

# Social Media, Screen time and Gaming

Information for parents during the teen years

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## Aims

- How concerned does research say we should be about screentime use and the impact on wellbeing
- What are the different types of screentime use and ideas for conversations
- Signs of concern and future resources



*“No locks will keep this intruder out, nor can parents shift their children away from it.”*

*“Here’s a device that is everywhere. We may question the quality of its offering for our children; we may approve or deplore its entertainments and enchantments, but we are powerless to shut it out. It comes into our very homes and captures our children before our very eyes.”*





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## Benefits and risks



What are some of the benefits of young people using social media/gaming?

What might be some of the risks and concerns?

# Looking beyond the headlines




## Heavy web use harms a child's mental health: Every hour raises risk, warns watchdog

- Report warns that progress on child mental health is being erased
- Finds computers and the internet is largely to blame for problems
- Warns peaks with over four hours online, but starts at very low levels
- One in ten children now has mental health problems, claims report

By DANIEL SMITH FOR THE DAILY MAIL





*“Messages about the negative impact of screen time on the wellbeing of young people feature frequently in the media, the community and political discourse. The current review suggests that this discourse may not accurately reflect the available scientific literature, and that the magnitude of the effects when they can be measured range from small to very small.”*

*Tang et al., 2021 Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies – screentime and mental health*



# Ideas around harms of screen time

- Screen time is **directly 'toxic'** to (physical and mental) health
  - *very little/no evidence*
- Screen time **alters behaviour** so leads to negative consequences
  - *broad evidence of some impact on eating/increased snacking*
- Screen time exposes young people to **harmful content** i.e. unhealthy behaviours, cyberbullying, violence, pornography, unrealistic images (body image) or monitoring online status (i.e. likes)
  - *for some young people, depending on their activity*
- Screen time **displaces positive activities** such as socialising, good sleep, diet and exercise
  - *most supported reason for some overall small negative impact on wellbeing / life satisfaction*







## Time and allowances




What do you think is the recommended and healthy amount of screen time per day for young people?



# Time and allowances





**Children and young people told us that, in a typical day they spend an average of...**



**109 children and young people aged 11-24 years took part in this engagement exercise.**

## CHILDREN'S SCREEN TIME

The sheer number of hours young kids are spending in front of digital screens is astounding - which by the time they are teens becomes nearly all hours of their waking lives.

### Average Daily Media Consumption INCREASES WITH AGE

(Excluding Use for School or Homework)



