Playing with Technology

There are benefits to using technology both for play and learning. Using technology can help with creativity, problem solving, visual thinking and can make learning fun. Using the right kind of technology/games/activities can support the development of your child's learning and skills, including fine motor skills, letter/number/shape/colour recognition, eye-hand co-ordination, reading, writing, planning, problem solving etc.

Screen Time

Technology should be used in moderation, with support and interaction from adults and with age appropriate activites. It is important that children take part in a balance of different play activities e.g. explorative play, active/energetic play, functional/manpulative/creative play, social play and pretend play.

Recommendations

- Be a good "technology" role model.

- Play together using technology.

- Screen-free time is important for the whole family.

- Have technology-free areas/times in your home, for example mealtimes, for at least an hour before bedtime, eating area/dining table and bedrooms.

- Teach your child to use good manners when they are online as well as when they are offline.

- Teach your child to be kind and think of others when they are online.
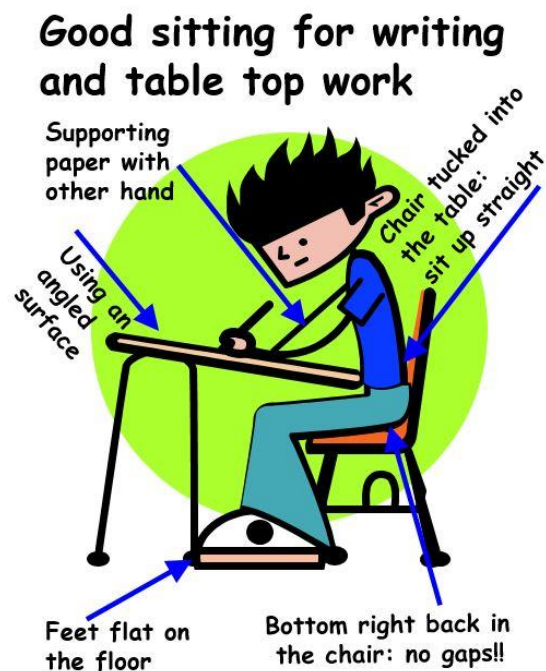
- Charge devices outwith bedrooms.

- Media can be effective in keeping kids calm, but it shouldn't be the only way they learn to calm down. Teach them about their feelings and help them to find other ways to calm themselves e.g. deep breathing, talking to someone they trust, having quiet time.

- Teach your child about how to use technology safely. Here are some resources for children, teenagers and adults to help with this:
    - **Think U Know** (www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)
    - **Internet Matters** (www.internetmatters.org)
    - **Safer Internet** (www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers)
    - **NSPCC** (www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety)
    - **Commonsensemedia** (www.commonsensemedia.org) can help you to decide if games, movies, apps and other online content are age appopriate.

- Make sure you know what your child is doing online.

- Be aware of who your child is connecting with online. Are these friends that you know?

- Use parental controls and passwords to limit your child's access.

- Try out any activities or apps before you let your child loose on them to ensure they are appropriate.

- Most games, movies, music and apps have recommended age limits.

- As your child grows and develops social media can support them as they explore and discover more about themselves and their place in the world. It is important that teenagers are aware that everything they post online is not private, regardless of their privacy settings. Help them to understand that there are consquences of posting on-line.

- Ask questions about the information and pictures that your child is posting.

- Encourage your child to think before they share and think about who might see what they are posting.

- Encourage other types of play and interaction:

    - Ensure your child has some playtime everyday when no technology can be used.
    - Play together during screen-free time. What about having a board game marathon, baking/making together or going to the park together?
    - Make sure you have face-to-face time with your child. Have a conversation during screen-free time.
    - Don't always resort to technology if your child is bored. Support them to take part in other types of play.

- Posture and position for technology use:

  o Looking down at a phone, tablet or games device regularly or for a long time can cause problems with your back, neck and shoulders.
  o Make sure that you take regular breaks and encourage your child to use different positions and propping their device up nearer eye level.
  o If you are using a laptop or PC then think about how you are sitting and following the good sitting rules.

Good sitting for writing and table top work

Supporting paper with other hand

Using an angled surface

Chair tucked into the table: sit up straight

Feet flat on the floor

Bottom right back in the chair: no gaps!!

We All Make Mistakes!

Your child is still learning to use technology appropriately. They will make mistakes. Try to handle these calmly and turn them into a learning experience. If you are ever worried about what your child is doing online then seek help from professionals. School staff may be able to help you with this or you can look for support on the websites mentioned above.