

Wiss Well-being

Digital Wellness Edition: May 2026



Growing Healthy Minds in a Digital World

Dear Wissahickon Community,

We are pleased to share this special issue of ***Wiss Well-Being: Digital Wellness Edition***, which highlights how technology is thoughtfully and intentionally used to support learning in our schools.

At Wissahickon School District, we believe technology plays an important role in modern learning. We also believe meaningful education includes experiences such as hands-on exploration, physical movement, and face-to-face conversation throughout the school day. Together, these elements create learning environments that support students' academic growth, well-being, and connection to others.



We are proud of our teachers for their purposeful and balanced use of technology, ensuring digital tools enhance hands-on learning experiences. We are equally proud of our students for following district expectations for appropriate technology use and for making healthy choices during free time, such as socializing with friends, playing games, or enjoying a good book.

We are also grateful for our families' partnership in supporting balanced technology use at home. By working together, we can help students build healthy, responsible relationships with technology while staying grounded in connection, curiosity, and learning.

This issue shares our district practices, resources, and upcoming opportunities for family engagement related to digital wellness.

Sincerely,

Family Engagement

Recognizing that families play an essential role in supporting healthy and balanced technology use habits at home and at school, we have actively engaged with our community to share resources and listen to families' perspectives and experiences.

Upcoming Family Learning Opportunity

- FREE: Keep Your Kids Safe Online – Parent Workshop
- Thursday, May 14, 2026 | 6:30–8:00 p.m.
- Lower Gwynedd Elementary School

This event, sponsored by the Lower Gwynedd Elementary Home and School Association, is open to parents and caregivers of all Wissahickon elementary school students. Co-presented by child abuse prevention educators from Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center and detectives from the Lower Gwynedd Police Department, this session will help caregivers better understand the digital world children are navigating today and provide practical strategies to support online safety and healthy decision-making. [Read more event information.](#)



**KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE ONLINE
PARENT WORKSHOP**

MissionKids
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Hosted by the Lower Gwynedd Elementary HSA

This interactive presentation helps caregivers better understand the digital world their children are navigating today. Co-presented by child abuse prevention educators from Mission Kids Child Advocacy Center and detectives from the Lower Gwynedd Police Department, this session combines prevention education with real-life investigative insight.

Caregivers will learn about current online risks including grooming, cyberbullying, and the impact of social media on children's mental health and decision-making. Through real-life examples and scenarios, participants will gain practical strategies to monitor online activity, recognize red flags, and respond effectively if concerns arise.

The session is designed to be engaging and conversational, giving caregivers the opportunity to ask questions, share experiences, and build confidence in having open, ongoing conversations with their children about online safety. Attendees will leave with tools to better protect and support their children in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

Free Admission!

Date: Thursday, May 14th, 2026
Time: 6:30-8:00 PM
Venue: Lower Gwynedd Elementary

Open to parents and caregivers of all Wissahickon elementary school students.
Questions? Email: LGEHSAVP@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATES:

- **Summer 2026 Community Book Study:** This summer's book study will connect to digital wellness (details coming soon). Last summer's community book study focused on *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt.
- **Fall 2026 Digital Wellness Family Engagement Night:** At an upcoming Digital Wellness Family Night, families will learn more about how technology is used in our classrooms and have opportunities to ask questions and share feedback.

Other previous engagement opportunities included school-based and district-wide digital literacy events, such as *Parenting in a Digital Age* for families and students.

New: Digital Wellness Webpage

This April, we launched our new **Digital Wellness webpage** to raise awareness of our shared practices and to support families in navigating technology use. Grounded in research and guided by our commitment to the whole child, our approach to digital wellness is simple: using the right tool, for the right purpose, at the right time.



This Digital Wellness hub highlights how we intentionally balance technology with meaningful offline learning so students can grow intellectually, physically, socially, and in character. We invite you to visit the webpage to learn more: [Digital Wellness webpage.](#)

No Technology During Free Time: Engaged and Joyfully Unplugged

During indoor recess in our elementary schools, district-issued laptops remain powered off. This time is intentionally set aside for creative, collaborative, play-based activities. Students are encouraged to use their imagination through drawing, building, and dramatic play, to connect with peers through board games, reading, and small-group activities, to practice teamwork and problem solving, and to enjoy safe, classroom-friendly movement.



This winter's frequent snow days led to many indoor recesses, and students responded with enthusiasm, playing games, reading books, and interacting joyfully with one another. Indoor recess is more than a break; it's a meaningful opportunity to build friendships, confidence, and a strong sense of community.

Cell Phone Use: Protecting Attention, Well-being, and Healthy Habits

Elementary (K-5): In our elementary schools, cell phones/electronic devices may not be used at school during the school day, including bus transportation. They must be turned off and kept in backpacks during the school day and on bus transportation.

Middle School (Grades 6-8): At WMS, all cell phones or other personal electronic devices must be deactivated and stored in students' lockers during the regular school day. Storing phones in backpacks or lockers during the school day helps strengthen students' ability to focus, collaborate, and engage with other students.



High School (Grades 9-12): In every classroom, students place phones in a "cell phone hotel" during instructional time. This approach keeps classrooms focused and free from distractions so learning can happen without interruptions.

