

RIDGEWAY COLLEGE

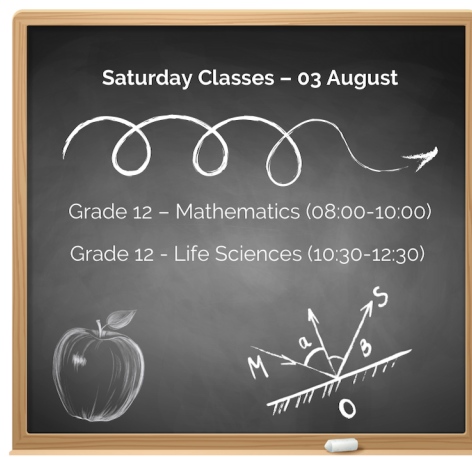
NEWSLETTER 02 AUGUST 2024

Dear Parents

Open day

Our Open Day on Saturday last week was a huge success. We attempted a different format for the morning and it proves to have worked. While 71 prospective pupils wrote a series of assessments through the course of the morning, their parents were busy in class. Our Languages, Mathematics, Commerce and Sciences Departments created an engaging, hands-on experience for our visiting parents. I must acknowledge all of our children who gave of their time on Saturday, whether performing, involved in sports practices or teaching our parent groups – we are very grateful for your time and your commitment to our school.





Career Expo

Our Grade 11 pupils were visited by various institutions on Wednesday. An opportunity for our children to engage, gather information and generate excitement around their chosen (or soon to be chosen) career paths, post Matric.

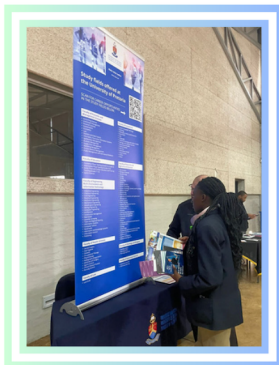
NEXT WEEK

THURSDAY 8 AUGUST

High School Photo Day

FRIDAY 9 AUGUST

Public Holiday
(National Women's Day)



How to Limit Your Teen's Screen Time

By Amy Morin (LCSW); reviewed by Michelle Felder (LCSW, MA)

Getting teens to put away their smartphones and other electronics can be a challenge.

Without adult guidance, most teenagers would spend almost all of their waking hours behind a screen, and statistics on average screen time for teens reflect that. Whether they're texting on their smartphones or watching videos on their laptops, their screen use can easily get out of control.

If your child says that "everyone is doing it," they may be correct – technology is a necessary part of most teens' education and social lives, after all – but that doesn't mean there aren't consequences of unlimited screen time.

Let's look at strategies you can use to limit your teen's screen time and how it can benefit your whole family. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was reported that children between the ages of 8 and 12 spent four to six hours per day using screens, while teens spent up to nine hours per day using screens. This equated to 63 hours per week and more than 3 000 hours per year on average.

However, in a post-pandemic world, studies have shown that tweens and teens between the ages of 11 and 17 had their daily screen time increase by 1 hour during the period of lockdown and school closures, with little evidence to show that the average screen time for teens has reverted back to pre-pandemic levels.

Compare those numbers to what some researchers have identified as healthier "moderate" use (about one to four hours a day), and it's easy to see how much room for improvement there is with regard to screen time for most teens.

Too much screen time has been linked to a variety of problems. Excessive electronic use raises the risk of obesity, interferes with social activities and family time, and takes a toll on a teen's mental health. In contrast, a study published in JAMA Paediatrics found that parental monitoring of a child's media use can have protective benefits on their academic performance, as well as their social, emotional, and physical development. Taking the time to strategize on how to set limits is worthwhile for a parent, as it can also help to prepare you for the resistance you will likely encounter from your teen.

Every teen is different, and a strategy that works for one may not work for others. That said, we hope that at least a few of these tips for limiting your teen's screen time will help you set healthy boundaries.

Make screen time a privilege

One of the ways that screen time has changed over time is that what was once considered a privilege is now considered more of a right. If you grew up sharing a family computer, for instance, you may have felt fortunate to get an hour to use it. When there are more screens than ever available to teens 24/7, it places more pressure on parents to say when their child can and cannot have screen time.

