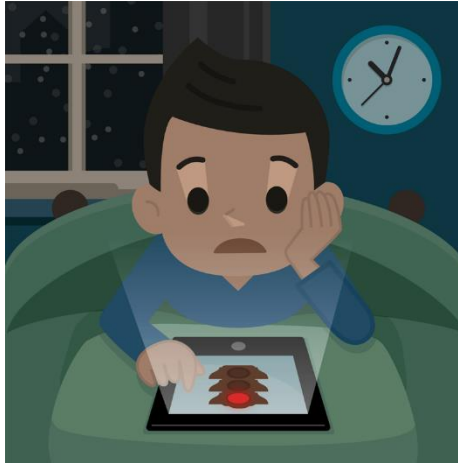


Screen time - Advice for Families



Now, more than ever before, we are relying more on our screens and devices as a platform for learning, working and communicating. With this, comes more screen time than ever before in many households and it is important to monitor your child's screen time and be aware of how they are using their devices. Passive use of the internet, such as scrolling through social media can have negative effects on well-being.

When asked 'how much screen time is too much', unfortunately, there is no magic number. Children use their devices, computers or phones for lots of different reasons – to learn, to play and to socialise. The most important thing is to set clear boundaries on screen time and set a good example.

Some tips to follow:

1. Agree on a clear set of rules for screen time in your time and stick to these rules.
2. Avoid screen time at meal times and before bed time.
3. Model the correct behaviour for your kids - if you want them to spend less time on their devices, you may need to model spending less time on yours.
4. Set a time aside each week for a fun alternative to screen time, a games night for example.
5. Avoid having screens on in the background when they are not in use.
6. No screens in bedrooms.

Social networking - advice for parents



1. Speak to your child about the social network sites they use. Make an effort to have a look at the sites your child is using and understand how they work.
2. Be positive in your conversations around social networking. Sometimes a teenager won't tell a parent about a bad experience they have had online because they fear that you might solve the problem by keeping them off their favourite social networking services. However, if they feel they can talk about their online habits with you, without judgement, or the threat of being disconnected it will lead to more honesty in the long run.
3. Ensure that your child's social networking page is set to a 'private' privacy setting. But also make them aware that even with the tightest privacy controls, content posted online can be easily copied and shared with audiences they can't control.
4. Speak to your child about their 'friends' list and ask to see who they are communicating with. It is important that your child views their 'friends' list as people they trust.
5. Be open and honest with your child about the positive and negative aspects of social networking. It is important that they are aware of potential dangers and feel that they can speak to you about this. Be sure to put emphasis on the fact that they should NOT reply to any unwanted or unsolicited messages.

Dealing with cyber-bullying



Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through the internet or mobile phone technologies. Sending hurtful or inappropriate messages is the most common type of online bullying. The Department of Education and Skills have defined cyber-bullying as **“placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or another public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour”**.

Cyber-bullying can occur at any time and to anyone. It is important that you speak to your child about cyber-bullying as soon as they begin to use the internet and social media so that they understand what it is and how to deal with it. Children need to understand the emotional damage of cyber-bullying and all other forms of bullying can cause. **All forms of bullying hurt, all cause pain and all should be stopped.** By stressing this to your child, it will encourage their responsible internet use and they will recognise cyber-bullying when they come across it online.

Advice to give your child:

1. **Don't reply** - if your child receives a hurtful or inappropriate message, they should not reply and instead inform you.
2. **Keep the messages** - you should take a photograph or a screenshot of any hurtful messages. They will be useful in reporting a record of the online bullying to the school or the guards.
3. **Block the sender** - senders can be blocked on any social media site and mobile phone. It is important to take the opportunity to send more hurtful messages away from the sender.
4. **Report any inappropriate content or messages** - as well as informing their parents, children should also report the material to the service provider or website. This will help to eradicate cyber-bullying.

We are lucky in Our Lady's School to have a close relationship with our community Garda, Niall Kennedy, who regularly gives talks to families regarding online safety. Niall also makes regular visits to our school to tal to the children regarding online safety.



5 THINGS WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT AT HOME...

#StrongerSmarterSafer



because being part of our children's online lives helps to keep them safe and happy.



1

KEEP IT PRIVATE

- Don't share personal information like your email address or date of birth.
- Turn ON privacy settings to protect your stuff.
- Don't add people you don't know.
- Turn OFF location sharing.
- If you wouldn't share with a stranger on the street, don't share it publicly online.

2

KEEP IT POSITIVE

- Think about how much information you are sharing online.
- A comment that you leave on someone's page or what you post when out with friends, may not give the best impression of you.

3

KEEP IT REAL

- If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online.
- Be the same person online as you would be in real life.
- Beware fake profiles. Other people may not be who they say they are.

4

KEEP IT HEALTHY

- Find a healthy balance with screen time. The Internet is designed to be addictive.
- Avoid gaming or any screen time for at least an hour before bedtime.
- The number of 'likes' you get does not define you as a person.

5

KEEP TALKING TO ME

- You can always talk to me if you are worried or uncomfortable about anything online.
- Tell me about what you like online, and what you don't like.
- Sometimes you won't know the best thing to do. Don't simply react – talk it over first with an adult you trust.

35% of children have never or rarely spoken to a parent about online safety.

www.cybersafeireland.org

@CyberSafeIE

/cybersafeireland

CyberSafeIreland
empowering kids to be stronger
smarter & safer online

TÚSLA
An Ghúinechtaíocht um
Leasú agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

CYPSC
Children's Young People's Services
Wellbeing