Read more on our Digital Wellness webpage, under the section [Teaching and Learning: Preparing Students for a Healthy, Connected Future - Teaching Healthy Cell Phone Habits.](#)

You will also find informative resources for your family under the section [Family Resources: Digital Safety, Screen Time, and](#)

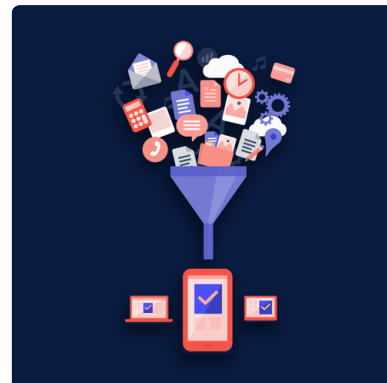
[Healthy Technology Use.](#)

Two resources that may be of particular interest to families include [Boston's Children's Digital Wellness Lab](#) and their [Research Brief: Young People, Content Effects, and Current Content Moderation Practices](#).

New Internet Filter - Coming this August

Starting this fall, the district will implement an improved internet filtering system with multiple layers of protection to block harmful content, reduce exposure to online risks, and support secure learning environments. Key benefits include:

- Safer viewing: Removal of YouTube sidebar ads, recommended videos, and Shorts, along with stronger blocking of gaming websites.
- Improved oversight: Clearer, faster reporting that allows building administrators to easily review student internet usage.



Read more under the webpage section [Our Laptop Program: Balanced Access, Safe Use, and Healthy Development - Internet Safety: Filtering, Safeguards, and Digital Wellbeing](#).

Teaching & Learning: Preparing Students for a Healthy, Connected Future

The district's vision for teaching and learning is to ensure students are prepared to think critically, collaborate effectively, communicate responsibly, and care for their physical, emotional, and digital wellbeing.

Our teachers plan intentionally by first focusing on what students need to learn and how they learn best at each stage of development. From there, they determine whether traditional approaches, technology, or a balance of both will most effectively support that learning. As a result, students often spend much of their day actively engaged, collaborating with peers, and learning in ways that do not involve screens. School-managed devices are most often used for short, purposeful tasks that promote active learning, like recording ideas, creating media, or responding to prompts that spark curiosity and connection.



Our Instructional Stance: The 4Cs

Many approaches to digital wellness and effective instructional practices are anchored in the 4Cs: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, and Collaboration, within a whole child framework that integrates academics, wellbeing, and citizenship.

Read more on our Digital Wellness webpage under the section [Our Instructional Stance: Balanced, Purposeful, Human-centered](#).

Digital Literacy, Healthy Technology Habits, and Online Safety

Digital literacy, healthy technology habits, and online safety are embedded throughout the K–12 curriculum, including instruction on privacy, digital footprints, cyberbullying prevention, media balance, and responsible online behavior, with skills reinforced across classes, counseling, and wellness programs.

The April 13 Health, Wellness and Safety Committee meeting included an overview of how digital wellness is embedded in the Health and Physical Education curriculum. Across elementary, middle, and high school, students learn to engage with digital media safely and responsibly by recognizing healthy and unhealthy online behaviors, managing peer interactions and screen time, and understanding how social and digital media can influence mental health, self-esteem, body image, decision-making, and overall personal health and safety.

Read more on our Digital Wellness webpage under the section [Supporting Safe, Responsible, and Ethical Online Behavior](#)

Supporting Students in an AI World

As AI tools become more common in everyday life, we are taking a thoughtful, balanced approach to how they show up in teaching and learning. **Only district approved AI websites are used to support learning.** Students use AI intentionally and instructionally, with educator guidance and clearly defined educational purposes. Teachers receive ongoing professional learning focused on AI literacy and instructional use, including:

- Teaching students what AI is (and isn't) and how it differs from human thinking and creativity.
 - Modeling responsible and transparent AI use in the classroom.
 - Practicing verification skills, checking accuracy, recognizing bias, and questioning AI outputs.
 - Designing learning experiences that prioritize process and demonstrate thinking.
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Laptop Use in WSD Schools

Elementary Schools: At Wissahickon, our device usage at the elementary level does not include sending devices home with students each day. Our approach has always emphasized intentional, balanced use of technology as one of many tools that support student learning in the classroom.



2:1 Laptop Ratio in Kindergarten and First Grade: Beginning in the 2024–25 school year, the district transitioned from having Chromebook devices for every student in the kindergarten and first grade classroom to a ratio of 2-to-1. This decision was guided by current research on how kindergarten and first grade students learn best at their developmental stage, while still thoughtfully incorporating an opportunity to use digital tools as part of their school day. It also reflects our continued commitment to providing high-quality, hands-on learning experiences for our youngest students, with an emphasis on activities that do not involve screens.

Laptop Use by Grade Level:

- **Kindergarten–1st Grade:** Students learn with a 2:1 laptop ratio, ensuring exposure to computers without overwhelming early learners.
- **2nd–12th Grade:** We maintain a 1:1 laptop model, providing equitable access, improved engagement, and more personalized learning opportunities.
- **K–5 laptops remain in school.**
- **6–12 laptops go home daily.**

Reinforcement of Expectations:

Teachers actively monitor and reinforce appropriate student behavior when using school-issued technology throughout the school day. Each year, students complete an Acceptable Use Policy lesson and digitally acknowledge their understanding of expectations to promote responsible and respectful technology use. When students do not follow school rules or district policies, teachers address concerns and, when necessary, consequences are applied in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

**Wissahickon School District**

True Blue with a Heart of Gold