**Ages 3 - 4**  
**5 Hrs.**



**Ages 5 - 7**  
**4.5 Hrs.**



**Tweens**  
**6 Hrs.**



**Teens**  
**9 Hrs.**

via Common Sense Media



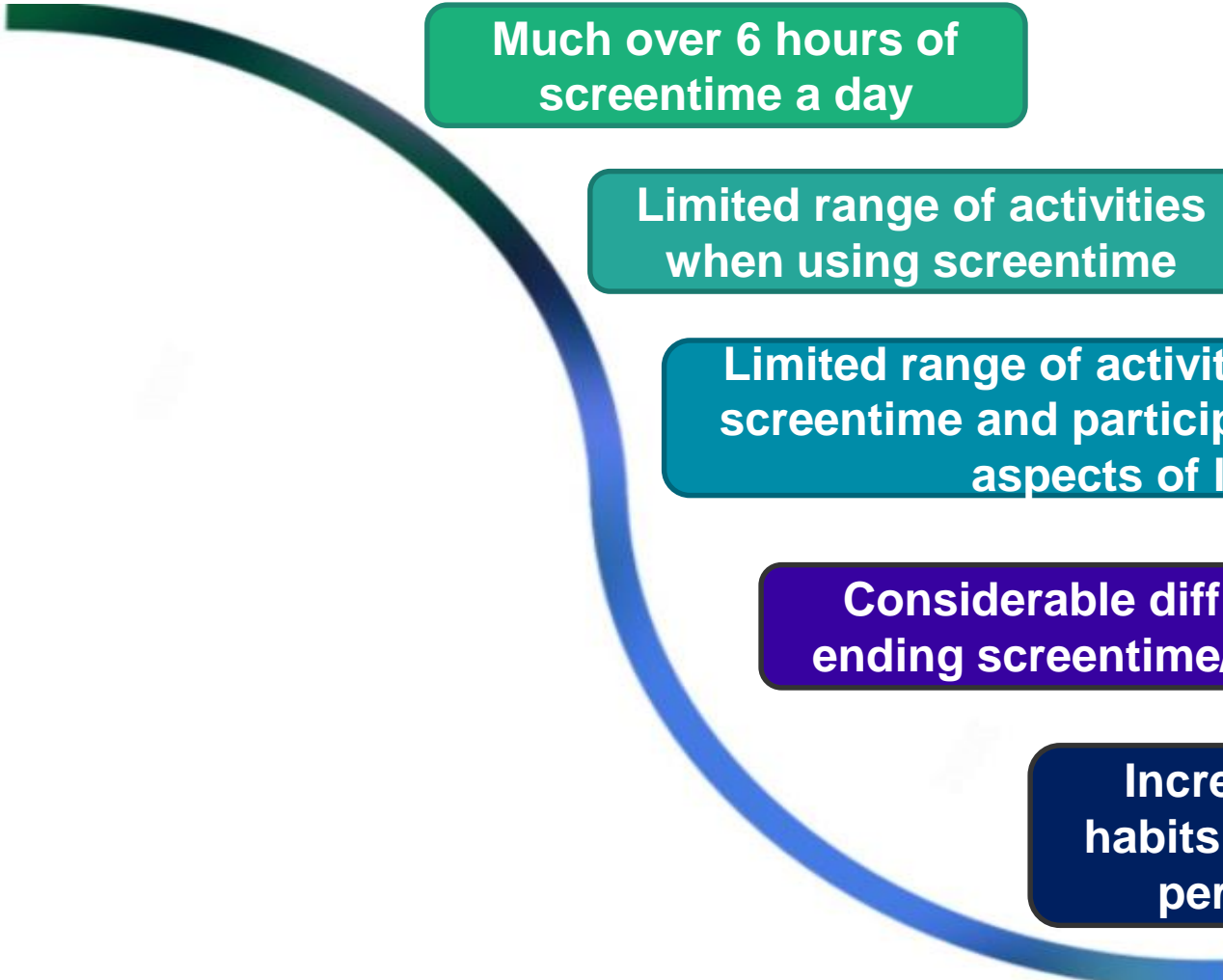
## Signs of overuse



How can you tell if your young person is spending too much time on their screen?



# Signs of overuse



**Much over 6 hours of  
screentime a day**

**Limited range of activities  
when using screentime**

**Limited range of activities outside of  
screentime and participation in other  
aspects of life**

**Considerable difficulties  
ending screentime/bedtime**

**Increased unhealthy  
habits: eating, sleeping,  
personal hygiene**



# Before talking about limits... Entering their world...

- Increasing autonomy and normal push for freedoms/privacy during teen years
- Showing interest in your teens screen use can lead to conversation
- Entering their world

**What sort of apps do you tend to use? Can you show me how you use them?**

**What games do you tend to play? Can you teach me?**

**Have you come across any funny videos recently?**

**What are some of your favourite accounts to follow?**

- Checking out their awareness of privacy/online safety
- Negotiating family agreements if needed

## Commonly used social media platforms



**Instagram:** Users can 'follow' other users, share photos and videos with their 'followers', and broadcast live videos. Users can set their profile to 'private' so that only people they allow can follow them



**Snapchat:** Users add one another as friends, and then send messages, videos and pictures. Often these pictures will be time limited e.g. only visible for 10 seconds



**Facebook:** Users add friends, post 'status updates' and photos/videos, and message one another privately.

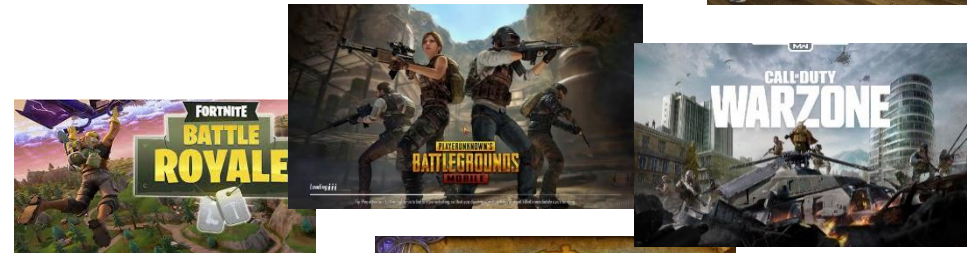


**TikTok:** Users can watch and create short videos. They can follow accounts they are interested in, but will also be shown other videos similar to their interests.



