ISB Recommendations for Digital Wellbeing at Home

International School Basel - November 2025

Introductions

Bradley Roberts

Director

Scott Hall

Head of Digital Learning

Setting the Stage

Share & Listen

Using shared language. We want to discuss, share, and listen to how devices are used at home.

Partner

This continues our 7-year partnership with the ISB parent community on technology use.

Research

Our recommendations are guided by experts, current research, and our shared school experience.

The Context for Our Conversation

ISB
International School Basel

A Complex Issue

Ubiquitous Internet Access, Social Media, Gaming, Smart Phones, Artificial Intelligence, Well Being, Family Values

A Balanced View

Not all digital is bad

Not all bad is digital

The Core Imbalance

ISB
International School Basel

"Overprotection in the real world and underprotection in the digital world."

Jonathan Haidt

ISB
International School Basel

Digital Agency

- ➔ deliberate choices
- ➔ navigate a connected world
- ➔ based on research & experience
- ➔ empowers families
- ➔ not one-size-fits-all
- ➔ digital thriving

Parents' role = Coach not Referee

Digital Learning @ ISBasel

ISB
International School Basel

Why Devices are in School

Access

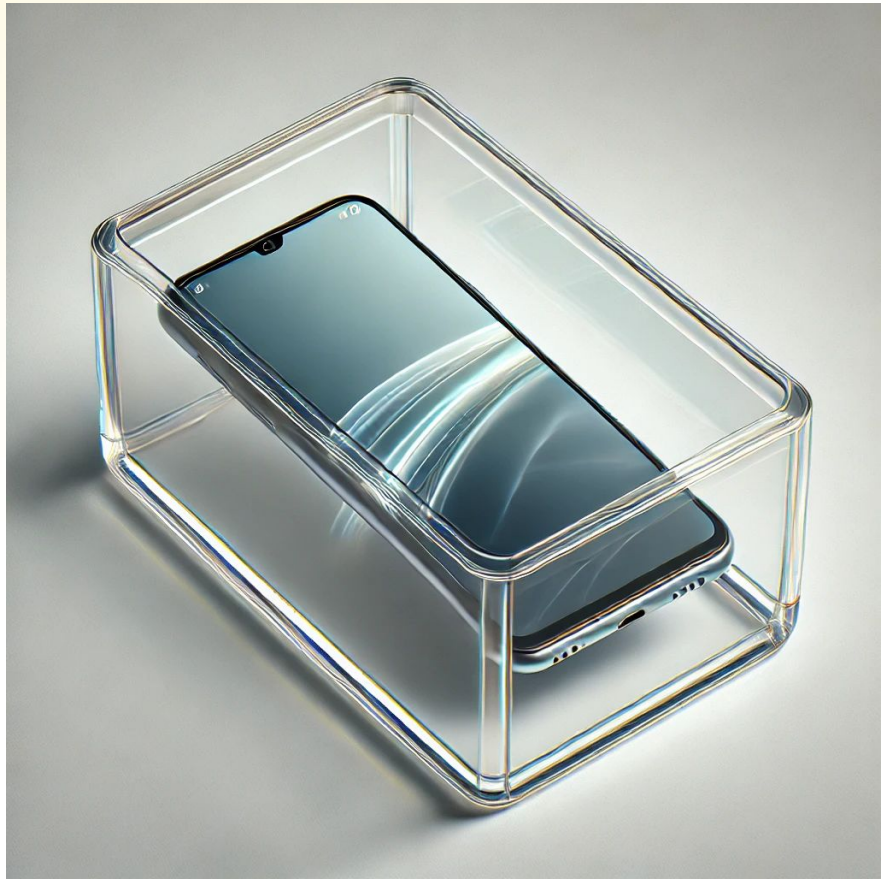
Efficiency

Differentiation

Why Devices are in School

- ➔ add value to the learning
- ➔ global scope, local context
- ➔ device & digital routines
- ➔ support teachers in making pedagogical decisions

Guidelines



- ➔ Responsible Use Policy
- ➔ AI guidelines & Academic Honesty
- ➔ clear, explicit phone policy, specific to each campus
- ➔ SEE Learning

ISB Recommends

ISB International School Basel

ISB Recommendations for Digital Wellbeing at Home

Guidelines to help families develop their own rules for responsible use of technology at home

At ISB, we guide students' use of digital devices during the school day for specific learning purposes. To support families in their decisions for technology use at home, we offer practical, research-informed recommendations to help them shape technology use at home positively, safely, and with balance.

