

## ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

# Where can I meet someone to date?

KEY WORDS dating apps | social media | common interests | online safety 

Today, dating someone is no longer confined to meeting accidentally (or not) between classes in school hallways. Using **social media and dating apps** to meet someone has never been more common. Let's see how traditional methods are complemented with technology for exploring a romantic connection.

When it comes to the classic way of meeting someone, **face-to-face encounters**, 76% of young people swear by this approach. School settings are a goldmine for meeting people with shared interests. Join clubs, hobbies, sports teams, or school events, and you might come across someone you have a lot in common with. Beyond school, keep an eye out for what's happening in your community and engage in social gatherings. Attend fairs, parties, game nights –someone special could be right under your nose.

Now let's discuss social media. Did you know 20% of young people use social media to make romantic connections?



And an even larger 28% turn into Sherlock Holmes by using social platforms to play detective and gather information on potential partners.

Some teenagers use dating apps designed specifically for them to meet new people. The most common ones such as **Skout, Spotafriend, Yubo, Wink and MeetMe** use safety features like age verification, privacy controls, and reporting tools. Staying safe also means never meeting anyone from the internet without at least talking to an adult about it first and verifying the person's identity.

Using the digital realm to meet someone to date opens up many possibilities, but it comes with its ups and downs. On the bright side, the internet can be a safe space for shy teenagers to connect with others and feel more themselves. Yet, **online relationships come with challenges**. Even though teen dating apps try to keep things safe, the bigger online world has its risks such as fake profiles and stalking. Stay cautious with social media, too – flirting online can go wrong, and 25% of teens have unfriended or blocked someone for being too pushy.



**Involving a trusted adult in your dating decisions** could make for a safer experience, so speak openly about online risks, such as encountering harmful users or identity theft. Someone you trust that is older can provide valuable guidance on setting boundaries, recognising red flags, and navigating dating challenges.

The avenues for meeting someone to date can be as diverse as your interests. Whether you're chatting in the school hallway, sending private messages on social media, or attending social events, remember that a thoughtful blend of both worlds, sprinkled in with some parental insight, makes for the best dating experience and sets the stage for meaningful connections. **Happy dating!**



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