, one can explore his/her own strengths and potential, accept and actively improve his/her weaknesses, as well as raise his/her confidence. Moreover, by getting along with others, good communication skills and healthy interpersonal relationship can be developed.

**The Unrecognisable Imposter**

Teenagers usually think they are clever enough, assuming that only paying attention to an app user’s gender, academic qualifications, hobbies, photos, messages, etc., are safe enough for avoiding the traps of swindlers. Despite some usefulness of the information to understand someone we meet, a swindler can simply make up the information as bait to cheat the prey, causing the prey suffering from financial losses, being threatened by nude photos, or being cajoled to a date and to fall into sexual traps. For instance, some app users stating their body figures may actually be making a plot to involve you in compensated dating or naked chat; users looking for part-time job seekers may actually be looking for people who are willing to participate in illegal activities. Therefore, there are a few things to note for the safety of teenagers when they are using mobile social apps:

1. Avoid disclosing personal information through apps or to others.
2. Avoid uploading personal photos, or sharing them with others through apps.
3. Do not turn on the ‘location identification’ function in the setting of the phone.
4. Consider the consequences; avoid meeting strangers.
5. If suspicious messages are received, cease the contact at once and tell people you trust.
6. If possible, only chat with the acquaintances you know in real life.

**What do we need to note if we are meeting someone who we know only through mobile social apps?**

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| **Should** | **Should Not** |
| 1. Know more about his/her character and background. 2. Be polite. 3. Stay vigilant. 4. Try to stay in appropriate public places you are familiar with. 5. Set the time limit for the date. 6. Tell people you trust about the date in advance. | 1. Consume any food or drinks provided by others. 2. Let others plan the whole schedule of the date. 3. Go on the date alone. 4. Let others pay for the whole date. 5. Get on the car of strangers. |

In the animation, Yan made mistakes one after another. For example, she did not try to find out anything about the personality and background of the online friend, went on the date alone, let Siu Man plan the whole schedule of the date, did not choose a place she was familiar with for the date, got on the car of a stranger. All of the above are the mistakes the swindler can take advantage of.

**How can we reject a date of someone we know only through mobile social apps?**

1. Reject at once if you find the request suspicious or inappropriate.
2. Keep your manners when you turn down the request, and express your standpoint clearly.
3. Even if the user promises that the date will cause no harm, stay vigilant and do not be convinced easily.
4. If the user presses on with the request, or does anything disturbing, you should immediately block the contact.
5. Seek help from people you trust whenever necessary.

**If suspicious of being deceived:**

1. Keep as much as possible related information such as conversations and messages as evidence.
2. Report to the police immediately.
3. Tell trusted and reliable relatives and friends and look for emotional assistance and support.
4. Seek professional help from social workers if necessary.