



## Birkenhead High School Academy Safeguarding Newsletter – Senior School

Dear Parents and Carers

Most of our pupils are now learning from home, and while technology provides us with some fantastic opportunities, there are also risks associated with this.

Many children will have received new IT equipment for Christmas, and I would advise you to make sure you have updated parental controls on any recent purchases. We are aware of a number of cases of pupils being groomed through online games and social media so it is really important to be vigilant and to talk through the risks with your daughter/ward. BBC news have reported on the rise in reports of online child abuse images, and the article includes advice on setting boundaries and staying safe.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-53417284>

Sharing indecent images is also a risk which many children take, and it is important to explain that sending any 'indecent' image of a person under 18 is illegal. Unfortunately, in spite of parents and teachers warning children about the dangers of 'sexting' it is an issue we deal with on a regular basis – often to the horror of parents who have discussed the dangers and believe their child 'would never' do this. Young people do make mistakes so it is important to keep the channels of communication open for them to allow us to help when they do! If your child has shared an image of herself you can find advice on the NSPCC:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/sexting-sending-nudes/>

Some parents have also raised particular concerns about 'Omegle' which is a free social networking website in which users are connected with unknown users at random. Information about a range of other social networking sites can be found on the site mentioned below.

The current pandemic and frequent updates to the guidance, self isolation and worry about family members has meant that some children and young people are suffering from anxiety and worries about the world around them. We need to help them to build resilience and learn to cope with the ever changing situation and can help by having honest and open conversations with them.

There are a number of apps recommended on our website which can be useful in managing mental health:

<https://www.birkenheadhigh.gdst.net/page/?title=Health+and+Wellbeing&pid=16>

I would also recommend looking at 'Parent Info', which is written in collaboration with CEOP and has advice on a wide range of topics, from 'Helping your child to be kind online' to 'Returning to School – 7 tips to help your child cope'.

You can also find advice on topics such as eating disorders and where to go for help with mental health.

It is well worth taking the time to familiarise yourself with the articles presented, and you can find them by following this link:

<https://parentinfo.org/articles/all>

Finally, please do contact us if you have any **concerns about a child**. The school safeguarding email during the lockdown period is:-  
[safeguarding@birkhs.gdst.net](mailto:safeguarding@birkhs.gdst.net) This will be operational during school hours only. You can also contact the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).  
To report a child at risk, call Wirral Social Services can be contacted on 0151 606 2008 (9 - 5) and (677 6557). In an emergency, call 999.

Yours sincerely

Klaire Costello

Vice Principal

Designated Safeguarding Lead