

Primary 4
Parents Briefing on
Cyber Wellness



Did you know?

67% of children aged seven to nine in Singapore use smartphones every day, and are active on social media



DEVICES USED DAILY BY CHILDREN (%)

	Overall	Aged 7 to 9	Aged 10 to 12	Aged 13 to 16
Smartphone	84	67	85	98
Personal laptop	32	13	30	51
Family laptop	36	44	37	27
Tablet/iPad	52	65	51	40
Others	5	7	5	5

Source: The Straits Times, 7 Feb 2021

Age when they started using social media

Current age/ Starting age	Overall	Age 7 to 9 years old	Age 10 to 12 years old	Age 13 to 16 years old
3 years old or below	9%	17%	6%	4%
4-6 years old	25%	42%	24%	11%
7-9 years old	39%	41%	46%	31%
10-12 years old	22%	NA	24%	40%
13-16 years old	5%	NA	NA	14%

Parents may not be aware of the online risks

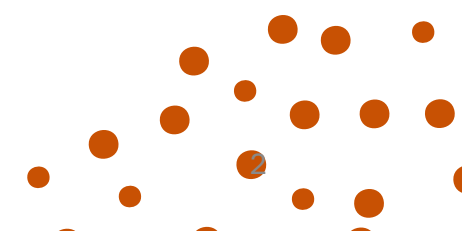
Parents might not be aware, but...

1 in 3 children has chatted with strangers online

1 in 3 children has been exposed to pornographic materials

1 in 4 children has overshared their personal information

Source: MLC-TOUCH Parent Child Poll Findings, 22 Aug 2023



What is Cyber Wellness?

- Cyber Wellness is about our students being able to navigate the cyber space safely.
- This is done through our curriculum which aims to
 - **equip students with the knowledge and skills** to harness the power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) **for positive purposes;**
 - maintain a **positive presence in cyberspace;** and
 - be **safe and responsible users of ICT.**

What will Pri 3 and 4 students learn about Cyber Wellness during CCE (FTGP) lessons?

During CCE(FTGP)* lessons, students will be taught:

● **Balanced use of digital devices**

- Time management and spending time on screen-free activities

● **Netiquette**

- Show respect to others online
- Be considerate when posting opinions online
- Reflect on how our interactions can affect others online

What will Pri 3 and 4 students learn about Cyber Wellness during CCE (FTGP) lessons?

● Stand up against cyber bullying

- What is cyber bullying
- What to do when encountering cyber bullying
- How to speak up and stand up against cyber bullying

● How to stay safe online

- Steps to take to determine if an online friend is trustworthy

● Respecting copyright

- Take steps to credit the works by others and avoid plagiarism

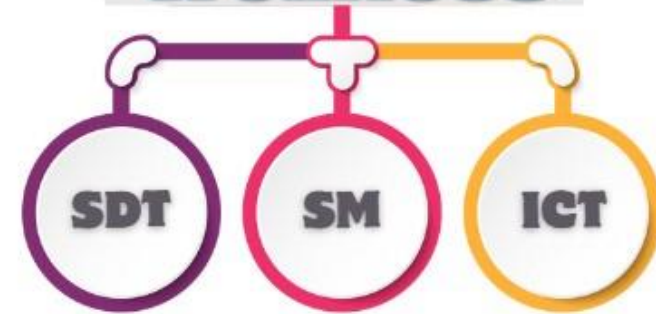
- Parents are strongly encouraged to participate in the “**Family Time**” activities in the CCE (FTGP) Journal with your children to reinforce the key cyber wellness messages at home.



Family Time in one of the P3 lessons

What other Cyber Wellness programmes do we have for our students?

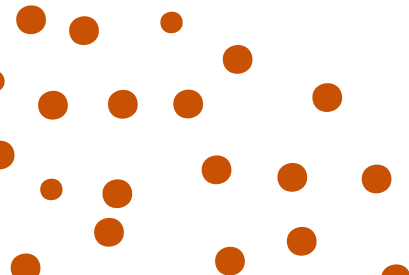
- ICT Literacy Programme
- Out of the Box and Assembly Programmes
- Cyber Wellness Week recess activities





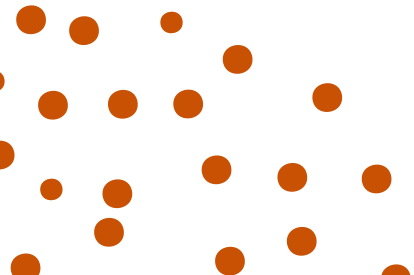
What are the school rules on digital device use?

