

*Family Guidelines for Home  
Technology Use*



Faith • Skill • Endeavour  
**MATTHEW  
FLINDERS**  
Anglican College



## Family Guidelines for Home Technology Use

Consistent with the College's Mission, Matthew Flinders Anglican College families recognise that the appropriate use of technology both at school and in the home enhances the pursuit of *"academic excellence and striving for decency, with an open spirit of enquiry and respect for truth"* while developing the many skills that are necessary in an ever changing 21st century world.

Three principles guide what is "appropriate" use of this technology. These principles are:

- Health
- Social Development
- Suitable Time and Technology Management

### Health

In order to be "appropriate", technology use should:

- Be balanced with physical activity.
- Be mindful of addiction issues
- Be age appropriate and suitable to the physical, social and emotional development of the child.
- Not impact on healthy eating and sleep.
- Not change behavior

### Social Development

In order to be "appropriate", technology use should:

- Not replace face-to-face social interaction.
- Not provide the default entertainment medium.
- Be age appropriate and suitable to the physical, social and emotional development of the child.
- Be balanced with real world and family experience.

### Technology and Time Management

In order to be "appropriate", technology use should:

- Only access content that is age appropriate and suitable to the physical, social and emotional development of the child.
- Minimise the size of a child's digital footprint and ensure that this digital footprint is appropriate and positive.
- Be well balanced with non-screen time based activities.
- Not include multi-tasking and the associated distraction of other applications running at the same time.
- Prioritise school work over other technology uses.
- Allow visibility to parents.

To support the Flinders Guiding Principles for Technology Use in the Home, the following guidelines for home technology use should be considered:

- 1. Access to screen based technology time limits in the home and beyond should be applied.**
  - Screen based technology use time limits should be agreed to and understood by the entire family.
  - Students will need access to their College device in order to complete homework. The following homework times are recommended by the College:

Year 7	70 minutes
Year 8	80 minutes
Year 9	90 minutes
Year 10	100 minutes
Year 11	110 minutes
Year 12	120 minutes

- Generally, students should not be allowed access to technology for homework purposes longer than these indicated times. However, particularly in years 11 and 12, many students will be completing more than this to maximize their academic achievements.
  - Any additional screen based technology time should be considered as personal, and such access should be consistent with other guidelines in this document.
- 2. Parents should set an appropriate example to their children by adhering to the agreed family use guidelines for technology use in the home.**
    - If a parent has a business need to access screen based technology in the home, similar guidelines should be developed to the child's that the child understands.
    - If a child's recreational use of screen based technology is restricted, similar restrictions should apply to other members of the family (including parents) as well. These are intended as "rules" for the family, not just for the child.
  - 3. Screen based technology should not be available or accessed during key family times such as meal times or particular family events.**
    - During these key times, all screen based technology should be switched off and not available to individuals - store them centrally. For example, place all mobile phones in a basket that is kept away from easy access.
  - 4. Unstructured screen based technology free time should be identified and allocated.**
    - Children need to have the opportunity to develop many skills that are not dependent on access to or the presence of screen based technology. They also need the ability to be creative, productive or simply not "bored" when no structure is provided to their free time. Therefore, everyday should include unstructured screen based technology free time.
  - 5. Incentives and consequences for appropriate technology use should be included.**
    - Only make rules that have consequences for breaking them already identified and discussed.
  - 6. Careful consideration should be given to a child's maturity level before allowing screen based technology in the bedroom - use such technology in a visible location.**
    - As a general guide; Middle School students (years 7, 8 and 9) should not be allowed to have screen based technology (laptops, mobile phones, iPads etc) in their bedroom. Students in the Senior School should only be allowed to have this type of technology in their bedroom if they have demonstrated suitable mature behaviour with technology use and even then; not while sleeping.
  - 7. Digital Technologies such as mobile phones, iPads and Laptops should not be stored in bedrooms while sleeping. Simple devices such as alarm clocks should be used instead of a mobile phone to provide the alarm.**
    - No matter the age of the student, devices should be kept on charge overnight in a central location within the house - NOT in the child's bedroom. Alternative simple devices should be used to provide an alarm clock.

- 8. Parents should know their child's passwords to all technology.**
  - All devices must be able to be accessed by the parent. Therefore, parents must have access to the password to their children's devices and accounts.
- 9. Parents should be 'friends' or 'following' their child on social media.**
  - Parents must be connected to their children via their social media account. Therefore, if a child has a specific social media account, so should the parents - parents should have an understanding of how the specific social media works before allowing their child access.
- 10. Filter technology should be employed in the house.**
  - Internet in the home should not be totally open. It should be filtered to minimise the risk of access to such things as pornography, illegal websites and unwanted gaming websites.
- 11. All online activity must be appropriate, legal and respectful.**
  - It must be agreed by all members of the family that all online activity that takes place is appropriate, legal and respectful. Family conversations about how these are defined should take place - understanding what is appropriate and respectful must be a shared understanding.
- 12. Technology multi-tasking should be discouraged - one activity at a time - while completing homework and other school work. Social media, games and other devices must be closed or switched off.**
  - Other devices and applications that are open provide distraction from the task at hand. Therefore, children agree that they will not have other applications open (even in the background) while completing such things as school or homework.
- 13. Non-screen time activity should be a priority during free time.**
  - During spare time, screen-based activity should not be the default activity. Alternative activities such as sport, non-screen based games, puzzles or interest clubs should be considered.
- 14. Respect user agreements for Service Providers such as Facebook etc.**
  - Children must satisfy the minimum requirements as stipulated by a service provider's User Agreement or Terms of Use. For example, in most instances, a minimum age of 13 is required. Parents can not provide a child with permission to break these terms of use.
- 15. School Holidays and Weekend Technology Access.**
  - It is reasonable to allow appropriate technology use during school holidays and weekends, but determination of times need to be considered and appropriate - it needs to be consistent with the three principles that guide appropriate technology use; Health, Social Development and Technology & Time Management.
  - Use guidelines at these times should be consistent with the other guidelines provided in this document. For example:
    - Non-screen time should be included.
    - Unstructured time should be included.
    - All activity should be appropriate as defined elsewhere in this document.
- 16. Use of technology as a hobby/interest.**
  - It is reasonable for a child to use technology either as a part of, or totally as a hobby or interest. Such hobbies and interests could include such things as; coding, app development, electronics, building and repairing computers, online gaming, 3D printing and flying drones (not a complete list).
  - Enabling the use of technology as a hobby or interest should still be considered within the context of this framework for managing technology use in the home.

