

Five ways that parents can protect their children:

1

Running away can be a sign.

If your child goes missing you should report this to the police. Doing this won't get your child in trouble but will mean that appropriate action can be taken to locate them and a return home interview can be completed to offer support and help reduce the risk of your child going missing again.

2

Look out for unexpected gifts, changes in behaviour or mood.

Some gifts can be in the form of noticeable items such as clothes, phones or cash, but they can also be much more subtle things, such as food, drinks or online gaming.

3

Understand the apps young people are using online and make sure that their privacy settings are set high.

Where you are unsure of an app you can visit reputable websites such as www.thinkuknow.co.uk to access guides and advice. Looking through these guides with your child can be a good way to agree which apps can be used and how.

4

Be aware that boys can also be victims of online grooming or CSE.

Any child could be affected by exploitation regardless of gender, religion or sexuality.

5

Alert a professional if you have any concerns.

Talk to a person who you can trust such as your child's teacher, they can provide guidance and can point you in the direction of local support services.