- **Students are not allowed to use smartphone and/or smartwatches, during school hours including recess, CCA and after-school programmes.**
- **Students are to switch off their devices and put them in their school bags once they enter the school and bear the responsibility for safekeeping their devices.**
- **Students are only allowed to use smartphone and/or smartwatches at the Security Guard posts after school hours.**



What are the school rules on communication?

- For urgent matters, parents and students are strongly encouraged to contact one another through the General Office
- Parents should contact teachers via the Student Handbook, email or the General Office during office hours
- Teachers will communicate with students through their Student Handbook, SLS, emails, class/school notice boards and Google Classroom to relay important class/subject specific information



How can parents help their child develop good digital habits?

- As parents/guardians, you play a significant role in helping your child establish healthy digital habits, and learn to use technology in a positive and meaningful way.
- Here are some ways:
 - **Role model good digital habits** for your child/ward (e.g. parents/guardians not using devices during mealtimes).
 - **Have regular conversations with your child** to better understand what they do online, how to stay safe and how to use technology in a responsible manner.
 - **Discuss and develop a timetable with your child** to moderate their time spent on screens.
- For more content to support your parenting in the digital age and more, please scan the QR code at the top right-hand corner to access the **Parenting for Wellness** Toolbox for Parents.

Navigating the Digital Age Page 1 of 2



Helping Your Child Manage Device Use & Stay Safe Online



Develop a Family Screen Use Plan

- A family screen use plan consists of screen use rules, their consequences and screen-free activities that the family can engage in.
- As a family, create your screen use rules by discussing and agreeing on expectations of screen use and the consequences of breaking these rules clearly.
Your screen use rules can include:
 - Device-free times and places
 - Time limit for devices
- "What are some suggestions on when and where devices should not be used?"
- "What should we do if we break our agreement?"
- Decide as a family what screen-free activities you want to engage in, like going outdoors, playing sports or playing board games together.
 - "What screen-free activities do you think we can do together?"
- Engaging your child in the process of creating screen use rules and inviting them to suggest activities to do together helps increase their ownership of the whole family screen use plan.
 - "What do you think of our screen use rules?"

Role Model Behaviours and Have Open Conversations

- Be consistent in role modelling positive screen use behaviours and habits.
- Engage your child in open conversations about their online activities, how to navigate the online space and its associated challenges. For example:
 - State observation: "I noticed you have been spending a lot of time on your device."
 - Ask open-ended questions: "What do you usually do on your device?"



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you've got this

How can parents better support their child's digital habits?

Achieving balanced screen time

- **Screen time** refers to the amount of time spent using devices each day. Having some screen time can be beneficial, such as when your child uses devices to learn and connect with others.
- However, it is important to be aware that **spending an excessive amount of time using devices is unhealthy**, as it is associated with insufficient good quality sleep, sedentary behaviours, increased obesity, and poorer mental health and well-being.
- **Discuss and develop a timetable** with your child to moderate their time spent on screens.
- Children aged 7 – 12 should have **consistent screen time limits**.

Using parental controls to manage device use and stay safe online

- **Parental controls** refer to a group of settings that put you **in control of what your child can see and do on a device or online**.
- Such controls can allow you to **supervise and monitor your child's online activities and protect them** from inappropriate content, online sexual grooming, cyberbullying and other online risks.
- Parental control settings can be used to **monitor and limit screen time** as agreed with the child.

Scan QR code to download the Ministry of Health's Guidance on Screen Use in Children for more information.



How can parents better communicate with their child on digital habits and matters?

