

# Managing Your Child's 'Screen Time'

**Our young people need to understand the need for developing good habits which allow them to cope in an increasingly digital world. As part of our commitment to working with parents to encourage safe and responsible use of digital devices in school and at home we have created this document, drawing together recommendations from a range of sources.**

- The two hour screen time grab: tell your child they have two hours per day and how they use that time is up to them so long as they don't go over the time limit (or set a lesser time limit if you prefer). This is similar to financial budgeting – you have £20, spend it as you see fit.
- Physical time: make sure your child is getting regular physical activity, which can include an evening walk with the dog or scheduled sporting commitments. And even if your child opts to take their screen time in one two-hour hit, get them into the habit of getting up at the one hour mark and taking a 10-minute break.
- Set family rules which allow children to develop balanced coping skills. Establishing family rules around multimedia etiquette is important. Media and technology has become a part of how our children socialise and they need us to help them figure out what is responsible behaviour.
- Food and drink free zone: eliminate food and drink in front of the screen. Family time in front of a movie together can involve a bowl of popcorn or other treats, but eliminate this element during solo screen time.
- Set an example. Children notice if you don't walk the talk. Balance your media usage and do not allow smartphones and tablets to be a habit. Associations and routines develop quickly for children
- Keep media out of bedrooms and in family spaces.
- Value family meals and car rides. This is a conversation rich time. Don't let small screens regularly steal this.
- Steer your child towards media that engages them while using as many senses as possible.
- Be conscious of age appropriateness. Consult app and game reviews for guidance if you are unsure of content suitability.
- Quality and quantity both matter. There are thousands of apps available for children. Choose wisely to separate the mindful from the mindless.
- Get involved. Look at or talk about your child's latest digital creation, game level or favourite app. The better informed you are the greater the conversation you can share about media choices.
- Help children make quality choices and critically evaluate apps and programs for themselves. This is a life skill which will transfer beyond multimedia tasks.
- Provide alternatives. Rather than saying no for content which is not age appropriate help them find suitable media content by searching media review sites for popular games, videos and apps.
- Crack down on multitasking. Encourage children to focus on the task at hand and use individual devices respectfully.
- Use time or content restriction available through the software on your WiFi or device to limit access.
- Be the parent – this sometimes means making unpopular decisions.