# Types of games- an overview

- Simple games – puzzles, short activities – individual or social
- Roleplaying games – individual or social
- Adventure/team games
- MMORPGs





## Online Safety

As with anything in life, the online world can have a darker side

- Young people can feel a pressure to share personal info
- They may come across content inappropriate for their age
- Passive use of social media may increase self-comparison

**Check out with your young person** re. their awareness of online safety:

- What steps have they taken to look after themselves online?
- Do they know about their privacy settings?





# Negotiating Limits



Some ideas...

- Aim to be collaborative
- Try not to accuse
  - *I've noticed I haven't seen you around so much, and that you like to spend a lot of time on your iPad... it's important we all have a balance of our online time. What sorts of things would you like to do more of outside online time?*
- Explore it as a family
  - *I've noticed we are all on our phones a lot... shall we all have a think about how we can reduce our screentime?*
- Make it fun!
  - Could you make it into a digital detox challenge?

# Online safety family agreement

An online safety family agreement can be used to start a conversation about online safety, agree expectations and boundaries and help to keep your kids safe online.



## What to think about and questions to ask

- What are the **different things you each go online for**? It could be research for school work, keeping in touch with friends, or gaming.
- What are the **favourite apps or sites** each person uses?
- How does each family member **access the internet** – via a phone, tablet, or something different?
- Are there things that **any of you** are doing online that are worrying or **affecting others**? Think about time spent online, is it interfering with family life such as meal times?
- **How do you talk** about online safety with your child – is it negative or positive?
- How many **devices in your house** are connected to the internet? Can you go on a hunt to count them and see if you each come up with the same amount!

## Basics

- **Sharing** – what is being shared and with who? Think about what pictures and videos show, and what is being included in messages.
- **Content** – are the games, apps and chat sites suitable for the person using them? You should remember that what is suitable for one person in the household might not be suitable for another.
- **Chat** – what should your child do if someone they don't know messages them? Who are they talking to online and are they sure they are who they say they are?
- **Behaviour** – does anything your child does online affect behaviour? This could be getting angry if they lose a game, or feeling anxious that they've missed a post.
- **Settings** – do you have safety settings in place on broadband and wifi and on your child's devices like phones or games consoles, such as for location sharing and parental controls?

## Behaviour

- There may be different agreements for different members of the household, this might be based on age, but also on ability to understand the risks and being able to deal with challenges.
- The agreement might be broken at some point, that isn't a failure, but use it as a time to talk about what has happened and why and what you can do to help keep to the agreement in future.
- You'll need to review the agreement over time. Agree how long it should be before the next review.
- Think about how you are talking about online behaviour – promote positive behaviour rather than focusing on negatives.

## Remember

Once you've talked together about how your family use the internet you can use this agreement to note down what you each agree too.

Make sure your agreement works for each member of the family and you all understand that online behaviour may need to change to stick to the agreement.



# NSPCC

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

# Our family online agreement



## Child 1:

Name

e.g. check before downloading a new app.

How will we check we are doing this?

Signature

## Child 2:

Name

e.g. don't share location when posting online.

How will we check we are doing this?

Signature

## Child 3:

Name

e.g. check before downloading a new app.

How will we check we are doing this?

Signature

## Adults:

Names

e.g. have phone free time each day for the family.

How will we check we are doing this?

Signature



# NSPCC

When will we review what we've agreed to?



EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR



## Resources that may be useful

Apps that can support reduction of screentime:



