

MTS Home Digital Well-Being Guidelines



At MTS, Collective Wellness and Belonging is one of our Four Habits of Excellence. To that end, we are committed to supporting students and families in developing a productive, intentional, and healthy relationship with technology both on and off campus. The following Home Digital Well-being Guidelines are school recommendations regarding the access to and use of technology off campus. While not school-enforced, we hope these guidelines support students and families in successfully developing and implementing healthy digital practices at home. Please use these guidelines and resources to determine the practices and policies that best suit your family.

	K-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
TECH DEVICES & PHONE STORAGE (all screens)	Device stored in family charging space by 7 pm		Device stored in family charging space by 8 pm	Device stored in family charging space by 9 pm
TEXTING: 1:1 AND GROUP & GROUP GAMING (from family or personal device)	Strongly Discouraged		No messaging/group gaming after 8 pm	No messaging/group gaming after 9 pm
SOCIAL MEDIA APPS & TECH PLATFORMS (Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, YouTube)	We strongly encourage families to not allow social media accounts through middle school.			
STUDENT'S PERSONAL SMART PHONE ACCESS	Strongly Discouraged iPad, Family Phone, and smartwatch as options for communication as needed.			MTS recommends waiting until the second semester of 8th grade to get a smartphone.
PHONE USE	<p>When students have phones or other texting/communicating devices, we advise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adult collects phones or other screens during playdates, parties and social gatherings, particularly sleepovers. Phones are stored in the glove box during carpools. 			



BEST PRACTICES

We encourage families to review and follow these best practices to support the development of a productive, intentional, and healthy relationship with technology.

- Develop a family technology contract that includes rules for going online, including how long they can be using all devices, what sites they can visit, and who they can communicate with while using all devices. The above MTS guidelines are a starting point. Sample contracts are provided in the resources.
- Review the [MTS Acceptable Use Policy](https://mttam.org/digitalwellbeing) (mttam.org/digitalwellbeing) with your child before signing it.
- Regularly discuss technology use, seeking to understand the positives of technology, not just the negatives. Make time for your child to show you what they are interested in when using technology (games, apps, music, etc.)
- Research and set privacy controls on all devices, apps, and browsers. Guides are provided in the resources.
- Carve out tech-free time for your family.
- Model a healthy relationship with technology in your own use, be mindful to make eye contact and not text, check email or social media, or make a call when conversing with your child.
- Provide an alarm clock so phones or other devices are not kept in the bedroom.
- Know your child's usernames and passwords and let them know that you will occasionally check their accounts to ensure they stay safe and behave appropriately.

Three things to keep in mind when it comes to technology contracts and other elements of digital well-being:

1. Technology is dynamic, so rules need to be dynamic too. Keep the conversation going and adapt your family guidelines over time.

2. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Start the year with a plan and set of rules, not the perfect plan. Your plan will evolve over time.

3. Expect pushback. Children like technology! Expect pushback and arguments on limits. Consistent, firm boundaries and productive arguments are healthy for childhood development.

RESOURCES

There are countless resources online and in print. These selected resources are meant to be a starting point. Again, don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

Family Technology Contracts

[Common Sense Media's Family Tech Planner](https://commonsensemedia.org/family-tech-planners) | commonsensemedia.org/family-tech-planners
[Screenagers Family Contract](https://screenagersmovie.com/resources/family-contract) and [Sample](#) | screenagersmovie.com/resources/family-contract
[MTS Example Tech Contract](https://mttam.org/digitalwellbeing) | mttam.org/digitalwellbeing

Parental Controls

[Wait Until 8th Summary of Parental Controls](https://waituntil8th.org/parental-controls) | waituntil8th.org/parental-controls
[Screenagers Parenting Apps](https://screenagersmovie.com/resources/parenting-apps) | screenagersmovie.com/resources/parenting-apps

Others

[Smartphone Alternatives](https://waituntil8th.org/devices) | waituntil8th.org/devices

Review our online document with links and growing resource list at mttam.org/digitalwellbeing

