

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is never a nice subject to write about but information is the best prevention to keep our children safe. Today I want to talk to you about **grooming** – in particular online grooming and hopefully highlight some of the signs which can help this behaviour be identified, stopped and reported. Grooming is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purpose of sexual abuse. This can occur online or face-to-face, by a complete stranger or by someone they know.

We don't have an accurate record of how common grooming is because often children don't tell anyone what is happening to them because they may feel ashamed, guilty or even be unaware they are being abused.

I would like to encourage you to discuss this topic with your child.

- Are they able to recognise the signs of being groomed?
- Do they know how to report someone?
- Remind them that there are always people to talk to no matter how bad they think things are.

This would also be a good opportunity to talk with them about their friends/connections. Groomers spend a lot of time getting to know the child's likes and dislikes from what they see them post online. This can sometimes give the abuser a way of connecting with the child.

- **Do they know who all their friends/connections are?**
- **Are their privacy settings set to private?**
- **They should also check previous accounts and posts which they may no longer use or access.**
- **Close any unused accounts.**

I have attached a short guide created by CEOP for parents summarising all you need to know about online grooming to support your children. There is also more information available here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-grooming/learn-about-it/>

which includes videos that may aid you in the discussions with your child.

As always if you have any questions regarding E-safety please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Mrs Hutchins



E-safety lead