

SAFE OR SUS



Using the scenarios below, discuss whether the behaviors shown by the characters are safe (no big deal) or sus (suspicious, or something that violates a boundary). Use the questions below to discuss each scenario in more detail.



Bailey and Cody have been dating for a couple weeks. Cody asks Bailey to send revealing pictures of herself, but Bailey isn't comfortable with Cody's request. At first, Bailey ignored Cody's requests or changed the subject, but recently Cody has become more insistent that it will make them closer and is something his friends' girlfriends do for them.

- Safe or Sus? This is **sus**. Despite Bailey dismissing or shutting down Cody's requests, he keeps persisting. Anything less than earnest consent means no and Cody should respect Bailey's boundary.
- ◇ Note: Sharing explicit (nude) images between minors, even if it is consensual between both parties, is illegal in most states. If a partner is aware of the laws and still asks you to break them, that is sus.
- Is this a physical, emotional, or digital boundary? It is a digital boundary because it involves sending pictures via text. It is a physical boundary because it involves Bailey's discomfort with taking revealing pictures and her partner asking her to cross that line. Finally, it is an emotional boundary because Cody is using manipulation to get what he wants from Bailey.



Parker has had a crush on Noor since their freshman year. This year, he decided that he wants to finally ask her out and hopes that she'll be his girlfriend by junior prom. Noor kindly turns him down but offers to hang out with him in a group setting with their mutual friends. Parker is a little embarrassed but decides to keep trying. He continues to ask Noor out, sometimes in front of their friends, hoping she'll eventually say yes. To get Noor's attention, Parker tags Noor in his social media posts in the hopes of receiving a response. Noor is very uncomfortable and starts avoiding social events and activities when she knows Parker will also be there.

- Safe or Sus? This is **sus**. While it may seem harmless, Noor feels like she clearly defined her boundary with Parker when she said she did not want to go on a date with him but would spend time with him in a group setting. It is possible that their communication was

not clear and open enough, so Parker might have misunderstood. Responses like “not right now” and “I’m not sure” might seem like a polite no to Noor, while Parker may interpret this as a possibility for Noor to change her mind in the future. Regardless, it can still be a boundary violation, even if Parker’s intention was not malicious.

- Is this a physical, emotional, or digital boundary? It is an emotional boundary, but also could violate a physical boundary if Parker’s advances include any unwanted contact (for instance, if he tried to hold Noor’s hand).
- What else could Noor say to continue to communicate her boundary to Parker? What should Noor do if Parker continues to violate this boundary?



Tenth graders Sophie and Priya have been best friends since sixth grade. They carpool to school together every day and sit by each other in the cafeteria. Priya made the jazz band this year, and the extra practices and rehearsals mean Priya and Sophie have less time to spend together. When Priya’s jazz band friends invited her to join them for lunch, she was worried that Sophie would feel left out, so she asked them if Sophie could join too. Priya’s new friends were excited to get to know Sophie better.

- Safe or Sus? This is **safe**. Priya is looking out for her friend and trying to include her in a new part of her life while also maintaining her individual identity.
- How do you balance time with your friends with your individual interests and extra-curriculars? How do you balance making new friendships with maintaining old ones?



Avery is a member of the LGBTQ+ community and has found a great group of friends online with similar backgrounds. Avery’s family knows about their sexual orientation but are not very supportive. Sometimes they say mean things and refer to Avery by their dead name. When this happens, Avery usually tells their online friends about it, seeking understanding and advice, because many of them have had similar experiences. One of Avery’s friends encourages them to run away from home and even suggests punching the person who was making fun of them. While the situation can be upsetting, Avery doesn’t want to hurt anyone.

- Safe or Sus? This is **sus**. Avery’s friend is recommending responses that may put Avery at even greater risk for harm.
- Is this a physical, emotional, or digital boundary? It is a digital boundary.
- How can Avery communicate to their online friend that they are not comfortable with the suggested actions? What are some things they could say to communicate that comments like that aren’t acceptable or safe?
- What should Avery do if their friend does not stop violating this boundary?
- If Avery was a student at your school, where could they go for more help and support?



Jay and Madison are seniors that have been dating since ninth grade. They do almost everything together, but Jay recently joined the club soccer team. Jay likes to hang out with his team members after practice, which sometimes makes Madison mad because he isn't spending that time with her. Recently, she asked Jay to let her access his social media accounts. He said no at first, but she threatened to break up with him. She said he would let her see them if he didn't have anything to hide, so he gave in. She is now regularly demanding to go through his phone and showing up to where he is unexpectedly when they aren't together.

- Safe or Sus? This is **sus**. Madison is invading Jay's privacy and using threats when Jay tries to reinforce the boundary.
- Is this a physical, emotional, or digital boundary? It is a digital boundary as Madison is demanding access to Jay's phone. It is also an emotional boundary, as Madison is using Jay's feelings for her to manipulate the situation to get what she wants.
- What are some things Jay can say to clearly communicate his boundary to Madison? What should Jay do if Madison does not stop violating this boundary?



Mike recently got a job at a gas station working overnight shifts thanks to his friend Gustavo. Two months into the job, Mike's supervisor Elsa reaches out to Mike and tells him how great of a job he has been doing. Elsa says that Mike has become a "trusted" employee, and that they would like Mike to work at another gas station Elsa owns. Mike now spends 30 hours a week at one location, and 35 hours a week at the other location. Mike talked with Gustavo about the job, proudly sharing how many hours he is working per week. Gustavo exclaims, "Wow, that's a lot of overtime pay!" Mike checks one of his paystubs and finds that he is not being compensated for any overtime. Mike also notes that Elsa rarely provides him with time to take breaks. Elsa also asked Mike to not talk about the additional hours he is working because his "coworkers might get jealous."

- Safe or Sus? This is **sus**. Elsa is taking advantage of Mike's wages and is not giving him required break time.
- Is this a physical, emotional, or digital boundary? It is a physical and emotional boundary, as Elsa is asking Mike to not report his income, as well as limiting Mike's right to take a break and receive overtime pay.
- What are some things Mike can say to Elsa? Mike should begin discussing his recent paystub. If Elsa gets defensive or begins using threatening language, Mike should consider leaving this job and reporting the activity to the Better Business Bureau.