

SAFETY DIRECTOR BULLETIN

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COVID-19 Presents Potential for Increased Risk of Child Exploitation

As parents are doing double duty – home schooling children and working full time jobs remotely – the FBI warns schools, caregivers and parents to be extra vigilant against online sexual exploitation and signs of child abuse. Here are some recommendations from the FBI to help keep your children safe:

- Discuss Internet safety with children of all ages when they engage in online activity.
- Review and approve games and apps before they are downloaded.
- Make sure privacy settings are set to the strictest level possible for online gaming systems and electronic devices.
- Monitor your children's use of the Internet; keep electronic devices in an open, common room of the house.
- Check your children's profiles and what they post online.
- Explain to your children that images posted online will be permanently on the Internet.
- Make sure children know that anyone who asks a child to engage in sexually explicit activity online should be reported to a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult and law enforcement.
- Remember that victims should not be afraid to tell law enforcement if they are being sexually exploited. It is not a crime for a child to send sexually explicit images to someone if they are compelled or coerced to do so.

The Boston Division of the FBI also reported video-teleconferencing hijacking, also called Zoom-bombing, is emerging nationwide. The FBI has received multiple reports of conferences being disrupted by pornographic and/or hate images and threatening language.

As a result, the FBI warns schools against making classrooms on zoom public. As a parent of a child participating in a Zoom-based classroom, if you are not sure if your school's zoom classroom is private, contact the school and inquire.