

# HOME TECHNOLOGY USE AT KING SCHOOL GRADES 9-12 PARENT EDITION

## OPPORTUNITIES

*Digital technologies unlock a whole new world of possibilities for teens to learn, create, connect, and play.*

Digital media empower students to . . .

- . . . **learn** deeply through rich multimedia, immersion in virtual environments, and the motivation that comes from educational play.
- . . . **connect** and stay connected with anyone across barriers of time and space.
- . . . **create** their own rich multimedia content and **publish** it for real world audiences.



## DILEMMAS

*Of course, technologies also present special challenges. These are just a few to consider when regulating home technology use.*

Sometimes, digital media . . .

- . . . **can expose children** to dangers like people intent on theft or abuse, to marketers, and to others—now or at any time over the permanent lifespan of digital information.
- . . . **can provoke antisocial behavior** by denying us vocal and physical cues to tell when we're being offensive.
- . . . **can pull us constantly away from the present**, into the "out there" rather than the "right here," which can distract us from the moment and the people around us, and can disturb us from reflecting inwardly.
- . . . **can be addictive**, leading unsupervised teens to serious social, academic, and health difficulties.



# GUIDELINES FOR GRADES 9-12 PARENTS

*Consider these guidelines for your teen's safe and healthy home technology use:*

- **Promote digital media for *creation* rather than just *consumption*.** Technology use does not have to be passive; it offers powerful opportunities for learning, connection, and creativity. Encourage your teen's healthy relationship with technology by attuning them to these constructive possibilities.
- **Limit screen use to specific times and certain zones.** Screens have been shown to disrupt teens' sleep, and the research is clear that teens already do not sleep enough. Establish the bedroom as a screen-free zone, and aim for no more than one to two hours of entertainment media daily. Limiting screens to zones of the home can ensure an adult is present to monitor screen time and media content.

... **And watch, surf, and game with your teen.** Talk with them about it. Ask them questions, and answer theirs. Establish yourself as a part of your teen's digital life, not apart from it.
- **Use parental controls on your home network.** King recommends the free tool from [opendns.com](http://opendns.com).
- **Review online services' privacy settings with your teen.** Protect your teen's personal information by reviewing privacy settings and choosing options that feel right to both of you. These settings need to be revisited periodically as they are updated. Learn more from the recommended sites below.
- **Collect your teen's passwords.** Position yourself to intervene if necessary. In one King family, each teen sealed all her passwords in an envelope which she gave to her parents. The seal signaled mutual trust that she would adhere to guidelines while they would only intervene in an emergency.

... **And be a friend and a follower** to your teen's accounts. Position yourself to supervise your teen's online behavior from accounts of your own.
- **Establish boundaries for appropriate online communication.** With whom is it appropriate for your teen to communicate online? On which platforms? (Note: many games have chat features). About what topics? How should your teen respond if someone tries to cross those boundaries?

... **And establish consequences for bullying behavior before it happens.** These conversations can combat psychological factors that can make online behavior feel less impactful, and they reinforce King's messaging that our virtues are the same offline or on.
- **Be a mindful host.** Hosting other teens should not necessarily be an excuse to disrupt household norms. In fact, supervising and delimiting technology use is especially recommended for groups of teens. Establish expectations from the beginning.
- **Model appropriate technology use.** Like anything, teens learn media use through observation. Monitor your own media habits, set aside times and places to disconnect, and do not text and drive.

*Learn more about digital media and teens from the following sources:*

## Books

- *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media* by Mizuko Ito
- *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* by John Palfrey and Urs Gasser
- *A Parent's Guide to Online Safety* by Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe

## Websites

- [CommonSenseMedia.org](http://CommonSenseMedia.org)
- [ESRB.org](http://ESRB.org)
- [ConnectSafely.org](http://ConnectSafely.org)
- [iKeepSafe.org](http://iKeepSafe.org)
- [OnGuardOnline.gov](http://OnGuardOnline.gov)
- [ParentFurther.com](http://ParentFurther.com)



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