



Ravenscote Wellbeing Newsletter



March 2026

In today's world, screens are part of everyday life. From learning apps and homework platforms to gaming and connecting with friends, digital devices offer many opportunities for children. As parents and educators, it is important that we understand both the benefits and the risks of screen use- and how to help children build healthy digital habits.

The Positives of Screen Use

- Supports learning.
- Encourages connection with family and friends through video calls and shared activities.
- Develops digital skills.

Potential Drawbacks of Excessive Screen Use

- Sleep disruption due to blue light affecting melatonin levels.
- Reduced physical activity when screens replace outdoor activity.
- Possible impact on mood and anxiety levels.
- Shortened attention span with constant fast-paced stimulation.

Practical Tips For Families





- Create tech-free times (eg. during meals and one hour before bed).
- Keep devices out of bedrooms overnight.
- Co-view and discuss online content with your child.
- Model healthy screen habits at home.

Our goal is not to eliminate screens, but to support children in developing balance, self-regulation and safe digital habits. By working together- school and home- we can help children benefit from technology while protecting their wellbeing.



Age Restrictions on Social Media

Most major platforms have a minimum age of 13 due to data protection laws. Some require 16 for certain features. These include:

	13 years +
	13 years +
	13 years +
	13 years +
	13 years +
	13 years +

These ages reflect more than privacy concerns – they also acknowledge the emotional and cognitive demands of navigating online spaces. The Contented Child

Recommended Screen Access by Age

These recommendations are based on global child health guidelines and current research. They are not rigid rules; they are starting points to support healthy development.

Under 2

Avoid screens other than video calls with family. The developing brain depends on real-world interaction, movement, and eye contact.

Ages 2–5

Aim for around 1 hour per day of high-quality, adult-guided content. Break screen time into short periods rather than long passive sessions.

Ages 5–11

Aim for balanced use: around 1-2 hours daily of recreational screen time. Prioritise sleep, physical activity, social interaction, and outdoor play before screens.

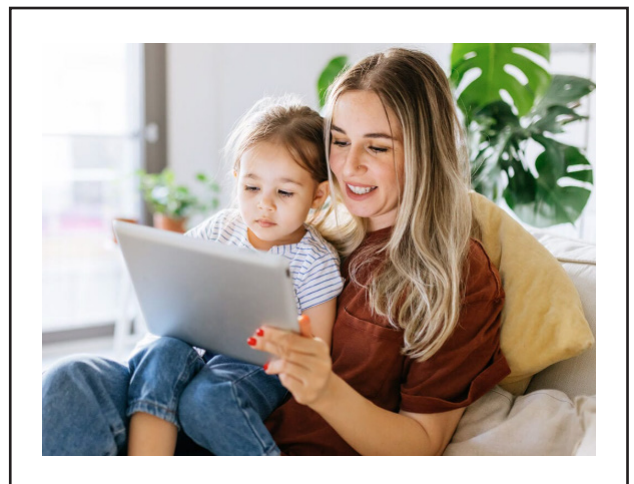
Ages 11–14

Focus on routines and boundaries rather than strict minutes. Protect sleep by avoiding screens at least one hour before bedtime. Encourage tech-free mealtimes and shared family spaces.

Ages 14–18

Guide young people toward self-regulation: discussing dopamine loops, online safety, body image, cyberbullying, and how screens affect mood and sleep. Maintain clear expectations around routines and night-time boundaries.

If you'd like the full bite-size Healthy Screen Habits Info Sheet to go with today's visual, comment SCREEN below and I'll DM it to you.
The Contented Child



This coming weekend (6th–7th March) marks National Day of Unplugging, a 24-hour period dedicated to stepping away from technology. Beginning at sunset and ending at sunset the following day, it offers the perfect opportunity to unwind, relax, and reconnect with family and friends. The aim of the day is to remind us how valuable it is to spend quality time without the distraction of electronic devices — and to rediscover the importance of being fully present in the moment. If you would like to give this a try, here is how to do it successfully;



1. Set Expectations (Together)

Instead of announcing, “No phones tomorrow,” try:

- Explain why you’re unplugging (more fun, less stress, more connection).
- Let kids help choose activities.
- Decide together what counts as “unplugged” (TV? tablets? smartwatches?).
- When everyone helps make the rules, there’s less resistance.