🌙 Prioritise Sleep and Device-Free Zones

- **Establish a no-devices-in-bedrooms policy as your primary technology rule.** If you can only enforce one device guideline, *CHOOSE THIS ONE!*
- Charge all family devices overnight at a central charging space, such as the kitchen.
- Encourage **30 minutes of screen-free time** before bedtime.

Remember: Adequate sleep is needed to ensure attention, emotional regulation, and academic success.

👪 Be a Positive Role Model for Digital Habits

- Model **responsible, mindful use of technology to your children -** your example shapes your children's behaviour.
- Demonstrate that **family time takes priority:**
  - Avoid phone interruptions during family time;
  - Silence notifications or move distracting apps off your home screen.
- Explain your phone use purpose to children (e.g., "looking up directions") to provide context
- Focus on developing responsible digital use through **guidance rather than restrictions**

Remember: Every family's approach to technology will be unique to their values and needs.

📱 Ensure Phones and Social Media Readiness

- Assess your child's **individual maturity and responsibility**, rather than age.
  - Does your child inform you where they are and what they're doing?
  - Do they follow household rules responsibly?
  - Can they care for their belongings independently?
- When introducing devices, **prioritise limited-capability options for children under 10** (basic or "dumb" phones, GPS watches, or tablets without data)
- Follow **minimum age requirements**: 13+ for most social media; Many apps (eg.Whatsapp & Tiktok) recommend parent or guardian reviewing terms of service for users under 18.

Remember: Every child develops at their own pace. Focus on maturity rather than age.

🏡 Establish Family Technology Agreements

- **Involve children** in shaping the rule; they're more likely to follow what they help create.
- Designate **screen-free zones**, such as dining tables and bedrooms.
- Create a **Family Technology Agreement** to cover device use for homework, gaming, entertainment and communications, emphasizing responsibility, safety, and digital citizenship (see templates)
- Frame the agreement as a collaborative effort, rather than a list of restrictions.

Remember: Setting shared expectations helps everyone feel involved and engaged.

🤖 Address Artificial Intelligence Safely

- Talk about AI with your child, focusing on your own experience; discuss what it can do, where it might go wrong, and how to use it ethically and responsibly for learning purposes.
- Remind your child that AI can sound confident even when it's wrong. Encourage them to double-check facts and use their own judgment.
- Help your child understand that anything shared with AI might be stored or reused. Remind them not to share private or identifying details.

Remember: Explore AI together! Use it as a tool for creativity and learning, while talking about fairness, honesty, and respect for others.

Prioritise Sleep and Device-Free Zones

🌙 Prioritise Sleep and Device-Free Zones

- ➢ **Establish a no-devices-in-bedrooms policy as your primary technology rule.** If you can only enforce one device guideline, *CHOOSE THIS ONE!*
- ➢ Charge all family devices overnight at a central charging space, such as the kitchen.
- ➢ Encourage **30 minutes of screen-free time** before bedtime.

💭 **Remember:** Adequate sleep is needed to ensure attention, emotional regulation, and academic success.

Devices have invaded the bedroom

- kids need 9-12 hours of sleep
- 75% of teens get less than 7 hours. (CDC report)
- Blue light interrupts sleep rhythms, & device use itself is stimulating
- "Golden Hour" before bed no TV, games, or phones

Turn & Talk

What is the reality in your house?

Prioritise Sleep & Device-Free Zones

- ➔ Screen Time not the point
- ➔ Good & negative screen time
- ➔ Device Free time / Device free place
- ➔ Reality of situations with friends

ISB
International School Basel

Be a Positive Role Model

What Kind of Digital Parent Are You?

ISB
International School Basel

Restrictive

Setting screen time and content limits include contextual restrictions and safety-oriented rules.

Active

Hold active, ongoing discussions about media, devices, and their uses.

Modeling

State what you are doing on your device and why. How present are you?

Co-Use

Share device use. Play a game, watch a show, or search the internet together.

