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Dear Parents/ Carers,

Whilst most of us are staying home to stay safe during current times, we are all accessing the internet to learn and play more online. The focus of my letter this week is to help children stay safe whilst using the internet at home.

It is really important to have open communication about online safety at home. Discussion around online safety between parents/ carers and children should take place regularly. Encourage your children to discuss what games and apps they are using and what they are sharing and who sees it – it may help to compare what you share in everyday life and what you would share online. These questions might help:

- What things do you share online?
- Should we share everything?
- What shouldn't we share?

Let your child know they can talk to you. The internet and apps are great places to play, learn and connect. However, remind your children that they can talk to you if they see or hear anything that upsets or worries them online.

Children also need to be clear about what not to share online. They are advised not to share private information online in public places such as Facebook, YouTube or other social media, such as:

- personal information, like emails, names, phone numbers, school names
- photos of themselves
- photos or videos of their body
- gossip

Home internet filters

The four big internet providers in the UK – BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media - provide their customers with free parental controls which can be activated at any time. This link provides info on how Parents/Carers can turn on these filters:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/Parents/Carers-and-carers/parental-controlsoffered-your-home-internet-provide>



TV on demand and catch up TV:

Whilst many families juggle to combine home-working and home-learning, it is inevitable that children may be accessing more TV. Most channels and apps such as BBC iPlayer, Netflix, SkyGo and Amazon have parental controls you can turn on to help restrict inappropriate content. This link provides a link to the parental control sections for most of these channels and apps: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/Parents/Carers-and-carers/safety-toolsonline-services/tv-demand>

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media platforms, through a mobile phone, on a laptop or via gaming, the effects can be devastating for children involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen. Parents/Carers and carers need to be aware that most children have been involved in cyberbullying in some way, either as a victim, perpetrator, or bystander. Some signs that a child may be a victim of cyberbullying during these days at home include:

- Upset after using the internet or his/her mobile phone
- Avoiding speaking to friends online in the normal ways
- Suffering from low self-esteem

This government guidance is very useful on how Parents/Carers can help prevent and respond to cyberbullying:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_Parents/Carers_on_cyberbullying.pdf. The guidance includes these tips for children:

- Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself and change it regularly
- Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly
- Do not retaliate or reply to offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations
- Save the evidence. Always keep a copy of offending e-mails, text messages or a screen grab of online conversations and pass to a parent, a carer or a teacher

If a Pupil is concerned about cyber bullying, or if a parent is concerned that their child may be involved in cyberbullying, please speak to school.

Useful links

There is lots of information available on how to keep your children safe online. Set out below is some of the most relevant guidance during these times in addition to the links included above. **General advice:**

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk> Really useful guidance on all aspects of online safety

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-onlinesafety> NSPCC – talking about online safety

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> Thinkyouknow - advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online

<https://www.internetmatters.org/> Internet matters - support for Parents/Carers and carers to keep their children safe online

Stay safe and well,
Mrs Waplinton

