



**WEST MERCIA
POLICE**

Online Safety Advice for Parents During the School Holidays

Dear Residents,

With the school holidays approaching, many children will be spending more time online gaming, chatting with friends, watching videos, and using social media. This can be a great way to stay entertained and connected, but it's important to help children stay safe while online.

- ☒ **Talk openly about online activity** – Take an interest in the apps, games and websites your child uses and encourage them to speak up if anything online makes them feel uncomfortable or upset.
- ☒ **Check privacy settings** – Ensure accounts are set to private where appropriate and review who can contact your child or view their information.
- ☒ **Know who they are talking to** – Remind children that not everyone online is who they claim to be. They should never share personal information such as their address, school, passwords or phone number.
- ☒ **Manage screen time** – Set healthy boundaries around device use and encourage a balance of online and offline activities.
- ☒ **Use parental controls** – Many devices, apps and broadband providers offer parental controls to help manage content and screen time.
- ☒ **Be aware of online gaming risks** – Discuss in-game chats, friend requests and spending money on games. Ensure children know to tell a trusted adult if they receive inappropriate messages.
- ☒ **Report and block** – Teach children how to block and report users and reassure them they will not be in trouble for reporting concerns.

Most importantly, remind children that if something doesn't feel right online, they should stop, leave the site or conversation, and talk to a trusted adult.

Let's work together to help keep children safe online and make the most of their summer holiday.

Thanks, enjoy the hot weather while it lasts!