Dear Parent/Carer,

Here at West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC) we, like you, have been settling into our new ways of working. With our offices closed, our staff, like many of you are working from home alongside supervising classroom activities and play time. It's times like these that the Internet is a real lifesaver. We can access our work files, chat to self-isolating relatives, order our shopping and keep fit with online exercise classes.

The internet is also proving invaluable at this time for our children to continue their education and keep in touch with their friends through the many social networking sites. With this in mind we felt it important to send out some support for parents and carers on supporting your children and Teenagers in navigating the internet safely.

There are many organisations providing detailed information on a range of topics in this area such as talking to your child about online safety, the risks of online games, livestreaming and parental controls.

https://www.nspcc.org.uk - It can be hard to know how to talk to your child about online safety. From setting up parental controls to advice on sexting, online games and video apps, we can help you to understand the risks and keep your child safe.

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk - You don't need to be an expert on the internet to help your child stay safe online. Our advice and resources are here to support you as you support your child to use the internet safely, responsibility and positively.

Unfortunately whilst the Internet is a fantastic resource it can also be used inappropriately by both adults and other children. If your child or teenager experiences any difficulties whilst using the Internet there are organisations that can offer support.

Top Tip: It is never the child or teenagers fault if they encounter abuse online, it is the responsibility of the adult or other child who is acting irresponsibly or breaking the law.

https://www.childline.org.uk - Having a mobile phone and going online is great for lots of reasons. But it's important to be aware of the dangers too. Learn how to stay safe online.

https://www.ceop.police.uk - Are you worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you online?

Top Tip: Perhaps you could set your child or Teenager a project to research the positives and possible pitfalls of the Social Platform they are bugging you to let them download onto their phone or write a family friendly quiz that they, their cousins and wider family could take part in.

Refer to us

At WMRSASC we are also having to consider new ways of engaging children and young people in support due to the impact of Covid-19 however we can reassure you that our referral process is fully open and operational. Although we may not be able to meet with a child or young person face to face until the government guidance changes we have a number of different ways to continue to provide support, including the use of online rooms.

If you are aware of a child or young person who has consented to engage with WMRSASC support:

- Counselling
- Children's independent sexual violence advocacy (ChISVA)
- The Branch Project (CSE support service)

Please submit a referral by following the link: https://www.wmrsasc.org.uk/referral/

Over the next couple of weeks we will be using these resources to focus on specific issues which might impact on children and young people during this time so look out for our upcoming bulletins.

From all of us here at WMRSASC we hope you keep safe and well both on and offline.

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All information and advice provided by WMRSASC is only valid within the United Kingdom.

WMRSASC is an organisational member of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy, Children England & The Survivors Trust. WMRSASC has completed and adheres to Rape Crisis National Service Standards.

NATIONAL SERVICE STANDARDS
Rape Crisis Professionally Approved