Interactive: The Presence Self-Test

1–5

Totally Distracted (1) to Fully Present (5)

For Yourself...

On that scale, how present were you during your last 30 minutes with your child?

(Hold up your fingers, just for yourself.)

What Kind of Digital Parent Are You?

ISB International School Basel

Restrictive

Setting screen time and content limits include contextual restrictions and safety-oriented rules.

Active

Hold active, ongoing discussions about media, devices, and their uses.

Modeling

State what you are doing on your device and why. How present are you?

Co-Use

Share device use. Play a game, watch a show, or search the internet together.

Foster Family Culture

- ➔ deliberate use of devices
- ➔ consider a household device
- ➔ What values do you want to promote?

👥 Be a Positive Role Model for Digital Habits

- Model **responsible, mindful use of technology to your children -** your example shapes your children's behaviour.
- Demonstrate that **family time takes priority:**
  - Avoid phone interruptions during family time;
  - Silence notifications or move distracting apps off your home screen.
- Explain your phone use purpose to children (e.g., "looking up directions") to provide context
- Focus on developing responsible digital use through **guidance rather than restrictions**

💭 **Remember:** Every family's approach to technology will be unique to their values and needs.

Ensure Phones & Social Media Readiness

Assess readiness based on maturity and responsibility, not just age.

- ➔ Do they inform you where they are?
- ➔ Do they follow household rules?
- ➔ Can they care for belongings?

- ➔ Consider no phone or a "Dumb Phone"

Turn & Talk

Which criteria was/will be most important in your decision to give your child a phone?

ISB
International School Basel

16 images

246.57

HMD Fusion X1

128 GB, Black, 6.56", eSIM, 5G

Faster delivery from **296.90**

Ratings
★★★★☆ 12

Brand
More from HMD

Test reports
1 test

A

Delivered between Tue, 25.11. and Thu, 27.11.
Only 2 pieces in stock at third-party supplier

Supplied by
technik-günstiger.de DE

Add to cart

Compare | Add to watch list

Free shipping

1 Bild

68.90

Nokia 110 4G (2024) Blau

1.80", 4G

Bewertungen
☆☆☆☆☆

Marke
Mehr von Nokia

Zwischen Sa, 22.11. und Mi, 26.11. geliefert
Mehr als 10 Stück an Lager beim Lieferanten

