

March 31, 2020

Dear parents and Guardians:

As we transition to online learning, you may have several questions about screen time and be worried that your child will be spending too much time on a device. This may be especially the case as your child/ren are beginning to sign online to access learning materials on their electronic devices. As a school community, we wanted to provide parents with some additional information and tips to assist you through this time.

Recreational Screen Time & Non-Recreational Screen Time

Studies have shown that not all screen time is considered the same in terms of the effects on children and adolescents. [A study](#) which examined the effects of screen time on adolescents found that while mental health effects were connected to recreational screen time, non-recreational screen time was shown to have no adverse effects.

Generally speaking, **recreational screen time** is time spent using a device such as a computer, television or gaming console that does not promote activity. **Non-recreational screen time** is time spent using a device such as a computer, television or gaming console with an *educational or active component*.

Tips For Managing Screen Time

While the total amount of time a child spends online depends greatly upon their age and course requirements, keep in mind these tips.

- **Set time limits for continuous screen time** for both non-recreational screen time and recreational screen time. Hint: type 'set a timer for 30 [number of minutes] minutes' in a tab in chrome for an instant timer.
 - Depending upon your child, this time limit will vary. For example, you may set your nine year old with a 20-30 minute time limit. At the end of 30 minutes, have them spend at least 10 minutes away from any device or screen before returning back to their online learning.
- **Chunking learning into manageable blocks of time**
 - For some students, sitting and focusing on a computer screen for the approximate one hour per day (5 hours per week) of programming as per Minister LaGrange's guidelines for educational programming, may be too much to be done at once.
 - For some students, they may need to have multiple 10-15 minute learning sessions than have a break, especially if this was a strategy in your child's IPP of having "frequent breaks."
- **Encourage movement.**
 - Go outside for walks if possible.
 - Do exercises such as jumping jacks or running on the spot. If you're not too tired of the screen, you can also use websites like [Go Noodle](#) for movement breaks.



WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

- **Determine set times of the day for working online.**
 - Schedule times of the day when your child will not be on a device or screen.
 - Be sure to put devices away well before bedtime as the blue light from devices can affect your child's sleep.
- **Work on paper if possible.**
 - When you or your child needs a digital break, it may be possible to complete the assignment on paper with pen or pencil. You can always snap a picture of the assignment and hand it in through Google Classroom or whatever means your teacher has in place.

Finally, [here's a short video](#) that provides additional screen time rules you may consider.

Yours in education,



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