Online Safety for Young People

Supporting young people to act safely online and in the digital world

At our school, we enjoy the fantastic learning opportunities of the internet and the World Wide Web, but are also conscious of the necessity of knowing how to use it safely. This includes how much time children should be looking at screens each day.

How much screen time do you allow your children?

Do you supervise your children and always know what they are looking at?

Do you stop screen time for an hour before children go to bed?

What is screen time?

Screen time is the time you spend watching TV or DVDs, using computers, playing video or hand-held computer games, or using tablets or smartphones.

Screen time can be:

- interactive – for example, playing video games, communicating via Skype, or using online tools to draw pictures
- not interactive – for example, sitting still and watching movies, TV programs or YouTube videos
- educational – for example, doing maths homework online
- recreational – for example, playing games or watching videos for fun.

A balanced lifestyle is best

Have as much active time each day as time spent looking at a screen

Benefits of screen time

Television, movies, video games and the internet can be a positive influence on your child. This is especially when:

- you get involved when your child is using them and help your child make good choices about what games to play or things to watch
- you get involved and talk with your child about what's going on in the game or program so they understand it
- your child uses good-quality content on screens – for example, playing a video game that involves solving creative puzzles to progress to higher levels
- using screens gives your child new ideas for traditional play – for example, playing Minecraft might get your child interested in designing buildings on paper
- using screens helps your child learn new skills – for example, doing a video about a school excursion might help your child learn video-editing skills.

Some suggestions

- Reading stories on e-readers
- Practice Maths skills such as Tables
- Practice touch-typing
- Drawing
- Programming
- Logic Skills
- Communicate and compete with friends
- Find out and discover new things
- Have Fun

Risks of screen time

Screen time can have physical, developmental, safety and other risks. If you reduce the amount of time your child spends using screens, you can reduce the risks for your child.

Physical problems

Using screens can cause physical problems. For example:

- Looking at a screen intensely can cause sore, irritated and dry eyes, headaches and fatigue.
- Looking down at a device can make your child's neck and spine uncomfortable.
- Being inactive for long periods using a screen can lead to a less active lifestyle, which could lead to obesity.

You can **reduce these risks** by encouraging your child to:

- regularly look away from the screen into the distance
- keep their neck upright when they're using a phone or tablet
- take regular breaks to get up and move around
- make physical activity part of their daily life.

Development issues

Too much screen time can have an impact on children's language development and social skills. This is because children need real-life interactions to develop these skills. Too much screen time can also affect older children's development – for example, it can affect their ability to have conversations, maintain eye contact, pay attention in school or read body language.

Too much screen time can also result in children missing out on developing a wide range of interests, and the friends and learning associated with these interests.

Safety

Your child could encounter dangerous material or people on the internet.

You can **reduce this risk** by taking some practical internet safety precautions like checking the privacy settings on apps that your child uses. You can also help your child learn how to use the internet safely, responsibly and enjoyably – for example, by talking to your child about not sharing personal details online. Screen-based media can influence children and their behaviour – for example, children can copy or be influenced by negative behaviour, stereotypical representations of gender, violent imagery or coarse language they see in advertising and other media.

Many paediatricians suggest that:

- children under 18 months should avoid screen time, other than video-chatting
- children aged 18 months to 2 years can watch or use high-quality programs or apps **if** adults watch or play with them to help them understand what they're seeing
- children aged 2-5 years should have no more than one hour a day of screen time **with** adults watching or playing with them
- children aged 6 years and older should have consistent limits on the time they spend on electronic media and the types of media they use.
- All children should avoid screen time immediately before going to sleep

What do screen time limits mean for you and your child?

Screen time limits are about making sure your child enjoys lots of healthy, fun activities – both with and without screens.

Limits mean looking at the time your child spends on screens and making sure it doesn't get in the way of sleep and activities that are good for their development. These activities include things like physical play, reading, creative play like drawing, and social time with family and friends.

Limits don't mean you should stop your child from watching TV or playing video games because he uses screens at school or for homework.

If you wish to find out more about ensuring you and your children remain safe online see our website wantagece.org for further links.

There is also advice on setting controls and privacy settings on home computers, internet, video and social media sites. How do you know if a video game is suitable for your child?

CLICK CEOP
Internet safety

Do you know what this button is for?

See http:// **thinkuknow.co.uk/** to find out how to report abuse on the internet.