

Safe Internet Usage:

While we are self-isolating during this COVID-19 pandemic, children and young people will no doubt be spending more time online, whether that be gaming or on social media to keep in touch with their friends. Please see below some guidance and advice on how to keep your children safe. Please also share this with other parents in your circles to reduce the risk.

If you have any concerns or queries about the below, please contact the school on 01296622157 and we will be happy to help.

The closure of many schools due to the coronavirus means that opportunities for children to talk to and play with friends will be limited to online interaction. This will almost certainly lead to children spending more time online. Parents working from home may not be able to monitor their children's use of internet enabled devices as they usually would.

Children motivated by boredom could start to engage with new groups or individuals and this in turn could make them vulnerable to those looking to groom young people.

Online grooming may be hard for parents to recognise and groomers may specifically warn children not to talk to anyone about it. There are a number of signs to be aware of (although a lot of them are quite common among teens), but look out for increased instances of:

- *wanting to spend more and more time on the internet*
- *being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit*
- *switching screens when you come near the computer*
- *possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them*
- *using sexual language you wouldn't expect them to know*
- *becoming emotionally volatile*

Groomers often target young people by sending out friend requests on popular sites and platforms to see who responds. They may strike up a conversation to build a relationship with a child and ask them to continue the chat privately.

Speak to your child about who they are talking to and ensure they genuinely know them.

Thanks,

CWA Safeguarding Team