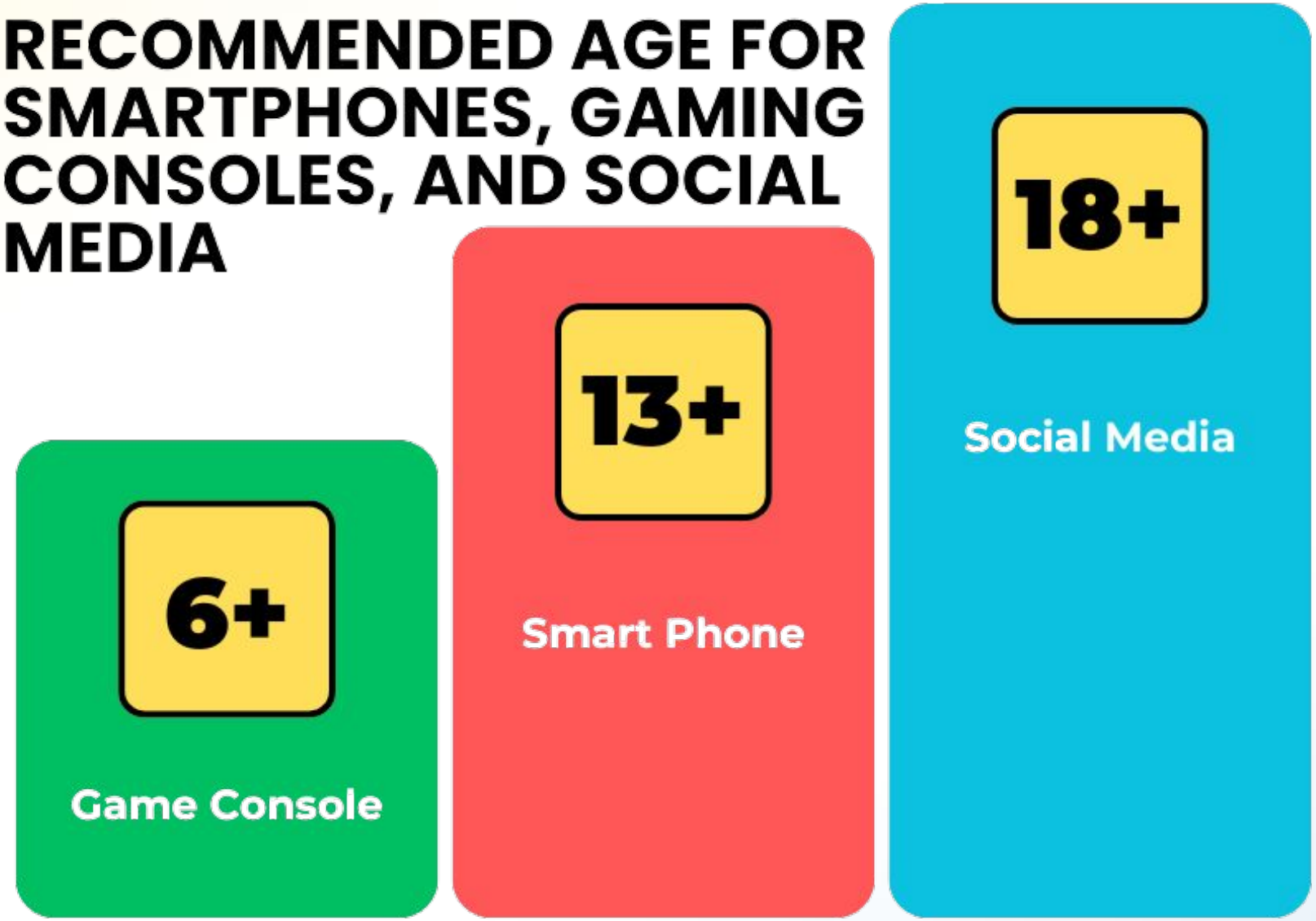
In den Warenkorb

Vergleichen | Merken

Kostenloser Versand

ISB
International School Basel

RECOMMENDED AGE FOR SMARTPHONES, GAMING CONSOLES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA



ANALYSIS OF MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR DIGITAL ACCESS: SMARTPHONES, GAMING CONSOLES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA (2022–2025)

Parents and policymakers often want age-based social media bans, but child development experts warn this overlooks individual development rates. Effective policies must balance protection with recognition that children mature differently.

6+

Game Console

The general consensus from experts and parenting guides suggests that the earliest appropriate age for a child to start using a dedicated game console like the Nintendo Switch or PlayStation is around 6 years old.

13+

Smart Phone

The minimum threshold for independent ownership, providing access to an unmediated digital environment, should be Age 13 or later, supported by data indicating severe mental health risks for those receiving devices earlier. Parental use and modeling are recognized as significant factors influencing child well-being.

18+

Social Media

While the default platform age is 13, policy across the US states and the EU is moving toward enforcing higher safeguards, often extending parental consent requirements and design protections through Age 18. Longitudinal studies strongly suggest that increased social media use in the 9-to-12 age range contributes to depressive symptoms.

Phone access & Social Media use

- ➔ nuanced approach
- ➔ Screen time vs. Social media
- ➔ ever connected - to what end?
- ➔ young people and branding
- ➔ social media and burnout
- ➔ be aware of age limits on apps, games