Providing a safe space for conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can be challenging to grapple with uncomfortable feelings and negative thoughts.• Children may hesitate to share their true thoughts and feelings with their parents, as they may fear being judged or misunderstood.• You can let your child know that it is normal to feel or think the way they do, and that they can feel safe expressing themselves with you.
Role modelling respectful conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When your child learns to engage in respectful conversations, they become a better communicator and friend.• Parents are in the best position to role model these skills through daily interactions with your child.• Listen to understand, instead of listening in order to give advice and offer solutions.
Have regular and open conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have regular conversations to better understand what your child does online.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is it school work or are they engaging in recreational activities?• For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State observation: “I noticed you have been spending a lot of time on your device.”• Ask open-ended questions: “What do you usually do on your device?”• Communicate your actions and rationale. Let your child know you care for them and want them to be safe online.

At what age should I give my child their first smartphone?

- Consider these questions:
 - **Does your child need a smartphone?**
 - Does your child need a smartphone to remain contactable?
 - **Is your child ready for a smartphone?**
 - Does your child always misplace their things?
 - Does your child obey certain rules set in place?
 - Will your child talk to you about issues which they might encounter while using a smartphone such as unpleasant messages or inappropriate content?
 - **Am I/Can I be a good role model for smartphone use to my child?**

[Credit: Adapted from IMDA's Digital Parenting Resource]

How do I prepare my child for their first smartphone?

- If you think your child is ready for their first smartphone, talk to them about **boundaries and responsibility** before providing them with one.

Scan QR code to download the Ministry of Health's Guidance on Screen Use in Children for more information.



Tip	Conversation
Encourage your child to think about the responsibility of owning a smartphone.	<i>“Can you tell me what are the rules you have to keep when you own a smartphone?”</i> <i>“Can you share with me why it is important for you to be responsible for your smartphone?”</i>
Ask your child to think about safe and responsible usage of the smartphone.	<i>“How do you show me that you will use your smartphone responsibly, respectfully, and safely?”</i>
Invite your child to articulate a set of rules and expectations for the family in writing.	<i>“What are some suggestions on when and where devices should not be used?”</i> <i>“What should we do if we break our agreement?”</i>



How do I prepare my child for their first smartphone/watch?



- Do remember to set **parental controls** on any smartphone/watch you provide to your child!
- Companies like Apple and Google have **parental controls and online safety features** that allow you to monitor what your child can access and set screen time limits.
- You may read more about giving your child their first smartphone from this Smartphone Parent Guide by Media Literacy Council.



For more information on
Apple's Screen Time,
scan here.



For more information on
Google Family Link,
scan here.



For more information, you can scan
here for Smartphone Parent Guide
by MLC.



What do I need to know about online games?

- Online games are everywhere, and complex games can be played on the go via smartphones.
- While gaming is fun and can bring about positive impact on children, it can create some negative impacts as well.
- For more content to support your parenting in the digital age and more, please scan the QR code at the top right-hand corner to access the Parenting for Wellness Toolbox for Parents.

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00 6213 123

Entering Your Child's Gaming World

Online games, when played appropriately, can be opportunities for your child to practise and develop skills such as teamwork, concentration, communication and problem-solving skills.

Playing games also allows your child to receive a mix of intrinsic rewards (e.g. feeling good about their abilities and effort) and extrinsic rewards (e.g. receiving game currency or points) when they succeed. However, excessive online gaming has pitfalls that you should be aware of.

If you're worried about how much time your child spends gaming, talk to them about it. Work together to develop a plan to balance gaming with other screen-free activities. Check in regularly with your child to review the plan.

Excessive online gaming may increase the risk of:

- 1 Cyberbullying
- 2 Attracting unwanted attention online
- 3 Excessive in-app purchases
- 4 Increased levels of anxiety due to the competitive nature of the game

Things You Can Say

Use these conversation starters to find out more about the games that your child plays, as well as to ask them to reflect on their gaming habits.

- 1 Ask about a game that your child seems to be playing frequently.
What's this game about?
- 2 Involve your child in setting rules and expectations for when they can play games, for how long, and the consequence of not following the agreed-upon rules.
Let's discuss what would happen if anyone breaks the rules.
- 3 Prompt your child to think about the benefits and risks of gaming.
Do you chat with strangers you've just met while playing online games?