**OurPact:** allows you to schedule screentime and block/grant access to apps from your phone



**ScreenTime:** allows you to set daily time limits on screentime and pause screentime on your child's phone



**Flora:** habit tracker used to track your screentime reduction and plant trees as you go

**iPhone app usage:** check how much time you have spent on each app

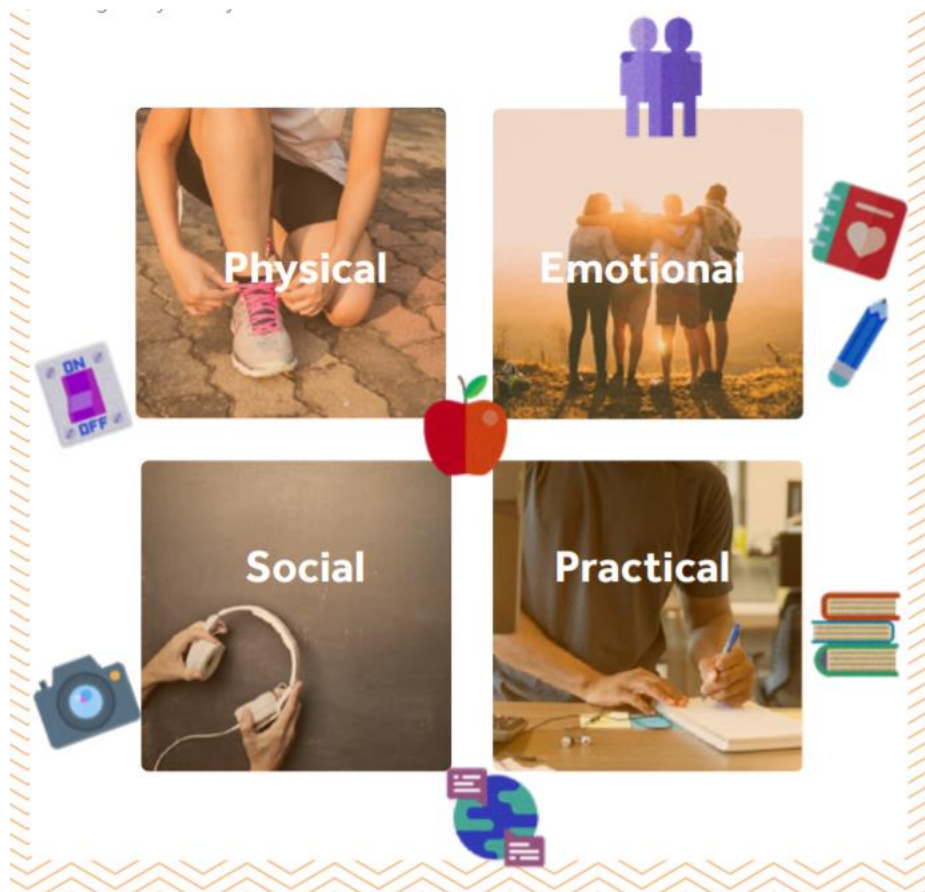
**We would always suggest attempting to negotiate an agreement of trust with your child before resorting to using apps to manage screentime**

## Ending screen time session

- Time vs Activity based endings
- Negotiating for one more game/puzzle vs 10 minutes and middle-of activity disruption
- Similar to stopping watching a sports match half-way through/an episode of your favorite soap without being able to return
  - *How long have you got before you finish the game you're playing/what you're currently doing?*
- Negotiating endings from there



# Developing balance and range of activities



- Thinking of screentime as an activity > as an award
- A range of activities
- Physical activities and regular 30 minute exercise
- Time away from technology
- Time with family and friends
- Studying / other responsibilities as an ideal

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/15030/my-self-care-plan-secondary.pdf>



## Sleep – Blue light myth

- No current evidence that blue light is helpful for: helping fall asleep faster, sleep quality or amount
- BUT also very little evidence that pre-sleep phone use has much impact on sleep duration or quality unlike previously thought
- Continued high stimulation activity i.e. communicating with friends late into night and lack of routine reduces sleep quality and duration
- Need to work towards boundaries and sleep routine as our brain thrives on sleep routines and sleep windows





## Guides and references

- NSPCC as a key source for information and advice
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- Online gaming different games and social media apps, livestreaming, parental controls, online safety, inappropriate and explicit content, social media and online wellbeing
- Royal College Guidance: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/health-impacts-screen-time-guide-clinicians-parents>

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Let's keep kids safe online

  
Royal College of  
Paediatrics and Child Health  
*Leading the way in Children's Health*

# Sometimes it can help to get support with our mental health

**Pastoral Care at school** – speak to a member of staff

**Kooth** offers online counselling support – self-referral @ [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)



**Off the Record** professional counselling can self-refer [www.talkofftherecord.org](http://www.talkofftherecord.org)



**Education Wellbeing Practitioners** offer early help wellbeing support to students for stress, anxiety and low mood that is research-based. Complete an application form on your own or with someone else (available via school)



**CAMHS** provides mental health support for students. They provide different evidence-based treatment options for a range of mental health difficulties. School or your GP can refer you.





*There is always someone here to listen and help...*



*Speak to any staff or your pastoral team within school if you want more information about any of these support options...*



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Self Harm Series - Part 1 -

Children & Young People's Wellbeing Service:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrRKV84lb8Jr69Z7ZhjSjCg>



# Thank you for joining us in this conversation – Questions and Feedback

*“We all have mental health”*

Short feedback survey:

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