What is a Virus?

A computer virus is designed to alter the way your computer works, without your knowledge or consent.

How are computer viruses transmitted?

Viruses are usually disguised and can enter your computer by:

- receiving emails and opening email attachments
- internet downloads
- web pages
- software on CD ROMs or floppy discs

How can you tell if your computer has a virus?

Some common symptoms of virus infection are:

- Your computer suddenly slows down. This can be more noticeable if your computer is connected to a network.

- Your computer starts behaving strangely.   For example disc drive lights may begin to flash.

- If you run an internal email server, this may become overloaded and slow down. Your data files such as Word or Excel may become corrupt or get lost. Sometimes these popular programmes may display a message telling you that your data files are not in their correct format.

- Any unexpected changes in the content of your files.

What can you do to stop computer viruses spreading?

- Ensure that your computer has the latest anti virus software installed and that the virus definitions are up to date.

- Ensure that your anti virus programme is actually switched on.

- When you use floppy discs or CD ROMs from friends make sure you first scan them with your anti virus programme.