Staying safe online during the Covid-19 outbreak.

By following guidance on social distancing and staying at home you are helping to protect yourself, your family, the NHS and your community.

It is still important to stay connected with family and friends. Staying in touch with people you normally see often or reconnecting with old friend by phone, video call or social media can really boost our wellbeing. The internet also offers people a wide range of educational resources, information and entertained.

We understand that daily routines may have changed and that parents and carers have concerns about the safety of their children online. It is important for children and young people to stay both connected and safe online.

Online safety tip for this week: Stay safe and healthy

Have a conversation with your child about children staying safe online. Most children have a positive experience online, accessing educational resources and entertainment and connecting with friends and family. Spending time online can be very beneficial for children particularly at the moment, but we recognise that many parents may worry about online safety.

You may be concerned about how long your children are using their devices. The government has published guidance for parents and carers on supporting children's mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

Here are a few tips to help your child strike a balance:

- **Sleep matters** -Getting enough good quality sleep is very important. Leave phones outside the bedroom when it is bedtime.
- **Sharing sensibly** -Talk about sharing photos and information online and how photos and words are sometimes manipulated. Parents and carers should never assume that children are happy for their photos to be shared. For everyone – when in doubt, don't upload!
- **Talking helps** -Talk with children about using screens and what they are watching. A change in behaviour can be a sign they are distressed – make sure they know they can always speak to you or another responsible adult if they feel uncomfortable with screen or social media use.
- **Keep moving!** Everyone should take a break after a couple of hours sitting or lying down using a screen. It's good to get up and move about a bit. #sitlessmovemore
- **Family time together** -Screen-free meal times are a good idea – you can enjoy face-to-face conversation, with adults giving their full attention to children.
- **Use helpful phone features** -Some devices and platforms have special features – try using these features to keep track of how much time you (and with their permission, your children) spend looking at screens or on social media.

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Here is a link for further information about how to start a conversation with your children about keeping safe online: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/