

Managing Teen's Screen time

During School Holidays

* MWS is an MSF-appointed Social Service Agency conducting secular parenting programmes.

Parents, how are we feeling with the upcoming school holidays? Excited? Anxious? Are we stressing over how to manage our child? Increasingly, a common problem we face is **managing their screentime** during the holidays.



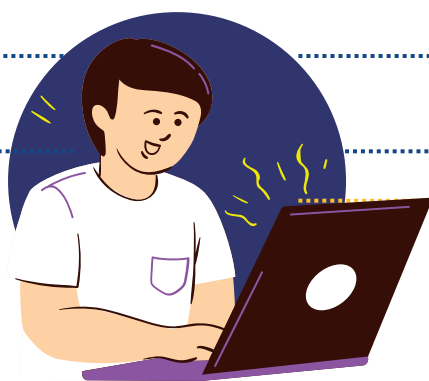
Potential Holiday Screen time Problems in Teens

Becoming **addicted** to digital devices and finding it hard to turn it off or enjoy other offline activities

Being exposed to **unsuitable online content** or **predators**

Insufficient physical activity, outdoor time and **reluctance** to participate in family activities

Unhealthy eating habits, including snacking during screentime, irregular meal times and **being distracted by devices** during meal times



Sleeping well beyond their usual bedtime during normal school days and developing **physical problems** with vision (sore eyes, blurred vision) & posture (neck & spines issues)

Difficulties readjusting to normal school routine when school reopens

Increased emotional outbursts after long periods of use or when told to finish a screen activity

7 Tips to Prevent Holiday Screen time Problems:

Strategies used is dependent upon your teen's normal screentime habit during school time.

If he/she has not learned to follow a fairly healthy screentime routine during normal school days:

01. Reflect on importance of your parenting role to **set limits** on your teen. Read this article for tips: tinyurl.com/settinglimitswithmyteen



02. Set aside a time (consider doing this over a meal outside just with your teen) to have a **conversation** with your teen on his/her screentime habit. You would need to have your teen **reflect** on his/her current lack of healthy screentime routine & consequences of that. **Explain your role** as a parent to **set healthy limits** for him at home. Perhaps you could acknowledge & apologise for not having done it previously. Reclaim your authority as a parent to set healthy screentime limits at home.



Continue with other strategies as below:

If he/she has learned to follow a fairly healthy screentime routine during normal school days:

03. Create a **Screentime Management Plan** before the holidays begin. Have a conversation with them on how they would like to occupy their free time during school holidays. **Remind** them of **current rules** that have been helping them to be disciplined with their screentime. Encourage them to list out how they would like to occupy their time during the school holidays by listing out activities which include **outdoor and offline activities** like reading or even skills they like to pick up. Remind them to include some activities that **involve the rest of family** too. This is a resource for list of activities for children during school holidays: tinyurl.com/littledayout



04. Discuss your role as a parent; to monitor them & ensure they stick to the holiday plan. Consider doing this in the form of a **Written Contract**, can access samples here: tinyurl.com/writtencontract. **Negotiate a reward** if they stick to the holiday plan.



05. **Get to know what your teen is doing online.** This is not only educational for you; it also communicates that we value them and what they're doing, and can prevent an "us v. them" situation from developing. Possible Resource from common sense media: www.common sense media.org



06. Encourage your teen to **invite their friends** over to your home to get to know them.



07. **Establish tech-free times** such as during meal times. It's important that parents **role-model** this. Parents can also role-model not assessing & responding to text when having a conversation with their child.



Still need more support for parenting?

Scan the QR code for **fully subsidised one-on-one coaching** sessions with accredited Family Life Educators to learn more.

Alternatively, you may use the following url: tinyurl.com/MWSTriplePFormNorth
For more enquiries, please email: mwsfspnorth@mws.sg

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