St John's College School
Digital Wellbeing Guidance for Parents

Digital technology offers children wonderful opportunities for learning, creativity, and connection. However, it can also lead to experiences that are confusing and age inappropriate. The following ideas are intended to support the wellbeing of your children when using digital devices at home and to develop habits that will serve them well throughout their lives.

This guidance is not prescriptive but is in keeping with our Digital Devices Guidelines and Digital Wellbeing lessons which children receive as part of the PSHEE curriculum.

Set Clear Boundaries and Rules
Establish consistent rules for screen time. The UK Chief Medical Officers recommend a balance that ensures screen use doesn't interfere with sleep, physical activity, or family time. Consider creating a family plan that includes screen-free zones in the home (such as bedrooms) and times (such as during meals and an hour before bedtime). If rules are set, it is important that all members of the family (both adults and children) follow them. Involving your children in the creation and review of these rules will give them an understanding of their importance and the rationale for them.

Model Healthy Digital Habits
Share your experiences and discuss how you manage your own digital wellbeing; such as the importance of taking regular breaks from screens and engaging in physical activities, hobbies, and in person interactions.

Stay Engaged and Communicative
For children, screens should only be used in communal spaces (never in bedrooms) and conducted in such a way that their screens are visible at all times. This practice supports a positive, open dialogue about their digital lives; regularly ask them about the platforms that they use, the content they consume, and their online interactions. Be approachable and supportive, so they feel comfortable to share any concerns or negative experiences they might have. Use this opportunity to guide them in making informed choices and to remain respectful and kind when communicating online.

Remind them that their actions online can have real-world consequences. Discuss the concept of digital footprints and how online activities can be permanent and traceable. Remind them not to share personal information such as their full name, address, school, or phone number. Explain the importance of strong, unique passwords and the dangers of clicking on unknown links.

Device Settings and Age Restrictions

It is not possible to give up to date guidance for the wide array of digital apps and devices that children may use at home in this document. However, all apps and devices that are age-appropriate will have child-friendly privacy settings for parents to consider.

The National College has a series of guides for parents about a wide range of games and social media platforms. These give clear, one page guidance to the age ratings and specific settings that should be considered.

Internet Matters Settings Guides provide clear information on the parental controls for digital devices that you may have in your home and when considering if digital content (film, TV, books, podcasts, apps, games etc.) are suitable for your child, Common Sense Media offers useful guidance.

Should you have any concerns or questions about your child's safety or wellbeing online, please contact Dr Igglesden (tigglesden@sjcs.co.uk), the school's Digital Safeguarding Lead.