Make it clear that screen time is a privilege that needs to be earned. At first, this may be difficult, but the lessons from learning to delay the gratification of screen time and control their impulses will likely stay with your child for a long time. Also, establish clear rules and boundaries for screen time, and be sure that your teen is aware of what behaviours can result in their privilege of screen time being taken away. One expectation that can be helpful to establish is that their homework and chores need to be done first, and then they can turn on the TV, play games, or go on the computer.

Model healthy habits

It can be helpful to have screen time limits that everyone in your household is expected to follow. Telling your teen to shut off their electronics while you're sitting in front of the TV is likely to be less effective than letting them know that it's time for everyone to shut down their screens. Teens will learn more from what you do than what you say. Be a good role model by limiting your own screen time.

Let your teen see you make the choice between scrolling on your phone versus reading a book, for example. Show them how you have learned to treat media as a privilege.

Discourage multitasking

It's common for teens to believe that they can multitask effectively; for example, they may try to text while doing their homework or use social media while talking on the phone. If your child has a phone, you're probably all too familiar with their justifications for doing screen time multitasking. Discourage your teen from doing two things at once and discuss how multitasking actually interferes with productivity.

Establish clear rules

Most teens, especially younger tweens and teens, aren't mature enough to handle free reign with their electronics. Establish rules that will keep your teen safe and help your teen make good choices with video games, cellphones, TVs, and computers.

Two helpful rules that you might consider implementing are having a set time when screens need to be turned off at night and establishing bedrooms as no-screen-zones.

Encourage physical activity

Encourage your teen to get regular exercise. Going for a walk, playing a game of catch, dancing to their favourite tunes, or even doing some yard work can support your teen in getting the physical activity they need each day. Finding activities that you're able to enjoy as a family can also help your teen to experience movement as more social and fun.

Physical activities not only support time away from screens but they're also beneficial for your child's physical, social, and emotional development.

Educate your teen on media

Media literacy is an important skill young people need. Make sure to have frequent conversations about various aspects of media. Explain how advertisements and sponsored content can create false narratives that attempt to make them feel inadequate in order to try convince them to purchase their products. Discuss the dangers of too much violence exposure and help them learn how to be an informed viewer.

Tip

If your teen is obsessed with social media and always wants the latest trend – try educating them about how advertising on social media works. There are several videos that break down how much an influencer gets paid for a post and all the gifted items they receive to create ads with. By showing your teen how much they are earning, it could make them rethink the credibility of online advertisements (or make them want to be an influencer).

Enforce screen-free mealtimes

Shut off your TV during mealtimes and don't allow text messaging or web surfing while you're eating. Instead, use the opportunity to talk about your day. You may be hearing more and more about how family dinners can make kid's lives better. Don't let screens cheat your family out of this priceless time.

Schedule screen-free days

Every once in a while it can be helpful to have a family-wide screen-free day. You might even consider a longer detox like a week-long vacation from electronics twice a year. It's a great way to ensure that everyone still has plenty of activities to engage in that don't involve electronics.

In addition to allowing for solo activities, try to fit in some screen-free family fun, too. Whether you play a board game or go for a family hike, make it clear that during your time together there won't be any electronic use. Studies have found that inter-parent conflict (conflict between parents) in setting screen time limits is associated with a child having more conflict in their own relationships. Before setting media limits for your teen, make sure you work together with your partner or co-parent so you can present and enforce these rules as a united team.

Screen-free activities for teens

The studies discussed earlier tell us some of the hazards of excess screen time and how monitoring and limiting the use of electronics improve outcomes for kids academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Yet the benefits of limiting screen time might seem even more real to you if you think about what children miss out on when they are constantly behind a screen.

Take a moment and think of some of the activities you enjoyed growing up and how it would be different today. Don't let your child miss out on those opportunities.

As an institution we will be looking at our own policy on cellphones at school to assess how we can assist our children in limiting screen time.

KIND REGARDS

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#Believe



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