Online Safety Advice for Parents

FOR PARENTS AND CARERS:
Children are likely to be online much more over the coming weeks, possibly using their laptops and other devices to access learning material as well as other entertainment. The risks will vary depending on their age, but here are some tips to help keep them safe and healthy.

Technical Tips:
- Ensure your passwords are strong and secure for your router and any accounts that your children might be accessing. Three random words make the strongest passwords.
- Make sure all your devices have the latest software updates.
- Keep anti-virus software up-to-date and consider installing parental control software to protect children from stumbling across inappropriate content.
- Be aware of fake news and scams; these are already emerging.

General Tips:
- Ensure that your child logs out of any online platform.
- Check that there are no other windows open on the device your child uses when they are doing their homework (eg. online games).
- Agree some ground rules about screen time, breaks and exercise – it's much easier to do this in advance than argue about it later. Keep an eye on their posture too.
- Use PEGI ratings and reviews to check the age suitability of any games they want to play.
- Remind children about the need to keep personal information private and not to be tempted to click on links or free offers.
- Remind them only to communicate online with real-life-friends.
- For children using video chat, have a conversation about who they are chatting with and how they know them, to ensure their contacts are safe. Make sure they are dressed appropriately and not video chatting in their bedroom.
- Ensure that the webcam is switched off when your child is not using it.
- Ensure that a laptop is shut down properly and the lid closed when you are no longer using it.
- Talk about good digital citizenship, about being kind and thoughtful in their online interactions and how thoughtless behaviour can both damage their reputation and hurt others.
- Reassure them that you are there to help if they have any worries about anything they come across online or about the current health crisis.
- See this great article from the BBC on how families can cope with self-isolating together.

Links to Helpful Tips:
- Internet Matters has a new #StaySafeStayHome resource to help families make the best use of technology - click HERE.
- The following is a video giving tips on the functions within YouTube that you can use to keep your children safe. You can see it HERE. Or paste this link into Google https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1YvIfw7obwE&feature=youtu.be

Remember, if you are worried about the way someone has been communicating with your child online, you can contact CEOP. Click HERE