

Handout 4 – Pressure & Pause Plan

Pressure can narrow attention.

The goal is not to remove emotion or social influence; it is to notice when you need enough space to use your decision skills.

Pressure signal	What it can sound/feel like	A safe pause response
TIME	“Answer now.” “There is no time.”	Ask: “Is this truly urgent?” Request a minute, read again, or ask for the first essential fact.
STRONG EMOTION	angry, excited, embarrassed, afraid, overwhelmed	If safe: step back, ground attention, avoid sending/posting immediately, return when able to think more clearly.
PEER PRESSURE	“Everyone is doing it.” “Don’t be boring.”	Name your choice: “I’m deciding for myself.” Move away, contact someone, or choose a different role.
REWARD / FOMO	“This is my only chance.” “I’ll miss out.”	Ask what the later cost could be and whether the offer is actually time-limited.
UNCLEAR INFORMATION	“I don’t fully understand what I’m agreeing to.”	Stop. Ask a question, check a source, read instructions/terms, or ask a trusted adult.
DIGITAL URGENCY	notifications, streaks, rapid group-chat reactions, viral pressure	Do not forward/post just because others are fast. Check privacy, permanence, audience and accuracy.

My pause phrase(s):

- “Give me a minute to think.”
- “I need to check before I agree.”
- “I’m not comfortable deciding this right now.”
- “I need more information.”
- “I need an adult to help with this.”

RED-LINE: If there is immediate danger, abuse, exploitation, a serious threat, sexual safety issue, self-harm/suicide risk, serious violence, major legal risk or a medical emergency, do not use this worksheet as the main response.

Follow the school safeguarding/emergency route.