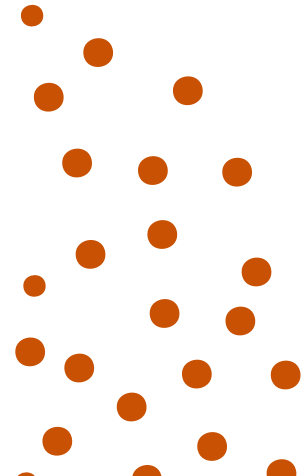

By understanding how games are designed to encourage your child to keep playing, and the potential pitfalls, you can approach conversations about games more empathetically. This will help you build a positive and healthy relationship with your child.

If their gaming habits continue to be a cause for concern, you may wish to seek help from their school or from community partners such as **Help123 by TOUCH Community Services, Singapore's One-Stop Cyber Wellness Hotline at 1800 6123 123.**





What are some ways to reduce the risk of negative impact of online games?

- To reduce the risk of negative impact of online games such as online harms and inappropriate content, parents can take note of the following:
 - Does the game require your child to play with others online?
 - Not all games require an online connection.
 - **Games that require players to play with others online** will have **some risks** such as cyber bullying or attracting unwanted attention from strangers.
 - Is the game age-appropriate?
 - Video game ratings can be found on the IMDA website.
 - Age ratings on games can be found on Google and Apple app stores.
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What can I do if I am concerned about the gaming habits of my child?

- **Discuss your concerns with your child and develop a realistic timetable** to balance their gaming with other screen-free activities. Scan the QR code for conversation tips.
- Review the plan regularly with your child.
- If there is no improvement and their gaming behaviour continues to be a cause of concern, you may want to seek help from the school or other community partners such as Help123 at 1800 6123 123.
- If there is marked deterioration and significant impairment to the child's life, you should consider seeking professional help. The professionals could assess the severity of the problem and recommend appropriate interventions.
 - You may call National Addiction Management Service All Addictions helpline at 6-RECOVER (67326837).



Conversation tips on gaming concerns



At what age should I allow my child to have their own social media account?

- Most social media platforms **require users to be aged 13 years and above**.
- While social media platforms allow people to connect with others, **constant exposure to social media content** can make us feel **anxious or overwhelmed**. It is important for **social media users to be mature enough** to navigate such feelings when using these platforms.
- Maturity can be assessed by observing your child's ability to
 - make responsible decisions to keep themselves safe online.
 - manage the pressures and feelings that come with social media use
 - control impulses.
- Therefore, **have open conversations** with them on the risks of social media, and why they cannot access social media as they are not of age.
- For more content to support your parenting in the digital age and more, please scan the QR code at the top right-hand corner to access the **Parenting for Wellness** Toolbox for Parents.

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Navigating the Digital Age

Social Media: Is Your Child Ready for It?

While social media platforms allow people to connect with others, constant exposure to social media content can make us feel anxious or overwhelmed. It is important for social media users to be mature enough to navigate such feelings when using these platforms. Most social media platforms require users to be aged 13 years and above. **However, is age the only consideration in determining if your child is ready?**

The maturity of your child is also an important consideration to determine their readiness for social media.

Maturity can be assessed by observing the following:

- Their ability to make responsible decisions to keep themselves safe online.
- Their ability to manage the pressures and feelings that come with social media use.
- Their ability to control impulses.

Although your child may pick up skills to use social media quickly, they may not fully understand how to use complicated online safety tools and settings. They may also not understand how the platforms' safety features work.

Things You Can Do

Before allowing your child access to social media, have open conversations with them on the risks of social media and establish clear ground rules on how to keep themselves safe when using it. Here are some suggested topics:

- What are some potential dangers of oversharing personal information?
- What does healthy social media use look like?
- How do we keep ourselves safe on social media?
- What are some ground rules we can establish as a family?



Additional Resources:



Parenting for Wellness



For more bite-sized resources (practical tips and strategies) on building strong parent-child relationships, supporting your child's mental well-being and parenting in the digital age, scan the QR code above to download a copy of the **Parenting for Wellness Toolbox for Parents**.

Keep a lookout for the **Parenting for Wellness website** that will be rolled out in 2025 on Parent Hub (hosted by HPB) for personalised access to the full suite of parenting resources!

