

1st April 2020

Dear Parents,

Internet Safety Guidance for Parents

These are unprecedented times for all of us – we are all facing new ways of working and huge change to our daily routines. Inevitably, due to lock down and remote learning, children will be spending more time than usual on their devices. This will potentially add more stress and worry for parents, onto an already stressful situation. Therefore I wanted to send the attached article which outlines some of the findings from a report ([click here for full report](#)) into screen time by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) as well as some guidance on how you can make the best of time spent online. If you have any further questions or concerns, please email school and we will try and support you remotely.

Full Parent Zone Article (and further guidance) – Click [Here](#)

“Parents are still getting mixed messages about how much is ‘too much’ when it comes to screen time. You may be concerned about the strict guidelines from the World Health Organisation recommending zero screen time for children under two – Don’t worry – here’s how to take a reasonable, flexible approach – and get your kids on board too.

Conflicting reports on what amount of screen time is right for a child can be confusing for parents. A [recent report](#) into screen time from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) found no compelling evidence that screen time is harmful, whereas the [World Health Organisation](#) is recommending strict limits. The good news is that there are sensible, evidence-based ways to think about screen time limits - and, by getting your kids involved, you can find a solution that really works for your family.

Here’s where to start.

1. Remember not all screen time is the same

Not all online activities are equal: doing something creative or learning new skills are very different from mindless scrolling on social media. Being online might be allowing them to socialise in a positive way - or maybe they’re just doing something that they really, really enjoy. If there are real benefits, then the amount of time they spend doing it becomes important.

2. How long should kids spend online per day?

Around 1 to 2 hours daily during the week and a bit longer at the weekends is considered ‘just right’ - after that the benefits gradually taper off, and the negative effects increase.

Children under 5 are in a particularly important stage of development. It’s important to ensure children this age are physically active and get good, regular sleep. The World Health Organisation suggests that children under 2 years should have zero screen time while those aged 2-4 should only engage in a maximum of one hour of screen use a day to ensure they are getting enough physical activity. However, these are not unbreakable rules you need rigidly stick to and you need to decide what works best for your family.

3. Boundaries really do work if you stick to them

The important thing is to get your child involved in the process so they understand *why* you're setting limits. Be very clear about your reasons and ask them what they think - getting buy-in at this stage will really help to avoid arguments later on. Remember that teens might need to spend longer online to complete their homework.

Once you've agreed on the limits, stick to them! It's always tempting to give up in the face of pester power or teenage sulks, but it will get easier every time you stick to your guns. Honestly.

There are more helpful web links for you to visit on the E-Safety page of our website too.

<https://www.highgate.leics.sch.uk/safeguarding-including-e-safety/> If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to email your child's teacher or myself for further advice and support using the eduhelp@highgate.leics.sch.uk email.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Jenkinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr T. Jenkinson
Headteacher