

ONLINE SAFETY

IN JUST 4 SIMPLE STEPS

Keeping your child safe online - and knowing what to say no to and what to say yes to - can feel like an impossible task.

So keep it simple with these 4 Rules.

Protect your child from exploitation by strangers, problems with peers, content that harms their mental health, addictive products, violent and sexual content, poor sleep, reduced concentration and disrupted development.

1

NO SMART PHONE UNTIL YOUR CHILD IS 12

Once you give your child a smart phone it is very hard to go back. Once they've got a smart phone it becomes almost impossible to control or monitor how they use it. So keep it simple: no smartphone. If your child really needs a phone you can get them an old fashioned feature phone for about £30.

2

NO SOCIAL MEDIA UNTIL YOUR CHILD IS 16

Social media can be fun, but it can also be addictive and harmful. The social media platforms are not making sure that they are safe for children to use. So the world of social media is full of content that is dangerous or damaging for your minds, from cyberbullying to pornography. So just keep your child off social media.

3

NO YOUTUBE AND NO TIKTOK

The social media rule includes youtube and TikTok. These platforms are designed to be addictive. They weaken your child's ability to concentrate. It is very hard to monitor and supervise them and there is a lot of harmful content on there. Whilst they are kids, there is plenty for them to watch on things like iPlayer and Netflix.

4

NO GROUPS, NO STRANGERS, NO SNAPCHAT

Just because your child is in your house, it does not mean that they are safe from being exploited by adults or upset by other children. So if they use things like Whatsapp, it's family and close friends only. No one that you don't know, no being in big online groups and no deleting messages. And this includes gaming online.

AND REMEMBER...

Don't rely on your child being sensible and honest online to keep them safe.

Yes, we need to teach them to be those things, but it is not fair or realistic to ask young children to operate safely in an online world that is really not set up for them.

Your child will not thank you for these rules. They will tell you that other children don't have these rules.

But those other children are not your responsibility. It is your job to look after your own children.

The majority of parents worry about their children online -
some of them decide that saying 'No' is an option. You can be one of those parents.

If using tech devices is making your child sad, anxious or angry then take those devices away from them.

If they are not following your rules then take those devices away from them.

This might not be easy when they are young, but it will be almost impossible as they get older.

Ultimately you are the adult and you have to decide what is best for your child.