

13th February 2019

Dear Families,

Re: Online safety cyber-bullying, sexting, exploitation awareness events

As you will be undoubtedly aware, Burton Borough School held two awareness and information evenings this month in collaboration with West Mercia Police around online safety. The events were a huge success and we are very pleased to hear that parents/carers who attended have reflected on how they manage their child's mobile device/computer/games console usage at home and adapted what they do. Although it would be impossible to go through all of the questions asked and the discussions that took place, we would like to highlight a few main points from the sessions here for families who were unable to attend:

- **Your child's bedroom is not a safe place for them** to be using their mobile devices/games consoles/computer. They could be talking to anybody, even if the photo of the person and the friends list looks like people they know. Encourage your child to use these devices in an area of the house where you can monitor them.
- **There are age restrictions for many apps**, many of which surprised our parents/carers! Here are some of the main ones:
 - **Fortnite:** Age 12+
 - **Instagram:** Age 13+
 - **Snapchat:** Age 13+
 - **Facebook:** Age 13+
 - **FaceTime:** Age 13+
 - **YouTube:** Age 13+
 - **Kik:** Age 13+
 - **Pinterest:** Age 13+
 - **Twitter:** Age 13+
 - **Tumblr:** Age 13+
 - **WhatsApp:** Age 16+
- If your child is old enough to use the apps above, **check who they are following, speaking to and 'liking'**.
- **Check for multiple accounts.**
- If your child is **deleting their internet history**, be suspicious!
- **Check your child's phone regularly for new apps** – even if they do not look suspicious. For example, there is an app that looks like a **calculator but is actually a social media app**.
- **For more information on apps, go to:** <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>



- **If you see your child closing down apps quickly when you approach them, be suspicious!**
- **If your child takes a photo of their private parts, they are committing an offence for making indecent images of a child, even though it is a photo of themselves.**
- **If your child keeps that photo on their device, they are committing an offence for possession of an indecent image of a child**
- **If your child sends the photo of themselves to someone else, they are committing an offence for distributing an indecent image of a child**
- If your child is found to have committed the **offences outlined in the previous three bullet points**, they would be put on the **sex offenders register**. This would mean that they would not be able to do certain jobs, like those where children or vulnerable adults are involved and they would not be able to go on holiday to or work in certain countries e.g. America or Australia.
- **More information can be found in the PowerPoint presentation attached and: <https://stoponlinechildsexualabuse.campaign.gov.uk/>**

Attachments – additional documents

There are signs that you can look out for in terms of your child's behaviour. These have been outlined in the **attached** document '**Child Sexual Exploitation Indicators of Need**'.

Also attached is a document of UK street slang that was provided to us by West Mercia Police. Please have a look through carefully so that if you hear certain words, you understand what they mean fully.

If you are concerned about a child, you can contact Family Connect on 01952 385 385.

Further information can be found on the third attachment titled '**Family Connect and Safeguarding**' from Telford and Wrekin Local Authority. Information on signs of neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, emotional abuse, domestic abuse, Prevent (radicalisation) and bullying can be found here.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to all parents/carers who were able to make the awareness events. Please do spread the word and we look forward to seeing you next time!

Yours sincerely,

Burton Borough School

