

Working with children who have concerns about alleged 'killer/creepy clowns' and advice for children and parents

This craze started in America, which is where a large majority of the cases reported on the news and in social media have come from, so now through the media it has become something which lots of you will see or hear on-line, most of which is untrue. Please use this as a guide only, depending upon the needs of the child.

Advice for staff to give to children and parents as appropriate:

Remember:

- Although these people look scary, in reality it is just a person in a mask and clothing
- The Police are taking these matters seriously and will arrest anyone who causes children or adults distress in this way
- Events which are in the news seem worrying but because they do not happen very often, it is very unlikely to happen to you.
- No-one has been killed by someone dressed as a Clown, there are no 'Killer Clowns', this is also the media creating news stories
- There have been no reports of people dressed as Clowns inside school grounds

If you're worried about this or anything else then:

- It is important you talk to someone you trust, like a parent or a teacher or other safe adult
- Ask a grown up to contact the Police, or call them yourself if you are threatened or in immediate danger
- Call Childline on 0800 1111 if you want to discuss your worries or get advice and support
- Block and report abusive messages from people posing as clowns or making threats on social media; tell an adult you have done this
- Ask your parent/carer to check your security and access to different apps on your phone or tablet (or any other device)

Internet and Social Media or other Apps etc.

- Be careful what you read and believe: false rumours can spread really easily on social media, as people/children can believe and share things that aren't true.
- It is okay to discuss your worries but don't pass on rumours
- Be responsible; this means you and your friends should not engage in these "pranks" as they are crimes
- If you read or see something on-line which worries you share this with a safe adult

Advice for Parents:

- Listen to your children as their worries feel real to them
- If they feel unsafe, check when and why this is with them, and offer continued reassurance that they are safe and that you will keep them safe
- Check what they have access to on-line and on television – is this age appropriate etc.
- Share any concerns with your children's school if fears are heightened by conversations with their peers
- If in the unlikely event someone does frighten someone you know, report it to the Police as this is potentially a crime of Harassment.

Above all keep things in context for your child; do things they enjoy, show them their home is safe, reassure them that schools generally are safe places, ensure if they travel to and from school on their own they have a means of communication with them or better still encourage them to walk with friends.

Useful Links:

NSPCC: <http://www.westbriton.co.uk/children-targetted-as-nspcc-receives-more-than-100-calls-about-8216-creepy-8217-clowns/story-29808235-detail/story.html>

BBC Newsround: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/37616622> - advice for children if worried about clowns, includes video by children for children

