Sm@rt e-Team

Primary School Students

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It is fun to use the Internet nowadays. We can connect with our family and friends through different ways on the Internet including instant messaging or social networking sites. We can also get different kinds of information we want or play games for fun. It will affect our health if we do not use the Internet and electronic screen products properly.

The following suggestions help us to use Internet and electronic screen products safely and healthily. These include the "General Principles (DARES)", "Frequently Asked Questions" as well as "10 Health Tips".

Let's join the Smart e-Team and make declaration on "DARES":

1. Development

We should develop a variety of interests and hobbies and have a balanced life, including physical activities. We can participate in different kinds of group activities in real life, learn how to manage time, develop positive manner and choose appropriate content for ourselves.

2. Awareness

Internet, electronic screen products and the related technology bring a lot of fascinating experiences to our daily lives. However, we should be aware of the potential risks and traps in the use of Internet. We should learn the ways to reduce the risks and minimize the harmful effects arising from the misuse of the Internet.

3. Respect

The reason for parents to set rules and make agreement with us on using Internet and computers is not to restrain us but to provide us with guidelines for better use of computers. Therefore, we should respect our parents and teachers. We should also respect other users, show good manners and avoid attacking others.

4. Effective Communication

It is a good practice to share your world in the Internet with parents. We can let our parents know how and why we enjoy using Internet and electronic screen products. It is fun to share our feelings, joys and concerns with our parents.

5. Seeking Help

We can seek help from our parents, teachers or a trusted adult if we come across problems which we may not be able to handle by ourselves when using Internet and electronic screen products. They can offer advice when we encounter matters of our concerns.

Smart Talk

Question 1

I am only allowed to go online for half an hour every day but I want more. I have asked my mum to let me play longer but in vain. What can I do?

Answer

1. What your mum concerns most is that you may lose control on the amount of time you spend on the computer. If you can ensure a balance and proper time management, your mum will be more reassured.

2. Be aware that it is easy to lose track of time when we navigate websites, play online video games and watch videos. Very often we may go online with an intent to spend only a few minutes, but end up with spending hours on the Internet. This will affect our daily activities and study.

Smart Tips

1. Tell your parents how and why you enjoy using the Internet, and share your feelings with them through open communication.

2. Listen to your parents and try to understand their concerns and worries.

3. Ask yourself whether you have neglected other areas of life when you spend too much time on the computer.

4. Use the computer with a specific purpose. Avoid browsing Internet just to kill time. Switch it off after use.

5. Set a timetable for your daily routines after discussing with your parents. Set time limit for using the computer. It is important for you to live a healthy and balanced life.

6. Make a family agreement which might include the time spent online, surfing the Internet after you have finished your homework, switching off computer by ten o'clock the latest. We should follow the rule as agreed.

Question 2

I enjoy playing online video games very much and when offline, I will continue to play video console. My mum and dad often complain that I am "addicted" to gaming, which makes me very upset. What can I do?

Answer

1. Avoid excessive use of the Internet or gaming. Those who are preoccupied with gaming could often feel lost or distressed when they are away from the computer.

2. Be aware that it is easy to lose control on time spent on video games during holidays or weekends.

3. Try to engage in different kinds of healthy activities for entertainment.

Smart Tips

1. Talk to yourself: "I would stop playing in 10 minutes. I have many other enjoyable things to do." Set time out and turn off the computer for a break.

2. Set a weekly quota for Internet use or to agree that certain games should only be played at weekends. Try to set a reasonable play time limit right from the start of your holidays.

3. Engage in different activities for entertainment. Activities such as playing jigsaw puzzles, doing craftwork and reading are as interesting and fun as online games.

4. Spend time with your family. Talk to them about things happened in school, the progress in learning and relations with classmates, etc. Join different activities with family such as board games, ball games, cycling and swimming, etc.

Question 3

I sometimes play online video games with my brother. Some of his favourite games are rather violent and involve repeated killing. My mum warns us that the games are too violent and we are not allowed to play these games anymore. Is it true that we will become aggressive if we play violent video games?

Answer

1. It is true that exposure to violent games will have adverse effects on us, may lead to aggressive behaviour and lack of empathy. Therefore, we should understand our parent's worries.

2. Many non-violent games are also funny and challenging.

3. Many online and offline video games are interesting, educational and suitable for children.

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Smart Tips

1. Play games that are suitable for children. Avoid games that might contain abusive language, inappropriate behaviours, violent or sexually-explicit content.

2. Choose games and online content that are recommended by parents or teachers.

3. Many interactive games can cater for a wide range of interests such as sport related games, mission based games and quests inspiring users to complete challenges.

4. It is fun to interact with your family and friends in games such as hide-and-seek, chess games, board games and simulated games, etc.

Question 4

My friend suggested me to make online friends on social networking sites. In order to sign in, I have to give out personal information such as my name, age, gender, email and a profile picture. How can I stay safe when I reveal my personal information on these social networking sites?

Answer

1. Do not make friends online.

2. You should protect your privacy and avoid exposing too much personal information.

3. Other Internet users may not be who they say they are. They might create a fake profile to pretend to be someone else. Information on the Internet may not be true. It is often difficult to find out whether a person is telling the truth or not.

4. "Friends" made online are still strangers. Someone online might lie about who they are and try to befriend you on the Internet but actually have bad intentions.

5. Strangers may be able to find you or even hurt you with the personal information you shared on the Internet.

6. Making online friends will limit our opportunities for interaction with our friends in the real world.

7. Online communication without interactions in the real world may affect our face-to-face communication, which may have a negative impact on our social skills development.

