



Crossways, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 3NH
Tel: 01442 866249

Head Teacher: Katharine Ellwood

Friday 3 April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you and your families healthy and well. On the last day of the Spring term it feels very strange not to be able to see your children and to tell them to enjoy the Easter holidays!

In these uncertain times, I thought it would be helpful to highlight to you guidance received from the recent DfE guidance around online safety whilst schools are closed - The information below has been lifted directly from the DfE guidance on **Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers.**

'Parents and carers may choose to supplement the school or college online offer with support from online companies and in some cases individual tutors. In their communications with parents and carers, schools and colleges should emphasise the importance of securing online support from a reputable organisation/individual who can provide evidence that they are safe and can be trusted to have access to children. Support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers'

I have also seen a message circulated by Neighbourhood Watch which I have set out below as again I feel this to be very pertinent:

'Hertfordshire Constabulary is providing advice for parents and carers of young people who are spending more time online during periods of self-isolation.

The closure of many schools due to the coronavirus means that opportunities for children to talk to and play with friends will be limited to online interaction. This will almost certainly lead to children spending more time online. Parents working from home may not be able to monitor their children's use of internet enabled devices as they usually would.

Children motivated by boredom could start to engage with new groups or individuals and this in turn could make them vulnerable to those looking to groom young people.

Online grooming may be hard for parents to recognise and groomers may specifically warn children not to talk to anyone about it. There are a number of signs to be aware of (although a lot of them are quite common among teens), but look out for increased instances of:

- wanting to spend more and more time on the internet
- being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit
- switching screens when you come near the computer
- possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them
- using sexual language you wouldn't expect them to know
- becoming emotionally volatile

Groomers often target young people by sending out friend requests on popular sites and platforms to see who responds. They may strike up a conversation to build a relationship with a child and ask them to continue the chat privately.

Speak to your child about who they are talking to and ensure they genuinely know them.

For more advice on how to keep safe online visit: www.herts.police.uk/Information-and-services/Advice/Child-sexual-exploitation and follow @hertspolicehalo for regular updates from our team that tackles child exploitation.'

I do hope that the above information is of use to you.

The Local Authority have been contacted by Andrea Hone, Patient and Carer Experience and Wellbeing Nurse at Watford General Hospital. Andrea has asked if children in the area would write letters of thanks to the nurses and medical staff at Watford General Hospital. Watford Football Club are involved and have offered to make a display of all the letters received. The Chief Executive of Watford Hospital Trust is in support and we understand that St Albans and Hemel hospitals are now also on board. The brief is no more than a side of A4 and a message of inspiration and thanks to keep the staff going as they care for those that are very sick. If you do want to do this, letters should be emailed to:

Andrea Hone
 West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust
 WGH x8430
 Mobile: 07879519566
andrea.hone@nhs.net

We will be uploading more home learning support onto the school website on Monday 20 April. We appreciate that this is new for all of you as parents/carers but are sure you understand that this is also a new way of working for staff – we anticipate that we will continue to refine what is set for your children as we move forwards in the pandemic.

Please stay safe.
 Regards

Katharine Ellwood
Headteacher

