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Dear DSL,

With the situation that we are all facing in light of COVID19 virus, please can I take the opportunity to update you with regard the current position of Thames Valley Police, particularly in relation safeguarding our children. During this period of COVID 19 lockdown children and young people are increasingly using social media. There are positive aspects to this but also challenges. TVP have launched a media campaign which highlights some of the safeguarding issues that this increased use can bring. The key messages highlighted in the campaign are as follows:

For children are:

- Don't be afraid of coming forward and speaking to a parent, carer, guardian, teacher or other trusted adult.
- The Police are here to help and support you – you will not be in trouble.
- Know who you are talking to on-line. If something doesn't feel right – tell someone.

Key messages for parents

- Trust your instinct for signs, you know your child better than anyone
- Have your children suddenly become very secretive?
- Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?
- Do they seem distracted
- Do they have sudden mood swings?
- Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media?
- Have open conversations with children about their internet usage.
- Use parental controls and seek guidance from the available free resource.

TVP is strongly advocating for information on staying safe the use of the NCA CEOP website www.thinkuknow.co.uk – this contains links to advice for children at different age groups, parents/carers and professionals including teachers.

TVP would like to take this opportunity to ask schools to publicise this information and website to teachers parents and children through any communication channels you are using during Covid i.e. newsletters correspondence that you are having with children and parents, on your school websites.

Kind regards

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PVP