


The background is a solid light beige color with a repeating pattern of small, white, line-art icons. These icons include various school-related items: pencils, books, rulers, graduation caps, and other educational symbols. The icons are scattered across the entire page. A large, faint, white curved line is visible in the bottom right corner, starting from the bottom edge and curving upwards and to the left.

# **50 Ways to Socialise Your Online Student**

The background is a light beige color with a repeating pattern of small, faint icons including books, rulers, pencils, and school bags. A large, thin, curved line sweeps across the upper right portion of the page. Three teal-colored hexagons are arranged in a triangular pattern. The top hexagon contains text. The bottom-left hexagon is empty. The bottom-right hexagon is also empty.

When parents are considering educating their child at home, one of the first issues that comes to mind is socialisation.

After all, if your child isn't at school, how will they socialise with other children? This is a valid question to be asking.

The following ideas are an attempt at answering that question. The list is by no means exhaustive, but hopefully there are some ideas that are suitable to your family.

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## Excursion to the local museum

Excursions are a great way to develop your child's social skills (as you can tell from the fact that the first 13 ideas on this list are excursions!). Museums are a great place for socialising, because they are normally well staffed and patronised. You might like to coordinate your trip with other online students in your local area.

## Excursion to the local science centre

Most capital cities in Australia have science centres that go by various names. These centres are ideal for science excursions. Similarly to museums, they are typically quite busy year round.

## Excursion to the local zoo

Zoos are magnets for children. The chance of your child interacting with another child of similar age at a zoo is high. Most zoos have education officers on staff, so make sure you plan in advance.

## Excursion to a local business

An excursion to a local business? Really? Like doing the groceries? Nope. This excursion may include interviewing the business owner or manager, a behind-the-scenes tour and observing the operations. Planning the trip in advance to ensure your child gains educational value is important.

## Excursion to the local library

Your local library could be a treasure trove of social interactions waiting to be experienced. But if you never go, you'll never know. Be sure to consider the requirement for quiet when planning your trip. Small groups or working in pairs is best at libraries.

## Excursion to a national park

National Parks generally aren't somewhere you meet new people, so it would be wise to organise a group excursion with other online students. Walking along bush tracks presents the perfect time to socialise and learn at the same time.

## Excursion to a local historical site

There is a great breadth of "historical sites" in Australia - from convict settlements to gold mines. Again, it is best to take other students with you unless they are very popular sites.

## Excursion to a working farm

What a great way for your child to learn where our food comes from, and the important role our farmers play in society. Maybe the farmer has children around the same age as yours and you could arrange for them to take the tour of the farm.

## Excursion to a planetarium or observatory

Children love anything to do with space. If you have a planetarium or observatory anywhere near your home a science excursion is a must. Similar to zoos, these places are child magnets so the likelihood of your child meeting other children is high.

## Excursion to a homeless shelter

Before organising this excursion, you should consider the maturity of your child and the appropriateness of such an experience. A visit to a homeless shelter can be confronting. Your child may have the opportunity to interact with other children, volunteers and the homeless.

## Excursion to an orchard

This is a great way to get outdoors to teach your child about plant biology and agriculture. You could organise this as a group excursion with other online families in your area.

## Excursion to a newsroom to see behind the scenes

Definitely do this. Your child could learn so much about the media, journalism and advertising. Maybe organise for your child to interview a newsreader.

## Excursion to a local university

This could be a very interesting excursion. Sit in on a lecture, visit the library, tour a dormitory and interview the Vice Chancellor! University campuses are buzzing with activity if you pick the right time of the year to visit.

## Excursion socialisation tip

When taking your child on an excursion, encourage him or her to ask the questions of the tour guide, etc. Where possible, arrange an interview with someone so your child learns to interact with people from different backgrounds and life stages.

## Go on holidays with other families with children

Instead of holidaying exclusively with your immediate family, expand your social context and include other families with children. Camping is a great option.

## Enter your child into a "spelling bee" competition

Many spelling bees are open for anyone to enter so this presents a great opportunity for online students to meet other students in an educational context.

## Join a local home schooling group

For many parents who educate their children at home, their local home schooling group is like a second family. Whilst Online School isn't the same as home schooling you will be welcomed into these groups. Find the right one and it will provide plentiful socialisation opportunities.

## Join a science club

A lot of children are interested in science and so proactive community groups and homeschooling groups have started up science clubs. You will have to do some detective work to see what's available in your area.



## Encourage your child to have a “pen pal” and write letters regularly

The objective would be for your child to develop a deepening relationship over time with his or her pen pal. It is common for pen pals to meet face to face after years of writing to one another. This idea has the added benefit of improving your child's writing skills along the way.

## Encourage your senior student to consider a Cert III with a local TAFE College

Most secondary schools provide senior students with the opportunity to incorporate a TAFE certificate into their leaving certificate studies. This same opportunity is open to online students. Simply ask your Online School for more details.

## Volunteer with your child at the local surf club or RFS

Volunteering with community organisations is a great way to meet new people and for your child to socialise with other children in a fun setting.

