Smartphone and Tablet Use and Internet Safety

Whether it's watching videos, playing games on their devices or talking to Alexa – today's under 5s are spending more and more time online Recent statistics released by Ofcom revealed that over 50% of children aged 3-4 go online for nearly 8 hours a week, and 1 in 5 children aged 3-4 have their own tablet.

Safety
It's never too early to start taking action to keep your child safe online. As soon as your child starts talking about or exploring the online world, you should initiate conversations with them about their online activities and begin to put support in place. Click here for advice on keeping your child safe online.- https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/keeping-your-under-five-safe-online

Click here to find out how to set up parental controls – https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/

Boundaries
This is also the time that children develop long lasting digital habits so it is important for parents and carers to support children to develop positive digital habits from an early age.

Think about some rules and boundaries that you might like to introduce in your home –

❖ Agree specific times when the phone or tablet may be used and stick to them.
❖ No phones or tablets at the dinner table or while talking or playing with others. Not only is this good manners, but also vital for children's communication, language and social skills.
❖ Ensure any smartphones or tablets are turned off and put away well before bedtime – at least an hour, preferably two. The stimulation from using devices, as well as the blue light emitted from them has been shown to disrupt sleep if used too close to bedtime.
❖ Never allow children to have any digital devices in their bedroom after bedtime, even if they are apparently turned off- sometimes the temptation can be too much! Put phones and tablets away in the living room each evening.

Teach by example – phones away for everyone at dinner time, so the whole family can chat and interact more. Try to reduce your own use of smartphone or tablets – especially when you are with your children – not only will this send them a positive message but it will give you more quality time together and again help to boost your children's communication, language and social skills.

Digital devices like smartphones and tablets are here to stay – but now is the perfect time to make sure your child stays safe, and to get the message across that digital devices don't need to rule our lives!

For more great advice and information about keeping your child safe on line, why not explore the following links?
http://www.internetmatters.org/ - Internet Matters is an independent, not-for-profit organisation to help parents keep their children safe online

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/ - Thinkuknow from CEOP, a UK organisation which protects children both online and offline

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/ - NSPCC site with tips on internet safety including comprehensive advice on how to set up parental controls

http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/topics/safety-and-privacy/ - BBC site including tips on internet safety, with advice about online security