Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

Health Promotion Board

singapore kindness movement

Raising a Digitally Smart Child

With the **growing role of technology** in communication, learning and recreation, how can you support your child in:

1. Practising appropriate device usage?

2. Managing over-reliance on devices?

3. Handling Cyber Bullying?

4. Showing Cyber Kindness?

5. Discerning real news from fake news?

As a parent, you can...

- **Be actively involved in your child's use of technology.**
- **Role model good online behaviour.**
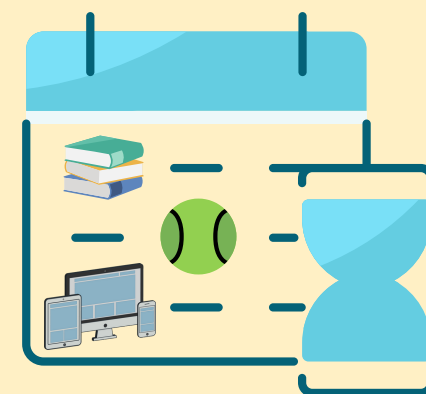- **Stay updated on emerging digital trends influencing your child.**

① Practise appropriate device usage

"How much time should my child spend online?"

Instead of running an internet search on the above, talk to your child about what they feel is **an appropriate amount of time to spend on their digital devices** per day, given their commitments (e.g., studies, CCA, art class).

Share your concerns with your child and reach a common understanding on:

- the **time they should turn off** their laptops/phones

- when **device usage should be paused**, such as during mealtimes and family activities

- when and how often they should **take breaks from the screen**, or get up to move about

- **what they can do online**, such as seeking out online entertainment and learning, accessing news, staying connected with peers

- **what they should avoid**, such as chatting with strangers, sharing personal details (home address, phone number), excessive sharing of pictures/videos of themselves
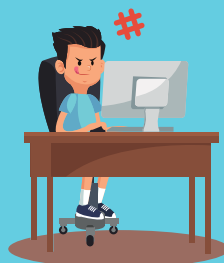
2 Manage over-reliance on devices

Is your child....

Constantly online and **only happy when they are online?**

Visibly restless or irritable when asked to cut down on gaming/online activities?

Using gaming/online activity **to avoid dealing with their personal problems?**

Speak to your child to understand more about their behaviour, and share your concerns with them. Here are some tips on how to steer the conversation:

- Identify specific behaviours (e.g. thinking about an online activity even when offline or lying to conceal the amount of time spent online) and discuss realistic durations for your child's screen time.

- Encourage your child to participate in outdoor activities instead of imposing a ban on device usage. Help them achieve it by scheduling these activities and doing it together with them.

- Manage your expectations. It's tough to alter habits overnight – give your child time to adjust their digital habits. Acknowledge and show appreciation when you see them putting in effort to change their habits.

Click here for more tips on managing over-reliance!

③ Handle Cyber Bullying

You may not always know if your child is being bullied online, but you can give them some pointers to help them deal with cyber bullying:

- **Stop** what you are doing if you encounter something that makes you feel uncomfortable, fearful, or hurt.
- **Block** all lines of communication with the cyber bully.
- **Save** all offensive and hateful messages as evidence of cyber bullying.
- **Tell** a trusted adult (parents or teachers) or your close friends if you are being bullied online. You do not need to suffer alone!
- **Report** the case to the police if personal safety is threatened or your reputation is being damaged.

Examples of cyber bullying:

- Nasty/threatening comments or personal messages
- Circulation of personal photos/data without permission
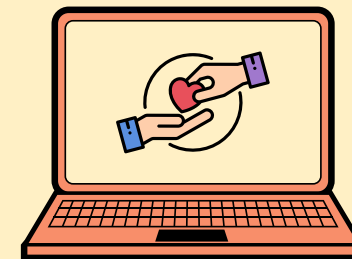- Online impersonation

4 Show Cyber Kindness

Here are some ways your child can be kind in their online interactions 💗

Focus on the positive, not the negative

Encourage your child to leave positive reviews, compliments, and share uplifting content – remind your child that the internet is not just for ranting.
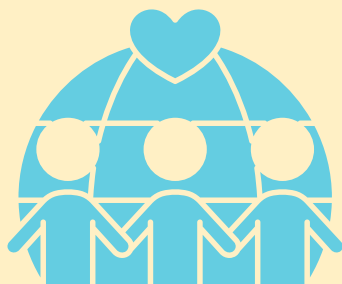
THINK before sharing

Before circulating content, check that it is authentic and does not harm anyone upon sharing. Is it **T**rue, **H**elpful, **I**nspiring, **N**ecessary, and **K**ind?

Respect other users' privacy

Refrain from sharing personal information about others online as it can be considered doxxing, which is a crime.

Practise empathy

Get your child to think about how they want to be treated online – then ask your child to treat others in the same way.

Be accountable

Remind your child that although the online space allows for profiles to be anonymous, they should still be accountable for their behaviour.

(5) Discern real news from fake news

It is key to verify the source(s) and intent of the information we come across online.

Use "SURE" to teach your child not to believe everything they read online:

Source: Look at its origin. Is it trustworthy?
Ensure that the source is credible and reliable.

Understand: Know what you're reading by searching for clarity.
Look for facts rather than opinions.

Research: Dig deeper and go beyond the initial source.
Investigate the material and compare it with multiple sources.

Evaluate: Find the balance and exercise fair judgment.
There could be different angles and sides to a story.

Technology offers opportunities for your child to learn and expand their interests.

As part of this journey, they need to learn how to use devices and navigate platforms responsibly and in a safe manner.

Let us proactively journey with them, and step in to guide and support them when necessary.

Click here to access MOE's Cyber Wellness education resources.

Do also check out "Parenting Resources" under the Services tab in PG for more resources & tips.

Services

Declare travels	Parenting Resources `BETA`
SchoolFinder	Edusave Standing Order
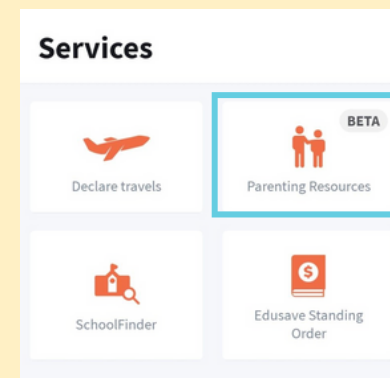
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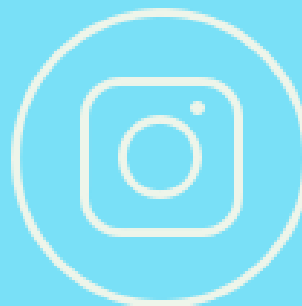
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