



Tips for Parents & Carers

As the school year wraps up, children and young people often spend more time online — from social apps and streaming videos to games and group chats. While these digital activities can offer entertainment and connection, they can also bring challenges to wellbeing, focus, and safety. Here are some tips on how you can support your children's online safety and balance screen time over the holidays:



1. Encourage Healthy Digital Habits

With more free time, it's easy for screens to take over. Instead of just limiting screen time, think about how that time is used. Try this approach:

- Build a summer routine together, including screen time and downtime.
- Talk about how apps or games make them feel. Energised? Connected? Drained?
- Use built-in tools to guide healthy use.
- Let children help set the rules — they're more likely to stick when they feel involved



2. Navigating Social Media in the Summer

Without school structure, children and young people may spend more time scrolling — and that can mean more exposure to unrealistic comparisons or negative content.

Keep in mind:

- Algorithms can push sensitive or troubling topics
- "Highlight reels" from peers or influencers can impact self-esteem.
- Encourage open conversations: Ask, "Have you seen anything odd or upsetting recently?"
- Keep conversations curious instead of critical!



3. Devices Stay Out of the Bedroom

A good night's sleep is essential — even if getting up for school isn't required, summer is a time for rest. Keeping screens out of the bedroom supports better rest and fewer late-night distractions.

Why this matters:

- Notifications and blue light can make it hard to wind down.
- Private browsing late at night can increase risks of viewing harmful content.
- Set a family rule: all devices are charged outside bedrooms at night .
- Lead by example!



4. Know what your Children are Watching and Using

Giving young people independence online is important, but so is staying involved.

You can try to stay involved by:

- Asking what apps they're using and who they talk to there.
- Occasionally reviewing watch history together as a way to start a conversation.
- Talking about what to do if they see something upsetting, — ensure no shame no or punishment so they feel they can come to you.



6. Teach Children how Algorithms Work

Children deserve to know how digital platforms are designed to grab their attention and make profit – they are not trying to make them feel good.

Explain simply: “Apps learn from what you watch or like — if you stop on a sad or strange video, they'll show you more like it, even if that's not what you want.”

- Show them how to use “not interested” or block features to shape what they see.
- Show them how to reset their algorithm and content feed often
- Reflect together: “Why do you think this keeps popping up?”

Summer is a time for making memories and it should feel fun, free, and safe — both offline and online. By setting clear boundaries, encouraging conversation, and staying engaged with your child's digital world, you can help them make the most of their break in a balanced way. Here's to a summer full of laughter, learning, and safe online and offline activities!



5. Managing Game Time and Interactions

Games can be great fun, especially with friends. But long sessions and open chats can come with risks.

Things you can monitor:

- In-game contacts. Who are they playing with or talking to? Who can connect with your child in games?
- Unfiltered voice chats where harmful language might be heard.
- Gaming late into the night, throwing off sleep and routines.
- In-game purchases and spending temptations.
- Tip: Use parental controls to limit play time, require approval for purchases, and control who can connect with your child.



7. Make Time for Outdoors and Offline Fun!

Screens can be captivating, but there is no substitute for real-world play and time outdoors. Help children and young people reconnect with hobbies, nature, and creativity.

Ideas to explore:

- Make a “boredom jar” filled with screen-free activities to pick from.
- Schedule outdoor time — even a half-hour walk can refresh their mood.
- Rediscover old hobbies or try new ones like music, crafts, or sports