ISB
International School Basel

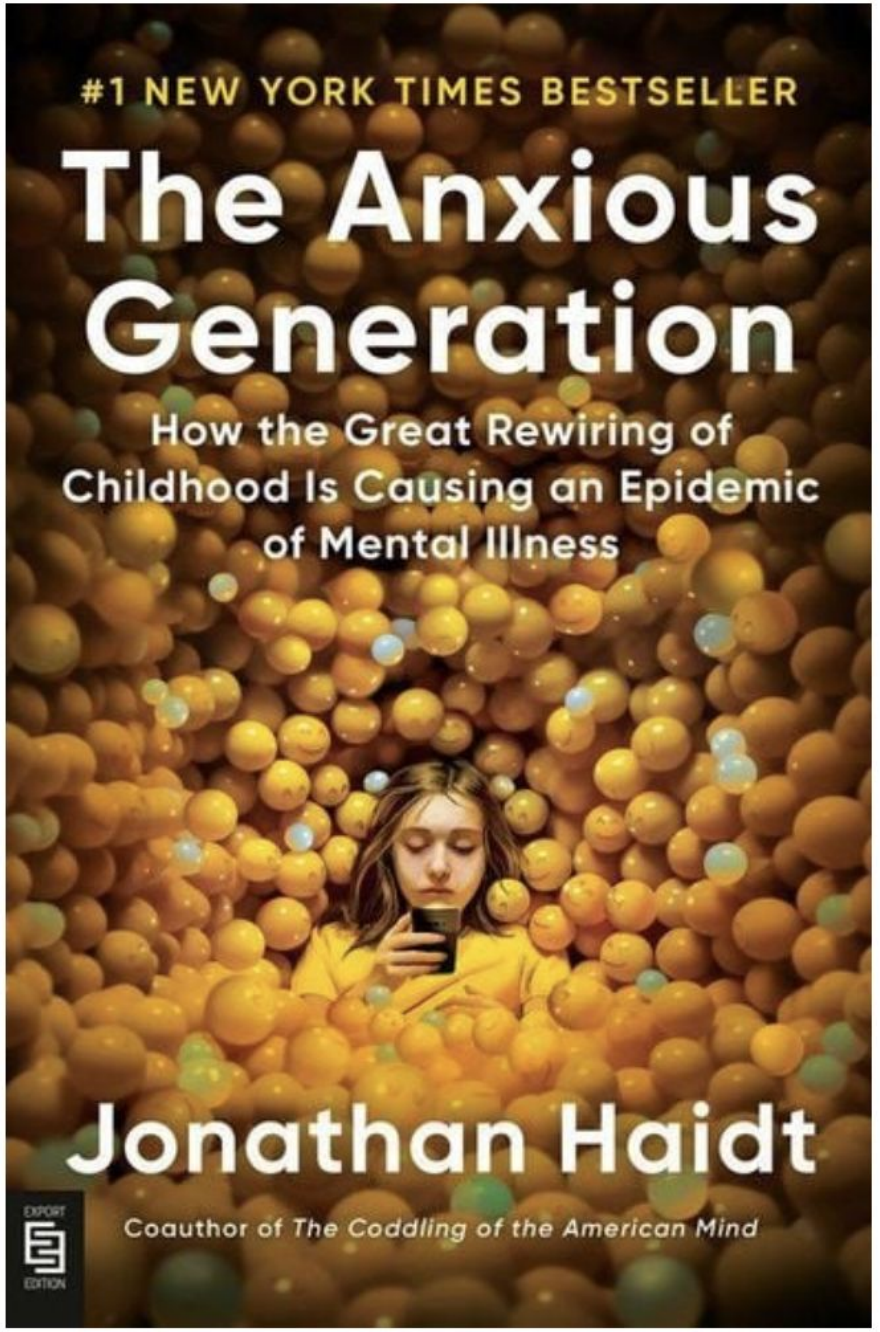
“To think about the pressure and the difficulty that they’re going through, the sort of stress and the strain of being always connected, of having to worry constantly about their online persona and what people are thinking about them, the inability to escape digital technology, it’s a lot harder than we adults appreciate.”

Jamie Bartlett Journalist and Author of ‘’The People v Tech’’

From "The Anxious Generation"

➔ Recent research-based recommendations (J. Haidt 2024):

- No smartphones before high school.
- No social media before 16.
- Phone-free schools.
- More independence, free play, and responsibility in the real world.



📱 Ensure Phones and Social Media Readiness

- ➢ Assess your child's **individual maturity and responsibility**, rather than age.
  - ○ Does your child inform you where they are and what they're doing?
  - ○ Do they follow household rules responsibly?
  - ○ Can they care for their belongings independently?
- ➢ When introducing devices, **prioritise limited-capability options for children under 10** (basic or "dumb" phones, GPS watches, or tablets without data)
- ➢ Follow **minimum age requirements**: 13+ for most social media; Many apps (eg.Whatsapp & Tiktok) recommend parent or guardian reviewing terms of service for users under 18.

💭 **Remember:** Every child develops at their own pace. Focus on maturity rather than age.

