

Dear Parent,

You will of course all be aware of the developing situation around Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Government's ongoing announcements regarding measures to prevent the further spread of COVID - 19. In these unprecedented times the Prime Minister has now announced that all schools will close from today Friday 20th March 2020.

There will a minority of schools still open who will support children of certain categories as outlined by the Government.

We are writing to you as the Safer School and Youth Engagement Team to reassure you that we will continue to be supporting your child's school as much as we can whilst pupils remain away from the education places. The safety and welfare of your child is paramount to us, but we need you to assist us. What we ask is that you speak with your children and explain to them the importance at this time to follow the Government Guidelines and adhere to social distancing. These can be found at www.gov.uk.

Many places of work have now implemented a work from home policy, but we understand that in not all professions this is going to be possible. Children of secondary age will be left at home whilst parents will continue to go to work. With this they will be left at time for many hours without parental supervision. We need you to assist us in ensuring where ever possible they remain safe at home unless there is the upmost necessity for them to go out.

As you can imagine Emergency Services, including ourselves, will be operating at maximum capacity to ensure everyone remains safe. We need to prioritise our calls to where our need is. To assist us in preventing crime and to ensure your child remains safe I have attached some relevant contacts where you will be able to get guidance should you require them.

Your Schools will remain in touch with your children at this time and they will have access to members of teaching staff via external portals. Your child can speak with their teachers or safe guarding lead and they will follow usual procedure in contacting the Safer School and Youth Engagement Team. This should always be your first port of call, however if you feel this needs reporting to the Police immediately you have the relevant contact details to do so.

You can contact the Safer School and Youth Engagement Team by emailing us at AWmailbox.saferschools@met.police.uk. Alternatively the phone numbers are:

- Call 101 to report a crime or other concerns that do not require an emergency response
- Call 999 in an emergency

Thank you for assisting us at this time.

Kindest Regards

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT AND ADVICE:

Citizens Advice: If your child has been illegally sold a knife, you can report this to Trading Standards on 03454 04 05 06 or visit: citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/get-more-help/report-to-tradingstandards/

Childline: Your child can call Childline on 0800 1111 at any time if they are worried about their own safety

Crimestoppers: You or your child can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 if you want to report a crime that has already happened

Family Information Service: This is a free, impartial information service for parents and carers of children and young people aged up to 19 (up to 25 years for those with additional needs.) westminster.gov.uk/family-information-service

Family Lives: Gives advice on all aspects of parenting and is open 24/7. Calls are free on 0808 800 2222 or visit familylives.org.uk

Fearless: Your child can contact a young person friendly site online at fearless.org/en to report a crime anonymously

Integrated Gangs Exploitation Unit (IGXU): Westminster City Council's IGXU identify and work with vulnerable and exploited young people aged 10-24 involved in group violence or on the periphery of gangs to improve their life choices and reduce associations with gangs and reduce incidences of serious youth violence. If you think your child would benefit from support from the IGXU, you can either email integratedgangsunit@westminster.gov.uk or call 0207 641 4051

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC): Their helpline provides information and advice to parents and others concerned about young people who may be involved, or affected by gang activity. Their helpline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Freephone: 0808 800 5000. Email:

help@nspcc.org.uk Web:nspcc.org.uk/gangs

Parenting groups and programmes: Westminster Early Help and partners offer a range of parenting groups across Westminster, to suit family circumstances. westminster.gov.uk/parentinggroups-and-courses

Physical Activity, Leisure and Sport in Westminster: There are a full range of great value activities and services to help young people live a healthy and active lifestyle, from gyms and swimming pools to Parkour and much more. Web: westminster.gov.uk/active. Call: 020 7641 2012.

Police: To find details of your local team and find out more about the work they are doing in your area, type your postcode at www.police.uk. You should call 101 to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response. Call 999 in an emergency.

Solace Women's Aid: A free anonymous service available to girls aged 13+ who have experienced rape, child sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence. Call: 0808 801 0305.

Victim Support: A national charity which helps people affected by crime. Web: victimsupport.org

Women and Girls Network: Advice and support service to girls affected by violence and abuse. Web: advance@wgn.org.uk. Call: 0808 801 0660.