





Digital Safety Newsletter Spring 2018

Welcome to our Spring digital safety newsletter. Although the internet is a fantastic resource and great fun, make sure you are keeping an 'eye' on how long your child spends looking at screens. Short sightedness in children and young adults is increasing across the world. In Singapore, a country with one of the highest mobile phone and tablet usage, 90% of university students now show some degree of short sightedness and has been attributed to blue light emissions of phone and tablet screens. Here are some ideas for managing screen time from the latest Vodafone Digital Parenting magazine.

Professor Lydia Plowman, chair of education and technology at the University of Edinburgh has offered these tips for parents -

- **Have family guidelines.** Most families have a routine for mealtimes and bedtime, and the same approach can work for screen time.
- **Start early.** The sooner you establish a pattern of behaviour, the better. It's much harder once children know what their friends are allowed to do.
- **Set boundaries.** You might allow screen time on Sunday morning so you can have a lie in, but not on weekday mornings, or within an hour of bedtime. Similarly, screen time in the living room may be OK, but not in the bedroom. Depending on your child's age, you could make these decisions together.
- **Share screen time.** Perhaps take it in turns to choose a game to play or video to watch – and talk about it the same way you would a book you were reading. Or video-call a relative and encourage your child to tell them family news or a story, or show something they've made.
- **Involve your child in your own screen time.** Share activities such as looking up train times and encourage them to join in. But try to limit your screen time when your child's about. If you're always checking your phone, they'll do the same.
- **Encourage creativity.** Use apps to help your child create photos, videos, drawings and stories.
- **Extend your child's play beyond the screen.** Find out which apps they like and plan related activities, such as dressing up as one of their favourite characters.

Why not use settings or apps to manage internet and screen time?

- Many of the major broadband providers offer settings to limit internet access time.
- Vodafone Home Broadband customers can set up a family network to control who uses broadband and when. It can be used to tailor access for each family member, including when children can go online.
-  **Flipd** is an app that hides distracting social media apps and games on your child's device for a period of time of your choice so they can stay focused and uninterrupted, but are still able to look up information online for homework. For Android and iOS devices - free on Google Play and App Store (Paid for in-app purchases are offered)
-  **Glued** was designed by parents who were frustrated by the amount of time their son spent online, Glued helps families reduce screen time by rewarding those who abstain with points, like a digital version of a real-world star chart. Currently for Apple iOS devices - free in the App Store. Coming soon to Android devices - free on Google Play. (Paid for in-app purchases are offered)

As always, don't forget the positives of the internet. The internet now has 3.2 billion users. By 2020, it is estimated that there will be 40 billion internet enabled devices in the world. Lets help our children to keep safe and make the most of their digital future.

Mr. Browne

This newsletter with active links is available in the Online Safety section of www.gisburnroad.com