



Sussex Police

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**Adur & Worthing
Neighbourhood policing team**

Dear Parent / Carer

Your child's school has kindly agreed to forward this letter to you as they and Sussex Police are becoming increasingly concerned with risky behaviour being demonstrated by young persons through their use of technology.

We live in an age where technology is to be enjoyed safely and responsibly, however young people's unsupervised access and use of technology is leading to young people making mistakes and exposing themselves to harm.

Increasingly Sussex Police have to deal with incidents of young people using computers, tablets, and smart phones to:

- **Send indecent images of themselves and other people to each other**
- **Bully other pupils in school**
- **Illegally accessing social media accounts belonging to others to cause upset and threaten people**
- **Make contact with people they have never met.**
- **Use social media to pick on other vulnerable people.**
- **Set up social media accounts to cause offence**
- **People they do not know befriending them and then committing offences against them**

Many of these can and do constitute criminal offences under UK law and can be dealt with via the criminal justice system.

Another common factor in a majority of these offences is that the parents of the young person were completely ignorant to what was going on and whether they were breaking the law.

The consequences to a young person of receiving a caution or conviction for any of these offences can be life changing.

For example - Sending indecent images of themselves is against the law and is classified as a sexual offence which could result in the young person being entered onto the sexual offenders' register.

Sussex police are therefore strongly urging parents and carers to take an interest in their young person's digital lives and to move their parenting into their digital spaces.

Ask yourself this question...

If your young person met a person, they do not know in a deserted park at three in the morning would you be worried?

If your young person met a person, they did not know via their computer in their bedroom at three in the morning would you be worried?

It is time to take action, engage with your young person and have good conversations about their digital lives and their safety.

Check online resources such as

- <http://www.thinkyouknow.co.uk>
- <http://parents.vodafone.com>
- <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk>
- <http://www.o2.co.uk>
- <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>
- <http://parentinfo.org/article/staying-safe-on-minecraft>
- <https://www.net-aware.org.uk>

Thank you for your help and assistance in keeping your young people safe.

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