



Dear Parent/Carer

15 April 2020

## **SAFEGUARDING UPDATE FOR PARENTS – APRIL 2020**

During school closure, we thought it is important to write to update you and remind you about this essential aspect of our work and what to do if you are worried about someone.

### **Safeguarding concerns**

If you are concerned a child is in imminent danger of harm your first call should always be to the Police via 999.

If you would like to report a situation that worries you, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the wider safeguarding team are available during school hours. You can contact the safeguarding team by emailing [office@ocean-aspirations.org](mailto:office@ocean-aspirations.org) which is regularly monitored or by phoning 01202 606888 and requesting a response from the safeguarding lead.

### **Online safety**

Any student whilst at school is safeguarded by our filtering and monitoring systems but of course whilst at home and working remotely this will not be the case.

- Work for students is left on Google classroom and any messages sent between staff and students will take place via this platform.
- If any contact comes from someone not using an Ocean email address then please let the safeguarding team know.
- If students are conducting their own research or working on aspects of schoolwork, outside of the specific tasks set, we would advise using all normal parental controls to help keep them safe. Please check you have parental controls in place.

A local Constabulary has published the following information and I thought it a helpful reminder of what the potential dangers might be for our young people.

*'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.'*

The Government have also updated their information for parents:

*There is a lot of support available to keep your child safe online. Below are some useful links to help parents and carers:*

- *Thinkyouknow [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)*
- *Internet matters [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)*
- *Parent info [www.parentinfo.org](http://www.parentinfo.org) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)*
- *LGfL [www.lgfl.net](http://www.lgfl.net) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)*
- *Net-aware [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk) (support for parents and careers from the NSPCC)*

If you have any concerns about online use then please follow the safeguarding steps described above. The best advice we can give is to please monitor how your child uses the internet and social chatroom platforms such as What's App, House party, Facebook, Fortnite etc.

### **Mental Health**

These are anxious times and our children will all respond in different ways to the social distancing and other measures in place. The resources on the Child Line website give some very good techniques for coping with these feelings: <https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>.

### **Domestic Violence**

This can affect anyone at anytime and under the current restrictions, may be even more of an issue for some families. The 24 hour Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247 or the Dorset County 'You First' 0800 032 5204 may help.

We hope that you are all managing to stay well and safe. If there are any concerns about children's safety, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

*J. Quarrie*

Mrs J Quarrie  
Principal

