

July 2020

Dear parents,

**Staying safe and being a good friend on apps, sites and games**

Children and young people have spent much more time on devices than ever before during lockdown, so as we approach the summer holidays, here is some information about staying safe online and principles you can help us remind your children about.

There is a handy fridge flyer to help parents at [toptipscorona.lgfl.net](http://toptipscorona.lgfl.net) which you may want to print out and keep.

Please do not worry too much about screen time - think instead about screen quality, balance and mental health. The Children's Commissioner has provided a framework called the 'Digital Five a Day' with five things to think about each day to help put that into practice.



It is really important children get the opportunity to chat to friends, so it's great to hear that many of them have been chatting online during lockdown. We are sure that this will continue over the summer, so please help us reinforce some key messages about appropriate behaviour to keep everyone safe and happy.

There have been reports of children being upset by unkind messages and inappropriate language on chat apps. This can usually be avoided if we remind children and young people to look out for their friends, not say anything that they wouldn't like to hear themselves, and always stop or stand up for others if someone gets upset.

Please remind your children never to share scary or rude images, even to complain about them. If they do see something that worries them or that might be wrong, all they need to do is ask for help from a trusted adult. They could talk to you or to us, or they may feel more comfortable talking anonymously to Childline. If you or they are concerned about an adult's behaviour towards a child online, report them to [CEOP](http://CEOP). And as a parent, you can also contact the NSPCC - O2 advice line on 0808 800 5002.

One more thing - this may sound like more relevant to older children, but the very youngest children need reminding not to get undressed or changed online. There's a fun song to get this message across at [undressed.lgfl.net](http://undressed.lgfl.net) (plus background information for you).

Thank you for your support - do let us know if you have any questions. Further advice about speaking to children about online safety can be found here: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/Talking-to-kids-healthy-internet-use.pdf>

Yours,

Miss John

Computing Leader

## UK Chief Medical Officers' advice for parents and carers on Children and Young People's screen and social media use

Technology can be a wonderful thing but too much time sitting down or using mobile devices can get in the way of important, healthy activities. Here are some tips for balancing screen use with healthy living.

### 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, their school's policy on screen time.



### 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



### Safety when out and about

Advise 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.