2. Create a “Device Drop Box”

Make it a ritual:

- Put phones/tablets in a basket.
- Store it somewhere out of sight.
- Parents participate too (this part matters most).

Kids notice hypocrisy quickly — lead by example.

3. Plan Activities That Actually Compete With Screens

The key: movement, novelty, and connection.

Outdoor Ideas

- Family hike or nature scavenger hunt
- Bike ride
- Backyard picnic
- Visit a park

Indoor Ideas

- Board game tournament
- Build a fort in the living room
- Bake something together
- Arts & crafts hour
- Family cooking challenge

Connection Ideas

- “High/Low” sharing at dinner (best & hardest part of the week)
- Storytelling from parents’ childhoods
- Family goal brainstorming

4. Make Mealtime Special

No screens at meals.

- Cook together.
- Light candles.
- Use conversation starter questions.

Simple ritual = lasting memory.

5. Expect Pushback (Especially at First)

You might hear:

- “I’m bored.”
- “Everyone else is online.”
- “Can I just check one thing?”

Boredom is not failure — it’s the doorway to creativity.

Give it time. Most families report that resistance fades after the first hour or two.

6. End With Reflection

Before devices come back:

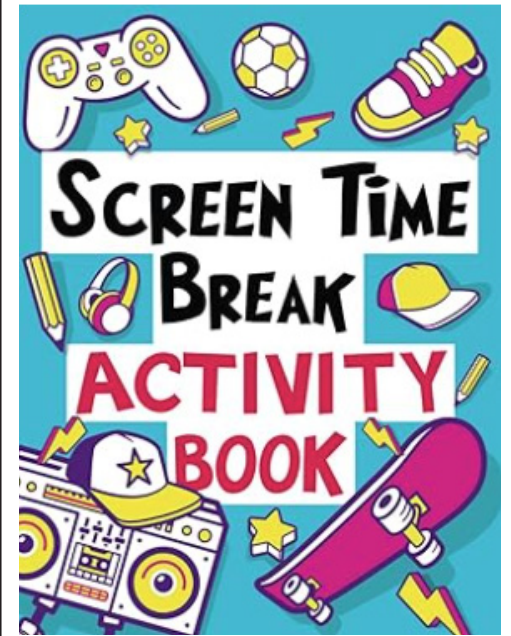
- What was your favorite part?
- What was hardest?
- Should we do this again?

You might discover:

- Tech-free dinners work well.
- Sunday mornings feel better unplugged.
- Weekly “family offline night” is doable.

Book Recommendation

Screen Time Break Activity Book: For Kids Aged 6-12



Kids will get to create their own **video game, soft drink and theme park as well as design skateboards, trainers, hoodies and cool t-shirts** alongside brain-twisting word searches, spot the difference and other exciting puzzles, allowing parents to give their kids a healthy, creative and super-fun alternative to screens.

Perfect for long days at home, school holidays, airplanes, road trips, restaurants and more, this book offers boys and girls aged 6-12 an **enjoyable and exciting alternative** to screens and devices that’ll keep them busy, happy and entertained for hours — **helping parents get a good balance** between screen time and non-screen-based fun.

Created by a teacher, parent and million-selling kid’s book author The Future Teacher - who knows first-hand how hard it can be get the kids off the screens - this **super-cool, original and modern activity book** has been designed to be so much fun that kids will love spending time away from a device, games console or screen.

A Child's Voice

The Screen-Dopamine Cycle

MY BRAIN ASKS FOR ANOTHER QUICK FIX

Because screens worked last time, my brain tells me to go back for more — even if I didn't mean to. This makes the cycle start all over again, and it can be really hard to break on my own.

MY BEHAVIOUR STARTS TO CHANGE

When this keeps happening, I may get quicker to snap, more impatient, or find it harder to sit with quieter things. My brain gets used to fast, exciting stuff and slower things feel "too hard".

