



# BOWERHAM PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers

During these unprecedented times, children are spending more time on the internet. Many reputable sources have reported that during the COVID19 crisis the risks to children of online abuse is significantly higher.

Only this week the BBC has reported on the alarming increase in online child abuse image searches and the fact that tech companies are not deleting such images as quickly during the lockdown. There is clear evidence that the lockdown is emboldening those who make and distribute child abuse images and they are actively looking at ways in which they can exploit increased online activity by children.

UNICEF says, "The coronavirus pandemic has led to an unprecedented rise in screen time," said Global Partnership to End Violence Executive Director Dr.Howard Taylor. "School closures and strict containment measures mean more and more families are relying on technology and digital solutions to keep children learning, entertained and connected to the outside world, but not all children have the necessary knowledge, skills and resources to keep themselves safe online."

We need to work together to ensure that our children are protected. Sadly, we have been made aware of instances where Bowerham children have been put at a real and immediate risk of harm.

- Are you sure that you know what your children are doing online?**
- Do you know what apps your children access?**
- Do you know who they are talking to online?**
- Do you regularly check your children's devices?**
- Do you have regular conversations about their online use and presence?**

Look at our checklist below and see how you can ensure that your children stay safe online:

If your child has a smartphone, have you set it up safely? Do you use an app to monitor your child's online activity?	YES/NO
Does your home broadband have parental controls set up?	YES/NO
Do you have safety mode set up on YouTube and Google?	YES/NO
Have you checked privacy settings on all apps used by your children?	YES/NO
Have you made sure that you know how to set up the social media platforms that your children are using?	YES/NO
Have you asked your children about their online use?	YES/NO
Have you agreed online rules with your children?	YES/NO
Have you looked at the resources on the following websites? <a href="https://www.bowerham.co.uk/online-safety/">https://www.bowerham.co.uk/online-safety/</a> <a href="http://www.internetmatters.org">www.internetmatters.org</a> <a href="http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk">www.thinkuknow.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.bcc.com/ownit">www.bcc.com/ownit</a> <a href="http://www.childnet.com">www.childnet.com</a>	YES/NO

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**If the answer is 'NO' to any of these points, please think about how much you know about your child's online activity. This is a team effort, it involves school, parents and carers and children. Online safety issues are regularly addressed in school and we regularly have lessons and circle time where this is discussed. We need an open and honest dialogue to make sure that we are as empowered as we can be. As we have said previously, those people who are dangerous online are clever and sophisticated.**

As a reminder the key messages to our children are as follows:

- Remember there are people online who have bad intentions
  - These people are manipulative, sophisticated and clever
  - They use their skills to target children
  - These people target and befriend children
  - They are **not** friends
- Limit online contact to those who you know in real life – not strangers
- Do not give out personal information online
  - Name
  - Address
  - School
  - Telephone number
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Any other information that make children identifiable
  - **NEVER TAKE AND SEND PHOTOGRAPHS**
- Online acquaintances are not friends, neither are they boyfriends or girlfriends
- Remember it is impossible to be certain who you are speaking to online.

Our children have the power in this situation,

**AS LONG AS THEY BEHAVE SAFELY ONLINE.**

Arming ourselves with and modelling good online behaviours and having the knowledge of our children's online behaviour is essential to maintain online safety.

Given recent instances, it is vitally important that children are made aware of the potential consequences of not behaving safely online.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact school for further advice and information.

We thank you for your continued support.