

## **UK Chief Medical Officers advice for Parent/Carers around Online Behaviours**

The UK Chief Medical Officers (CMO) recently conducted a systematic evidence review on children and young people's screen and social media use. The CMO subsequently produced advice for parents and carers to encourage them to discuss boundaries with children around online behaviours and time spent using screens, and to lead by example.

**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!

**Education matters.** Make sure you and your children are aware of, and abide by, the school's acceptable use policy.

**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.

**Safety when out and about.** Advise your children to put their screens away while crossing the road or doing an activity that needs their full attention.

**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.

**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.