THEN MY DOPAMINE DROPS... A LOT

After the excitement stops, my dopamine falls lower than it was before. I feel kind of flat, empty, grumpy, or restless again. I don't always understand why — I just know I don't feel good.

WHEN I FEEL BIG FEELINGS

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed, bored, tired, or just "not quite right". My brain doesn't like that feeling, so it starts looking for something that will make me feel better fast.

MY BRAIN PICKS SCREENS BECAUSE THEY'RE FAST

Screens give my brain a quick change. I don't have to try very hard — I just tap and suddenly there's something bright, fun, or exciting. My brain learns this is the easiest way to feel better.

MY DOPAMINE SHOOTS UP QUICKLY

Dopamine is the brain's "feel-good" chemical. Screens make it jump up fast because of the colours, noises, surprises, and constant new things to look at. It feels great for a moment.

"USING SCREENS SOMETIMES IS FUN AND HELPFUL. USING THEM TOO MUCH CAN CONFUSE MY BRAIN AND MAKE FEELINGS HARDER. MODERATION HELPS MY BRAIN STAY STEADY AND STRONG."

BREAKING THE CYCLE

For a copy of an extended PARENT INFORMATION SHEET, LIKE the post and comment BREAKTHECYCLE below.

BREAKING THE CYCLE STARTS WITH UNDERSTANDING

Screens aren't 'bad' and parents haven't failed. The difficulty sits in how fast, easy dopamine from screens trains the brain to expect constant reward. Each scroll, game or video gives a quick hit, followed by a dip that drives the urge for more. Over time, tolerance builds, regulation drops and everyday life starts to feel flat or frustrating. Understanding this cycle helps us respond with structure and support rather than shame or power struggles.

WHY WILLPOWER ISN'T ENOUGH

The dopamine loop is neurological, not behavioural. A child or young person isn't choosing defiance when they melt down after screens end, their nervous system is reacting to a sudden drop in stimulation. Expecting self-control without external boundaries puts too much pressure on an under-developed brain.

Breaking the cycle means adults stepping in to hold the limits while teaching regulation and alternative ways to meet dopamine needs safely.

START WITH A FAMILY MEETING

Change works best when it's transparent and collaborative. A family meeting creates shared understanding and reduces secrecy or resentment. Explain what dopamine is in simple terms and why screens feel so powerful. Acknowledge that limits might feel hard at first. Invite feelings, questions and worries. This isn't a debate about whether limits exist, it's a conversation about how everyone can feel supported while the brain recalibrates.

SET CLEAR NON-NEGOTIABLES

Some boundaries work best when they're consistent and predictable. No phones at the dinner table, devices placed in a basket so no one feels singled out. No tech in bedrooms overnight to protect sleep and regulation. Screens off at least an hour before bed. Adults follow the same rules to model safety, not perfection. These limits reduce constant dopamine spikes and create protected spaces for connection and rest.

OFFER HEALTHIER DOPAMINE PATHWAYS

The brain still needs reward, just from steadier sources. Movement, especially outdoors. Music, singing or dancing. Creative play, drawing, building, making. Laughter and shared family moments. Completing small tasks and feeling capable. Physical affection and safe connection. These forms of dopamine last longer, support regulation and rebuild tolerance for everyday activities that screens have crowded out.



©2025 The Contented Child. All rights reserved.

EXPECT DISCOMFORT BEFORE BALANCE

When screens reduce, dysregulation often rises before it settles. This is not a sign the limits are wrong, it's the nervous system adjusting. Stay calm, empathic and consistent. Name feelings without removing boundaries. Over time, frustration shortens, creativity returns and emotional resilience grows. Breaking the cycle isn't about removing joy, it's about helping the brain relearn how to find it safely.

FACE parent talks have a 'Supporting Healthy Screen Use' talk on 10th March. If you would like to be able to access this, but are unable to join live, you can sign up for the 10th March talk, and you'll then be sent a link of the recorded talk to watch at a more convenient time. Please use this QR code to access this, and many other, parent talks. Remember to use our code RV190126 to ensure that the talk is free!

FACE

Family Advice • Communication • Education