Establish Family Technology Agreements

🏡 Establish Family Technology Agreements

- ➢ **Involve children** in shaping the rule; they're more likely to follow what they help create.
- ➢ Designate **screen-free zones**, such as dining tables and bedrooms.
- ➢ Create a **Family Technology Agreement** to cover device use for homework, gaming, entertainment and communications, emphasizing responsibility, safety, and digital citizenship (see templates)
- ➢ Frame the agreement as a collaborative effort, rather than a list of restrictions.

💭 **Remember:** Setting shared expectations helps everyone feel involved and engaged.

Formal Technology Agreements @ Home

Turn & Talk

Do you have a family tech agreement (spoken or written)?
What does it include?
How often do you revise it?

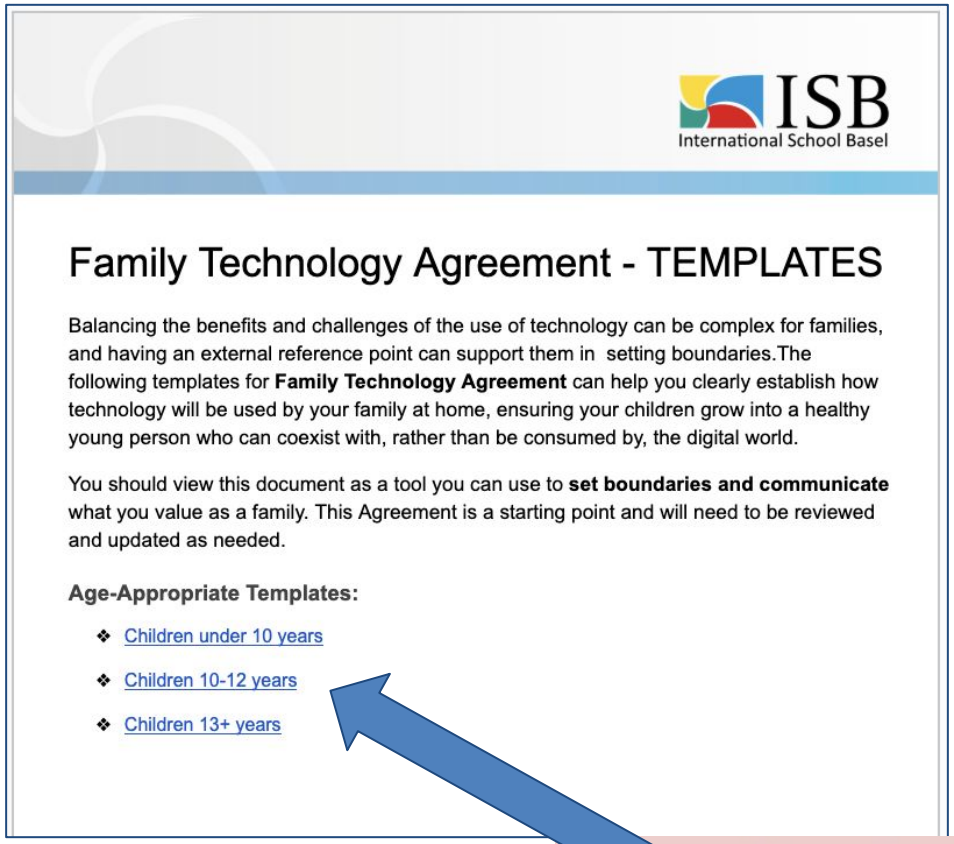
The "Why"

"The conversation around these issues <u>is</u> the thing."
Research shows that when applied collaboratively, agreements enhance digital resilience and awareness.

AAP 5 C's Framework

- ➔ Child - different for each
- ➔ Content - positive or negative
- ➔ Calm - way to decompress
- ➔ Crowding Out - time for other things
- ➔ Communication - open and often

Agreements > Technical Solutions



ISB
International School Basel

Family Technology Agreement - TEMPLATES

Balancing the benefits and challenges of the use of technology can be complex for families, and having an external reference point can support them in setting boundaries.The following templates for **Family Technology Agreement** can help you clearly establish how technology will be used by your family at home, ensuring your children grow into a healthy young person who can coexist with, rather than be consumed by, the digital world.

