

Dear Parent/Carer,

Over the last few weeks, we have sent emails to you offering support on how to keep your daughter safe online during these unprecedented lockdown times.

However, with an increasing number of headlines appearing in the media about the huge surge in coronavirus-related online, telephone and doorstep scams targeting adults, we have put together this guide for our community of parents and grandparents to help keep you safe as well.

More than 2,000 scams, including 471 fake online shops, have been taken down and the public are being urged to report suspicious emails and telephone calls.

And with this in mind, the Government has established the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to help keep people safe from criminals during this global pandemic.

Here are some of the scams to avoid;

- Doorstep crime - Criminals are targeting vulnerable and elderly people on their doorsteps and offering to do their shopping. The thieves take their money and do not return. There are also doorstep fake cleansing services that offer to clean drives and doorways to kill bacteria.
- Online scams - Email scams that trick people into opening malicious attachments, which put people at risk of identity theft with personal information, passwords, contacts and bank details at risk.
- Refund scams - Companies offering fake holiday refunds for people who have been forced to cancel trips. People seeking refunds should also be wary of fake websites set up to claim holiday refunds.
- Counterfeit goods - Fake sanitisers, face masks and Covid-19 swabbing kits sold online and door-to-door. These products are often dangerous and unsafe. There are reports of potentially harmful hand sanitisers containing glutaral (or glutaraldehyde) which was banned from human use in 2014.
- Telephone scams - Criminals pretending to be from your bank, mortgage lender or utility company.
- Text Scams - There have been offers for tax rebates and lump sum payments from thieves, as well as ones telling people they have been fined.
- Donation Scams - Thieves have been extorting money from people by claiming they are collecting for Covid-19 related charities.
- Loan Sharks - Illegal money lenders are expected to prey on people's financial hardship, lending money and charging extortionate interest rates and fees through violence.

For more advice on how to stay safe from scammers during the pandemic, how to spot fraudulent activity and how to report it, please visit the National Cyber Security Centre website www.ncsc.gov.uk

BT and ITV, along with a host of celebrities, have also joined forces to create a website dedicated to keeping adults and children safe from online scams during lockdown. The website is very informative and features many clips to watch for more advice. Please visit <https://www.bt.com/techtips> and <https://img01.products.bt.co.uk/content/dam/bt/storefront/coronavirus/BT-Phishing.pdf>

Please stay safe at this unprecedented time.

Kind regards

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