

TECHNOLOGY

for Students

Raising
Digitally Wise
Students



Why Technology Matters in Adolescence

Middle and high school students live in a world where technology shapes identity, relationships, learning, and belonging, and they need adults who can guide them toward wisdom, balance, and integrity.

This guide offers simple, age-appropriate practices to help **families** navigate digital life with confidence and connection... because YES, this includes you, too, parents! The best way to teach students digital literacy is to first model it.

HEALTHY TECH HABITS FOR STUDENTS

Middle School (6th–8th Grade)

- Keep devices **out of bedrooms** overnight.
- Begin teaching **digital responsibility**: privacy, passwords, and online permanence.
- Encourage **creative tech use** (coding, design, video editing).
- Talk openly about **peer pressure**, comparison, and online drama.
- Delay social media as long as possible; if used, start with **high supervision**.

High School (9th–12th Grade)

- Shift from control to **coaching**: help teens make wise choices.
- Discuss digital identity, online reputation, and long-term consequences.
- Encourage **healthy boundaries**: no phones during homework, meals, or late at night.
- Talk about **media literacy**: ads, algorithms, misinformation.
- Support them in practicing **self-regulation** and recognizing emotional cues ("Does this app make you feel stressed or connected?").

FAMILY TECH BOUNDARIES THAT WORK

- Create a **Family Tech Agreement** with shared expectations.
- Establish **device-free zones** (dinner table, car rides, church).
- Set **overnight charging stations** outside bedrooms.
- **Model** the digital habits you want your teen to learn.
- Keep conversations ongoing, not one-time lectures.

SAFETY & DIGITAL WELL-BEING

- Teach teens to protect personal information.
- Encourage them to tell a trusted adult if they see something harmful or confusing.
- Discuss online harassment, group chats, and how to exit unhealthy digital spaces.
- Use parental controls as **training wheels**, not permanent surveillance.
- Talk about the impact of screens on sleep, mood, and mental health.

SOCIAL MEDIA WISDOM

- Remind teens: **What you post shapes how others see you.**
- Encourage them to follow accounts that inspire growth.
- Talk about highlight reels, filters, and the difference between online life and real life.
- Help them practice **pausing before posting.**
- Encourage regular “digital detox” moments to reset.

RECOMMENDED SCREEN TIME

The goal is **not** perfection...But it's always good to have a goal.

- Aim for **2–3 hours/day** of purposeful, high-quality use. Quality content is the key. It even outranks the quantity of time spent online when it comes to negative impact.
- Prioritize schoolwork, sleep, relationships, and physical activity.
- Encourage teens to track their own screen time and reflect on patterns.

Additional Resources

Books

- Crouch, A. – *The Tech-Wise Family*
- Bogart, J. – *Raising Critical Thinkers*
- Boyd, D. – *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*