You should view this document as a tool you can use to **set boundaries and communicate** what you value as a family. This Agreement is a starting point and will need to be reviewed and updated as needed.

Age-Appropriate Templates:

- Children under 10 years
- Children 10-12 years
- Children 13+ years

- ➔ ISB as the "third point"
- ➔ Use of a household device

- ➔ Technical solutions not a "silver bullet."
- ➔ Technical solutions often don't align with values we want to reinforce.

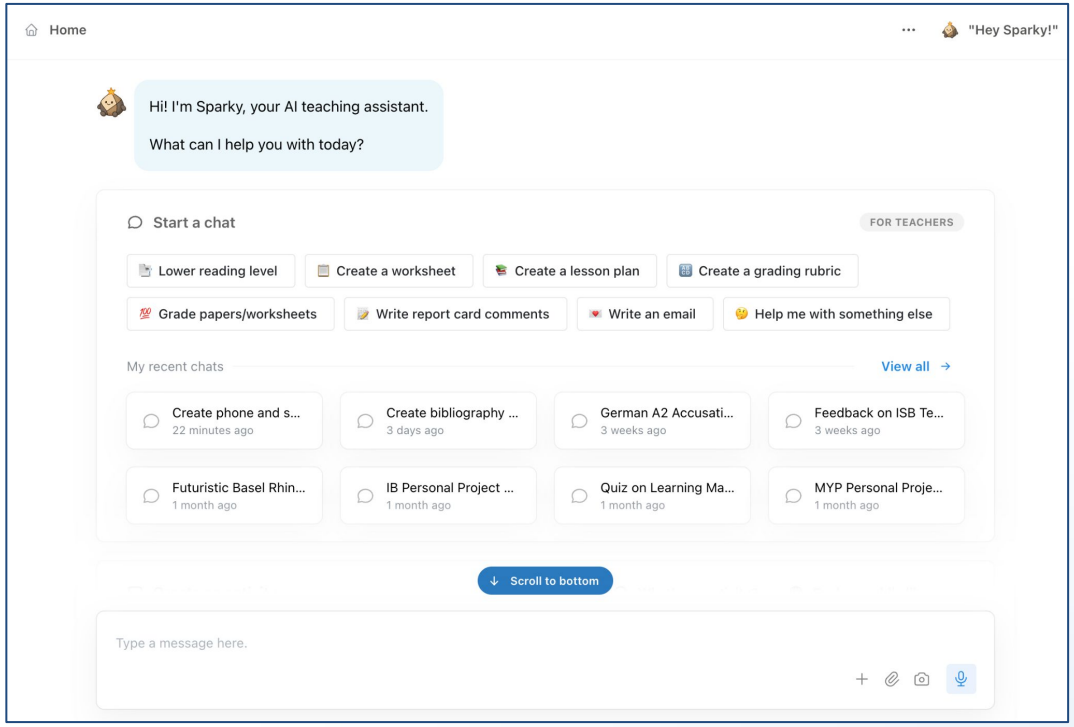
Create a **Family Technology Agreement** t
entertainment and communications, emphas
citizenship (see templates)

