

59%

of you are
Facebook friends
with your teachers.

SOURCE: SEVENTEEN.COM POLL



tempted by a teacher
Through Facebook chats,
Alyssia, 19, got close
to her instructor—too close.

HAIR: JORDAN; MAKEUP: ANNEBET DUWALL; HAIR AND MAKEUP: ANNEBET DUWALL; TOP: LULU; STRIPED TOP: LULU; GRAY TOP: LULU; JEANS: LULU; SHOES: CONVERSE; BRACELETS: LULU; RINGS: BRACELET; CO-SKYE; BRACELETS: CONVERSE; SNEAKERS: CONVERSE.

FLIRTING WITH DANGER

It's easier than ever to get close to your teacher or coach, thanks to Facebook and texting. But what happens when friending turns to flirting . . . or worse? BY JANE BIANCHI

You see your teacher in class every day. He seems so cool and funny and easy to talk to, and that makes you wonder what he's like outside of school. Does he go to movies and parties on the weekends? When he friends you on Facebook, of course you accept, because you can finally have your answer—and the chance to look at his photos and giggle about his status updates. It was like that for Shanae, 19, from Greensboro, North Carolina, who was FB friends with her economics teacher senior year. “In class, he'd talk only about school stuff,” she says. “But on Facebook, I knew if he had a headache or if he went on a fun date with his wife. I respected him more, because I realized he had good days and bad days, like me.” Plus, having online access to your teacher can also make it easier to get an answer if you ever have a question about class. “My history and science teachers keep me posted about tests and homework on Facebook, and if I need help, I can send them a quick message,” says Kristin, 16, from Houston, Texas.

For most girls, that's as far as it goes. But what if, one night after school, your teacher sends you a flirty message about how hot you looked that day? That's what happened to Alyssia, 19, from Fayetteville, North Carolina (pictured

at left). She was flattered by her math teacher's compliments and kept talking to him online, enjoying the attention. It made her feel like she was his favorite student. But then their relationship got complicated. The flirtier he got, the more Alyssia felt like what they were doing was wrong. But by then she was so attached to him that she couldn't resist when he pushed her into a sexual relationship. (Turn the page for her story.) Michelle*, 19, also felt confused when her psychology teacher started Facebook messaging her every night, using smiley and winky faces. He would listen to all of her problems, and then tell her how pretty she was. “I thought of him as a good friend. He'd act like we were boyfriend and girlfriend, father and daughter, and teacher and student all at the same time,” she says. After a month of chatting, he invited her to his house and then kissed her—out of nowhere. “I was totally stunned,” she says.

While Aria's relationship with her teacher, Ezra, on *Pretty Little Liars* makes the idea seem sexy, the reality is, if a teacher or coach hits on you, it's sleazy . . . and sometimes even illegal. When he has access to you 24/7 and convinces you to share personal info, the line between friendship and something inappropriate can get very blurry. You don't know if he's crossed the line because you don't even know where the line is anymore.

"MY TEACHER SEDUCED ME!"

M

y 33-year-old precalc teacher, Mr. Coffelt, was cute and funny. (He'd always joke, "I drink so much, I'm surprised I don't have liver failure!") My class liked his sense of humor, because he acted like one of us. He and I didn't

have any mutual friends online, so when he friended me on Facebook in November of my junior year, I knew he'd made an effort to find me. I accepted his request because I thought it would be fun to get to know him better.

At first, he'd private message me on Facebook in the evenings and ask about school, like if I was having problems in class (which I was, because I sucked at math!). But our convos quickly got personal. One day when my mom got into a fight with someone at my house, I had to stop responding to deal with it. He asked what was wrong, so I let it all out. Talking to him felt incredible. He was an amazing listener and gave me good advice. And he was so much more mature and wise than people my age!

nonstop attention

Soon we were IMing for hours every night. I loved it. He made me feel less alone. He'd tell me I was the most beautiful girl in class—nobody else had ever said stuff like that to me before. His flattery made me feel special. Then he said, "I'm sorry this flirtation can't go on outside the Internet." I wasn't sure that I wanted things to go farther, but I definitely didn't want our convos to stop. So I said, "It's okay if it does." Then he said, "If anyone finds out, I'll get in trouble. Don't tell anyone." So I kept my mouth shut. I was attracted to him but also nervous.

He started flirting with me in school by winking at me in class. And once while he was standing at my locker, I bent down to pick up a book and he joked,

"While you're down there ..." and pointed to his crotch. I laughed it off and ignored a voice in the back of my head that said things were going too far, since I didn't want Mr. Coffelt to stop talking to me.

getting physical

After we'd been IMing for several months, Mr. Coffelt said I should come over to his house to talk one Saturday. I said I'd go, but then that uh-oh feeling came back. So that Friday, I texted him, telling him I was

having second thoughts. He made me feel guilty, saying how much he was looking forward to it, so I felt obligated to go. When I got to his house, he hugged me and said, "I've been lusting after you since October." I felt so mature knowing that an older guy wanted me. We started talking and then he pressed me against the kitchen wall and kissed me. I was

half-expecting it, but it was still surreal. On the one hand, it seemed right, because I thought he was someone who deeply cared about me. But on the other hand, he was my teacher, so I knew it was wrong. We were moving way too fast.