## Family Incentives and Consequences Technology Use in the Home

It is important that incentives for using technology appropriately and consequences for inappropriate use are discussed and understood prior to the implementation of Family Rules for Home Technology Use. In order to be most effective, it is also important that students feel that they are contributing. Therefore, these discussions should be collaborative and inclusive of the child.

The types of incentives and consequences will vary between families. However, please consider the following examples:

### Incentives

- Find rewards that incorporate responsibility eg. pets.
- Family excursion to non-screen based alternatives ie. aqua park, beach, camping.
- Book voucher.
- Tickets to a concert/sporting event.
- Family time - playing board games, card games.

### Consequences

- Data budget per month used - once used up to not buy additional - insist that they wait until next top up.
- Reduced screen time allowed - do not return until earned back.
- Loss of the device for a determined period of time - remove access
- Grounded - Less times with friends.
- Screens after 'chores' have been done.

## Flexibility (wiggle room) for Technology Use in the Home

The realities of life are that not everything can always happen as planned. Therefore, if circumstances temporarily change, and there is a resultant need to use technology outside the Family Rules, ensure that it is understood that there is a process that must be followed in order to have some temporary flexibility in the rules.

Consider the following "wiggle room" guidelines in different circumstances:

- Permission must be requested and given before a rule can be temporarily broken.
- If a rule has already been broken, a suitable explanation must be provided.
- The breaking of a rule must not be hidden - openness and honesty should always be encouraged.

## Checklist for Developing Family Rules for Home Technology Use

- A technology access time limit that enables homework to be completed (based on College guidelines) has been included.
- We have considered how the family rules will apply to all members of the family including parents.
- Key family times when technologies will not be available have been identified.
- Unstructured technology free time has been identified and included.
- Incentives and consequences for each rule have been identified and discussed.
- Suitable locations for technology use have been considered and identified.
- An alternative location to the bedroom for digital technology storage and charging has been identified.
- If necessary, simple alarm clocks have been provided as an alternative to a mobile computer device.
- I/we know our children/s various passwords.
- I/we have the same social media accounts as our children and we understand how they function.
- I/we are friends/following our children/s social media accounts.
- I/we have internet filtering established on our home internet.
- I/we have engaged our children in a conversation about:
  - Being appropriate, legal and respectful when online.
  - Not multitasking while completing homework or school work.
  - Respecting the user agreements and terms of use provided by Service Providers.
- I/we have assisted our children to identify non-screen based activities that they can be involved in during non-screen times.
- I/we have considered how technology may/may not be used during School holidays and weekends.

## Sample Specific Flinders Family Rules For Home Technology Use

The following Sample rules are provided as a guide for a typical family with a 14 year old child in Year 9 and form the core of the type rules that a Flinders family should consider for technology use in the home:

### Sample Rules

- Having a mobile phone is a privilege and will not be taken for granted.
- You will be respectful in the way that you use your mobile phone and not use it for any purpose that you would not also share with mum and dad.
- Your laptop may be used for homework each night for 1 hour and 40 minutes (Year 9). In addition to this, you may use your laptop for other purposes for an additional 20 minutes. At the conclusion of this time it is to be turned off and placed on its charger in the home study cupboard.
- All screen based technology (mobile phones, Laptops etc) will be switched off and stored in the kitchen basket during dinner time and other special family events.
- After school, all screen based technology (mobile phones, television, laptops etc) is to be left turned off and not accessed until 5:00pm. During this time you are to find other activities to complete that do not require screen based technology.
- All homework and screen based technology use are to be completed at the desk located next to the living room. If you have another need, it must first be discussed with mum or dad. At no time is your laptop or other screen based technology to be used in your bedroom.
- During the night, all screen based technology is to be stored in the study cupboard, on charge. Mobile phones etc are not to be in your bedroom. The old alarm clock is to be used if an alarm is required.
- All passwords to your various devices are to be known by mum and dad. If these change, please ensure that you provide us with the new passwords.
- Mum and Dad are to have full visibility of your social media accounts. Therefore, please ensure that we have either your social media account passwords, or have unfiltered or unrestricted membership and visibility of your groups and accounts.
- An Internet filter will be used. You will not attempt to bypass this in any way or access the internet in some other way with a different device (eg. Hotspot to your phone). If you have need to access a blocked website, discuss this need with us.
- All memberships of online services must first be discussed and agreed to with mum and dad.
- All online activity must be appropriate, legal and respectful.
- While working on School work, all other applications and devices will be switched off.
- During weekends, if no homework is to be completed, this time can be used for appropriate technology use.
- During holidays, appropriate technology use will be negotiated at the time.
- The general consequence for breaking these rules will be the removal of access to the technology (mobile phone, laptop etc) outside of homework for a period of time.

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Signed: Parent 1

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Signed: Parent 2

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Signed: Student