## Visit a local retirement village

Exposing your child to people across the age spectrum will help to develop robust social skills. While at the retirement village, arrange for one of the residents to retell a part of modern Australian history to your child.

## Encourage your child to buy the groceries so they interact with the checkout person

This is an easy idea to implement, but a useful one. By doing so, your child will talk to a good variety of people throughout a year.

## Join a local study group

Or start one. Your child could meet, perhaps once a fortnight, with like minded students at your local library and provide peer tutoring to one another.

## Dance lessons

Extracurricular activities present excellent opportunities for regular socialisation. Dance classes will provide an opportunity for your child to socialise with children of the same age.

## Music lessons

Even if your child doesn't have 'rhythm in their bones' learning an instrument is still a valuable life skill. More so, studies are proving that music is very good for brain development. Plus, your child will interact with other children. Bonus.

## Gymnastics lessons

Jumping, laughing, rolling and chatting. All regular occurrences at a gymnastics lesson. Sounds like a great place for children to socialise.

## Horse riding lessons

This is another popular activity with children that gets them outside and active. Horse riding, unlike swimming, does lend itself to socialising.

## Swimming lessons

In primary school, students typically attend swimming lessons for a term. You might like to replicate this approach or adapt to suit your child. While swimming isn't the most sociable of sports, it should provide an opportunity for your child to make new friends poolside.

## Surfing lessons

If you are part of the 85% of Australians who live within 50kms of the coastline, then surfing lessons may be an option for your child. It's also probably best to avoid lessons in winter. Brrr. Surfing is a very social activity so is ideal for making new friends.

## Foreign language lessons

A language other than English (LOTE) course may be incorporated into your child's weekly schedule. This will help your child learn the language as well as interact with other children.

## Cooking lessons

If you team up with some other families that educate at home, you could rotate the parent-led cooking lessons between homes.

## Martial Arts lessons

Martial Arts is a great way for children to release their energy while learning some valuable self defence skills. Between kicks and flips the children do actually talk to each other.

## Art classes

Not to be confused with Martial Arts, art classes come in many different varieties - painting, sculpting and illustrating, for example.

## Start or join a book club

A book club combines reading with socialising. It is an excellent initiative for an online student to start or be involved in.

## Join the local YMCA

YMCAs can be a vibrant community of young people. If your town has a YMCA it may be worth checking it out.

## Youth group

The contemporary church youth group is very different to 50 years ago. Youth groups at bigger churches are typically exciting places to hang out on a Friday night.

## Interview your local MP

Interviewing your local MP would be a great learning experience for your child. Your son or daughter would learn some higher level social skills and it would stretch them.

## Interview local religious leaders

Similarly to interviewing your MP, these interviews would present a great learning opportunity. Contact your local religious establishments and request an interview with their senior person.

## Work experience

Commonly, there is heaps of social interaction within a workplace. If your child is in their senior years of school, organising work experience is both a valuable learning opportunity and a way to refine social skills.

## Spend some time at the local park

Parks can be outdoor classrooms where rich learning occurs. It would be wise to encourage your child to introduce himself or herself to other children at the park from a young age.

## Join your local theatrical society

For secondary students with a keen interest in theatre and performing arts, you might like to consider joining your local theatrical or musical society. These societies often act as a stepping stone into the pursuit of acting as a career path. Or, it can simply be a hobby.



## Join a chess club

If your child is into chess, research local chess clubs to see what's around. Chess teaches strategic thinking as well as provides a social context.

## Have your child go on camps

Depending on which groups your child is a part of, consider sending them on camps where available. For example, youth groups, scouts, guides, home school groups, surf clubs and horse riding camps are all options which may be possible.

## Join your local Conservatorium of Music

Similarly to theatrical societies, a conservatorium of music is typically a vibrant community of people with a common interest that stretches across the ages.

## Have your child participate in music festivals

Music festivals have grown in popularity in recent years. You can learn about these opportunities from your local conservatorium of music or even local music stores often promote these events.

## Part time employment

Earn some money, meet new people and gain valuable experience. Sounds like a good idea.

## Join a local computer games club

If your child enjoys playing computer games, you can turn this often anti-social activity around by joining a computer games club. Ask at your computer games retailer if they know of any local clubs.

## Learn to skate at local skatepark

Skateparks are micro communities. If you have a local skatepark it might be worth checking it out if your child is interested in skateboarding.

## Join a local sporting club

This last one speaks for itself. Most parents immediately think of adding sport to their child's weekly schedule when educating from home.

## Now what?

Maybe grab a cuppa and check out [accde.edu.au](http://accde.edu.au) to learn more about ACC Online School. Discover why it's rapidly growing in popularity.

**There you have it - 50 Ways to Socialise Your Online Student.** You can mix and match ideas and choose those relevant to your family situation.

Lack of socialisation doesn't have to be the barrier to online school that some people perceive it to be. As you can see, there are ample ways to ensure your child is still developing social skills when being educated at home.

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