Langar C of E Primary School

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Dear Parents,

We have recently had a number of concerns brought to our attention surrounding children's online safety. This is always a worry, but more alarming than ever with children accessing devices more often than normal whilst they have been unable to meet up with their friends.

The police have highlighted an increase in reports of children talking to and exchanging pictures with strangers online. Videochat websites and apps like Skype, Instagram, Omegle, Oovoo, Kik, and others, allow children to talk and exchange pictures on tablets and Smartphones or via a webcam. Whilst talking on webcam with known and trusted friends and family can be fun and exciting, children can be at risk of bullying and also abuse. Children and young people sharing pictures and videos online are vulnerable to exploitation. This can happen in the following way:

- An offender makes contact with a young person online through an app, chatroom or game.
- The offender begins a conversation and tricks the young person into sending them an indecent picture, appearing naked or performing sexual acts on webcam. They can trick them by pretending to be of the same age, someone the child knows, flirting with them or sending them sexual pictures or videos.
- The offender records or captures the picture. They then threaten to show it to others including family members if they do not perform more sexual acts. Some young people have been threatened for money or have been told to hurt themselves.

This has happened to young people and is being reported countrywide, with children of both Primary and Secondary school age. This is **sexual abuse**.

What to do if this happens

When a child tells a parent they have experienced on or offline sexual abuse parents should react calmly and always:

- Believe their child and tell them that they believe them.
- Not blame them, it is not their fault, the person responsible is the offender.
- Keep calm and talk to their child about how they feel and let them know that they're here to listen.
- Report the concern to Nottinghamshire Police via 101 or use 999 if there is immediate risk to someone's safety.
- You can also report to CEOP, a national agency that tackle exploitation of children and young people. For information, advice and to report concerns directly to CEOP, visit www.ceop.police.uk

- Be aware that offenders may sometimes be targeting and abusing multiple children online. Your child may possibly be one of many victims and reporting online suspicious activity may help protect many children.

How to stop it happening

- Set appropriate parental controls and use filters for home computers and devices (such as games consoles, tablets and Smart Phones)
- Talk to your child about what they are doing online and ask them to show you the apps and sites they use.
- Ensure your child understands how anyone can copy and share images or messages posted online and the importance of keeping their personal information and images safe
- Ensure that privacy settings and age restrictions are discussed and in place for the websites and apps that your child uses.
- Ensure that you and your child know how to block and report unwanted images and messages
- Ensure you know how to report sexual abuse online.

Roblox

Roblox is a particularly popular game, especially as it enables children to connect with and talk with their friends. I do wish to make you aware though that there are children who have been groomed and abused via this games. I would emphasise the following points to make the use of the game as safe as possible.

Make sure you check in with your child regularly about who they're talking to.

Remind them that conversations should only be about the game, and if someone starts asking them other questions or suggests they speak using another app like Snapchat or Instagram they should tell you.

Explore safety settings together like block, report and mute so your child knows how to stop unwanted contact or end an online chat if it's not about the game.

Be aware that some children use third party chat apps like Discord to communicate with other players while gaming. Make sure to ask your child if they're using any other messaging apps to chat with friends or people they don't know while playing games online.

Please take a look at the guide for parents - Roblox: A guide for parents (net-aware.org.uk)

If you are worried that your child is at risk of harm or a criminal offence has been committed then you can report your concerns to Nottinghamshire Police or the MASH   MASH factsheet for parents and carers v2 (primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com) . For further advice visit www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety, www.childnet.com, www.internetmatters.org.uk or www.thinkuknow.co.uk .

Yours sincerely

Mrs Emily Brown