

Online friendships: Advantages & Challenges



Can you tell the difference?



Scenario one

Fatima is a high school student who is a little shy about meeting new people. Her science class has a project where each **student gets to video-chat with a student from another school in Qatar!**

Fatima is assigned to video-chat with a girl named Maha. Fatima is nervous about meeting her and wonders if they will have anything in common.

When they meet, however, Fatima quickly sees that Maha is very nice and that they **have lots in common**. For example, they both love horse riding!



Scenario two

Layla gets a message on her phone from her gaming friend CJcool11. She doesn't know CJcool11's real name and age, but they've been online friends for a couple of months.

They had a fallout after CJcool11 posted a comment on one of Layla's Instagram photos, a photo of her posing at the mall. In the comment, **CJcool11 was trolling Layla's appearance.**

Layla responds: "That's rude. Friends should not talk to each other this way!" After a moment, CJcool11 answers back, **"Rly? Let's meet up and settle this in person."**

Layla is scared. This is quickly escalating, and she does not feel comfortable talking to her friend CJcool11.

Here are some examples from the two scenarios that tell you if this is a **positive** or **negative** online friendship

01

Appropriate Online Friendship:
Online friendship was initiated under adult supervision and in a healthy context.

02

Positive Online Friendship:
Online friendships can bring new connections with people who share common interests with us!

03

Risky!
Online friendships can be risky and potentially harmful to your emotional and physical well-being. Think how well I know this person and their values.

04

Red Flag Feeling!
Online friendships can sometimes lead to feelings of discomfort, anxiety, and tension. Therefore, carefully consider whether your relationship with this friend has a positive or negative impact on you.

How can you respond to hard or challenging situations with online friends?



Never plan face-to-face meetings with someone you don't know.



Unfriend the person or block them!



Ask a trusted family member for advice and help if you feel unsure.



Change the subject, or say, "I don't want to talk about this".