

Increase in Child Exploitation Material and Online Child Sexual Abuse during Lockdown

Overseas law enforcement have indicated a dramatic increase of the amount of online child exploitation and child sexual abuse during the lockdown period. Due to New Zealand being at level 4 with most Kiwis being confined to their homes everyone will have an increased online presence including children. Many Kiwis are also working from home while level 4 is in place and may not feel they have as much time as normal to monitor their children's internet use. Unfortunately, online offenders are also at home with an increased online presence.

To get ahead of the overseas trend and prevent sexual predation, sexting, cyber bullying and other types of cyber crime occurring please refer to the link and information provided by Netsafe:

<https://www.netsafe.org.nz/online-safety-for-parents/>

<https://www.netsafe.org.nz/the-best-online-safety-tips-for-lockdown/>

While the internet is a great place for learning and education and during this time a great tool for delivering distance education there are some dangers and things that parents and caregivers should remember to be aware of to try and prevent children and young persons from becoming victims and exploited online. Discuss internet safety with children of all ages and agree with them on what they can do online including sites to visit and appropriate behaviours

- Review and approve games and apps before they are downloaded
- Review privacy settings of sites and applications
- Check your children's profiles and what they are posing online and be aware that anything that is posted online will be permanently on the internet
- Take the time to understand what sites they are visiting and who they are talking with and check in regularly
- Some social media sites have age restrictions to join, check these before letting your child use them or join
- Monitor your child's use of the internet and consider having them use it in an open, common area of the house
- Make sure your children know to report any activity they don't feel comfortable with to you straight away.

Remember if your children were going out you would go with them or depending on their age check where they are going. If your children are online you should be with them or check what sites they are visiting.

If you think your child or a child in your care is the victim of online exploitation or abuse, please do not hesitate to report it. If we all work together to make sure children are safe online, we can make the internet a great tool for people of all ages.