Address Artificial Intelligence Safely

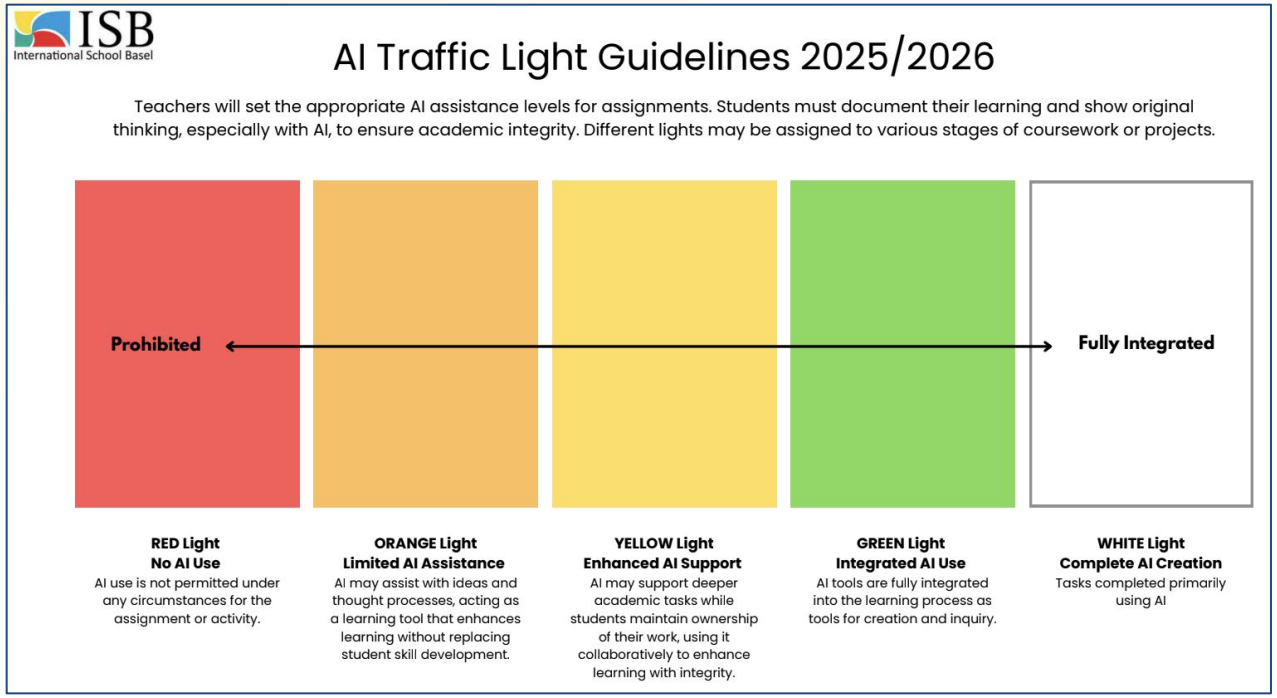
Lately I have been using... for...

AI: The New Reality

- AI in society
- Promise in education
  - powerful time-saver
  - powerful "homework machine"
- learning vs. making



AI @ ISB



- ISB has clear guidelines on AI & Academic Honesty
- Innovative practice
- Flint, Gemini & NotebookLM
- Canva, Google Search

Conversations to Have About AI

Truth & Hallucinations

AI can "hallucinate" and be biased. It is conversational, not transactional.

Privacy

Discuss the critical difference between private vs. personal information.

Trust

Can you believe everything you read, listen to, or watch? Can you trust the advice?

🤖 Address Artificial Intelligence Safely

- ➢ Talk about AI with your child, focusing on your own experience; discuss what it can do, where it might go wrong, and how to use it ethically and responsibly for learning purposes.
- ➢ Remind your child that AI can sound confident even when it's wrong. Encourage them to double-check facts and use their own judgment.
- ➢ Help your child understand that anything shared with AI might be stored or reused. Remind them not to share private or identifying details.

💭 **Remember:** Explore AI together! Use it as a tool for creativity and learning, while talking about fairness, honesty, and respect for others.

Scan Me

bit.ly/ISBrecommends

ISB
International School Basel

ISB Recommendations for Digital Wellbeing at Home

Guidelines to help families develop their own rules for responsible use of technology at home

At ISB, we guide students' use of digital devices during the school day for specific learning purposes. To support families in their decisions for technology use at home, we offer practical, research-informed recommendations to help them shape technology use at home positively, safely, and with balance.

🌙 Prioritise Sleep and Device-Free Zones

- **Establish a no-devices-in-bedrooms policy as your primary technology rule.** If you can only enforce one device guideline, *CHOOSE THIS ONE!*
- Charge all family devices overnight at a central charging space, such as the kitchen.
- Encourage **30 minutes of screen-free time** before bedtime.

Remember: Adequate sleep is needed to ensure attention, emotional regulation, and academic success.

Be a Positive Role Model for Digital Habits

- Model **responsible, mindful use of technology to your children -** your example shapes your children's behaviour.
- Demonstrate that **family time takes priority:**
  - Avoid phone interruptions during family time;
  - Silence notifications or move distracting apps off your home screen.
- Explain your phone use purpose to children (e.g., "looking up directions") to provide context
- Focus on developing responsible digital use through **guidance rather than restrictions**

Remember: Every family's approach to technology will be unique to their values and needs.

Questions?

Thank You

Further Reading – Bibliography by Section