"I don't want to do this anymore," I said. He stopped, but then said, "I'll keep trying until

you say yes." I laughed it off then,

but when I went to his house weeks later, I gave in and slept with him. It was exciting in the moment, but afterward, I thought: What in the world did I just do?

control freak

We had sex twice more after that, and then Mr. Coffelt's attitude changed. He started getting really controlling. He'd say, "Come to school in a dress without underwear." I did it, but it made me feel disgusting! He was treating me like a sex toy, not a person.



sex ed
Alyssia's teacher insisted that she call him Mr. Coffelt (not Phillip) because it made him feel like he was in charge.



Fayetteville math teacher charged with having sex with student

COFFELT: CUMBERLAND COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

CROSSING THE LINE It's important to remember that most teachers and coaches aren't But as Alyssia discovered, the sketchy ones can push the boundaries

FRIENDLY:

"Your grades are down. Have you tried our school's tutoring program?"

WHAT TO DO: Say, "I'm not comfortable talking about that." You'll send a clear message: Anything personal is off-limits!

FLIRTY:

"Your grades are down. Are you not getting along with your boyfriend? Want to talk?"

FRIENDLY:

He leaves an article on your desk about something he knows you're into.

WHAT TO DO: Bring the gift to your guidance counselor, tell her who it's from, and say, "I don't know if I should accept this present."

FLIRTY:

He slips a gold necklace or bracelet into your backpack when nobody is looking.

hot for teacher
Aria and Ezra's
behavior on *Pretty Little
Liars* is only fun on TV.



IN THE DANGER ZONE

It was starting to get really uncomfortable, so I began to pull away from him and we talked just twice a week instead of every night. That summer, I even started dating a guy my age, who I'd met at the mall. When I told Mr. Coffelt, he said, "Tell him he has to share you with me." But I told him I wasn't going to cheat on my boyfriend.

At the end of the summer, when my boyfriend and I broke up, Mr. Coffelt kept wanting things to go back to the way they were. I refused. I got sick to my stomach every time I thought about hooking up with him, because he had turned into a jealous jerk rather than the compassionate guy that he had appeared to be. Not to mention that he was 16 years older and my *teacher!* I figured that what we were doing was probably illegal, but worse, deep down I knew I was being manipulated and used.

I couldn't sleep or eat. I was angry all the time. I even began cutting myself. My mom noticed how depressed I'd become and I eventually spilled my guts to her. She flipped out at first—crying and screaming at me. I was

"HE PRESSED ME AGAINST THE KITCHEN WALL AND KISSED ME!"

so ashamed. But she calmed down when she realized how much pain I was in, and then brought me to the police station so I could report him. It was a relief to lift that burden off my shoulders. I knew he was taking advantage of my

low self-esteem to get me to do what he wanted, and I was so tired and stressed from feeling forced to keep it a secret.

Mr. Coffelt was arrested and word spread, so senior year was rough. Kids at school called me a whore on Formspring. But in time, the comments faded and I was vindicated last December when Mr. Coffelt pleaded guilty to sexual battery. He no longer teaches at that school and had to register as a sex offender. I'm happy that he was punished for what he did, because I don't want him to be able to violate other girls.

Now I'm in college, so I've had a chance to start over, and I've been going to therapy to work through my feelings. His texts and FB messages made him seem like a friend, then a boyfriend. But because he had secret access to me and we got so close so fast, it allowed him to manipulate me for his own twisted purposes. At the time, I really thought we had a connection. Now I see how wrong I was. **-alyssia, 19, fayetteville, nc**

These girls learned firsthand how to spot red flags from a teacher or coach.

His messages get personal

Vanessa*, 19, called the cops after her high school track coach became sexually aggressive, especially over text. "In the beginning, he texted me only to remind me about meets," she says. "But as time went on, he'd ask me about my day. Eventually, he sent me a text that read: 'We could play games. You could be Jane and I could be Tarzan and we could play 'Find the banana.' It was so gross!"

He deletes your convos

When her 11th grade psychology teacher sent her IMs telling her how pretty she was and then kissed her a few weeks after that, Michelle*, 19, was panic-stricken. But just before she pressed charges, he made sure that there wasn't enough proof to convict him. "He said he loved me and to protect our relationship, he had to delete our convos from my computer. I never should have let him," says Michelle.

He tries to get you alone

When her 36-year-old soccer coach offered to drive her to practice, Katherine, 17, of Bellaire, Texas, thought it was a kind gesture. But once they were in the car, where nobody could see them, he suddenly pulled over and kissed her. "I couldn't stop staring at his wedding ring, thinking, He's married! It was wrong on so many levels," says Katherine. "But since we were by ourselves, it was my word against his."

sexual predators—their goal is to help you, not hurt you. faster and farther than you might imagine.

FRIENDLY:

You're raising your hand. He taps your shoulder and says, "Just a second."

FLIRTY:

While talking one-on-one after class, he rubs your lower back—almost touching your butt.

WHAT TO DO: Say, "I don't like it when you do that" right then and there—even if you were too afraid to say it other times before.

*Names have been changed.