Smart Tips

1. There are many traps in Internet and we have to protect our online safety. Never share your personal information, including your full name, date of birth, pictures, school, address, email, phone number and daily routine, with people you meet online but do not know in the real world. It is best to use your real identity to communicate online with your real world friends and family only.

2. Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Never chat or arrange face-to-face meeting with anyone you know online but do not know in the real world. Be aware of news on cyber-crime so as to be more alert.

3. Seek advice from parents or teachers timely when you encounter problems.

4. Try to participate in different kinds of group activities in real life to develop your social life in the real world.

Question 5

What should I do if someone online is being unkind to a kid I know? I tried not to join in but the bully began to attack me by sending nasty messages, making jokes and calling names. What should I do?

Answer

1. What you encounter is a form of cyber-bullying, that someone uses technology, like Internet or smartphones, to deliberately and repeatedly bully another person. It can be in the form of nasty and hurtful messages, pictures or videos.

2. It is right for you not to join in or spread the unkind messages from the bully.

Smart Tips

1. We should learn to respect people with different opinions and think critically. We should be polite in our messages or reply to others online. Never use offensive language to chat online.

2. If someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, tell your parents, teachers or a trusted adult right away to discuss ways to solve the problem.

3. Do not incite any cyber-bullying. When someone you know is being cyberbullied, support the victim by reporting the incident to a trusted adult.

4. Try to block all communications with the bully and save all the messages, emails, pictures or videos as well as record the user name, date and time of the cyber-bullying incident as evidence.

5. Do not retaliate or respond to the bully. Replying to the bully may trigger more bullying messages.

Question 6

While I am online, websites with nude pictures and videos will pop up occasionally. Some friends have recommended sex websites to me. I know my parents won't let me visit these websites but I am really curious. Is it a problem?

Answer

1. Starting from puberty, it is natural for young people to be curious about sex.

2. Inappropriate content on the Internet may contain inaccurate information and distorted views and attitudes. Exposure to inappropriate sexual content may have a negative impact on us.

Smart Tips

1. Avoid exposure to inappropriate sexual content. We should be aware of the appropriateness and credibility of the information we get from the websites.

2. We should gain knowledge about sex from appropriate sources. Turn to your parents, teachers or social worker for help and advice if you have any concerns about sex or personal development.

HEALTH TIPS

The following 10 health tips aim to serve as reference to encourage healthy use of the technology through minimizing the potential harmful health effects that may be relating to its use.

1. **Be physically active, go outdoor**

    ))) Consecutive use for more than one hour of Internet and other electronic screen products including smartphones, tablet personal computers, video games, or televisions is discouraged.

    ))) Children and adolescents (6 to 18 years old): Accumulate at least one hour of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.

    ⚙ Moderate-intensity physical activity e.g. swimming, cycling or playing volleyball.

    ⚙ Vigorous-intensity physical activity e.g. playing basketball, football or rope skipping.

2. **Engage in interactive activities in real life**

    ))) Group activities are encouraged for development of social and communication skills as well as emotional management.

3. **Limit screen time and choose screen activities wisely**

    ))) 6 to 12 years old: Limit recreational screen time to no more than two hours a day.

    ))) 12 to 18 years old: Adolescents should be trained to develop good time management skill and self-discipline to work independently and prepare themselves to be responsible adults. Regular breaks should be adopted if prolonged screen time e.g. for academic purpose, is unavoidable.

4. Blink, break and rest

- Rest for 20-30 seconds after every 20-30 minutes when using electronic screen products.

- Change position, blink eyes and do muscle relaxation exercise.

Keep back and neck straight with elbow supported

Keep palm up and stretch wrist downward

Stretch fingers backward

Circle shoulder blade backward

Tuck chin in

Stretch neck sideway

Stretch chest wall

Source: Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association

5. Adopt proper setting

📶 Adjust brightness, font size and workstation.

A   Eyes should be slightly above the top of the screen and no less than 50cm from the screen.

B   Sit upright and close to the desk.

C   Forearms should be approximately horizontal and supported by the desk. A space in front of the keyboard to allow hands and wrists to rest when not typing.

D   Keep wrists straight when keying.

E   Position a mouse within easy reach so it can be used with a straight wrist.

F   Legs should have rooms to move under the desk.

G   Choosing a chair with round edge or curved cushion seat can avoid excess pressure from the edge of seat on the backs of legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful especially for children.

🛜 Keep reading distance no less than 50cm for a computer, 40cm for a tablet personal computer or 30cm for a smartphone.
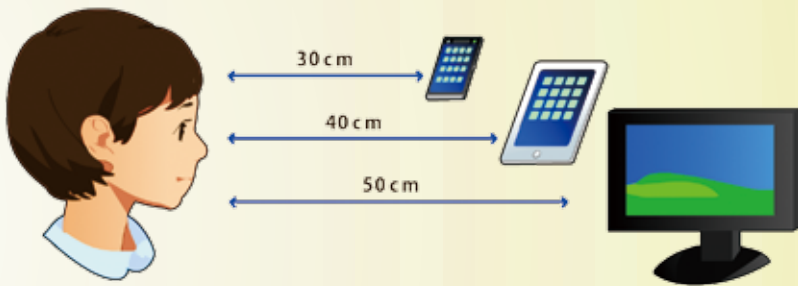
6. Protect hearing, prevent accident and pay attention to hygiene

🛜 Adopt the 60 – 60 Rule: Listen at no more than 60% of the mobile device's maximum volume for less than cumulative 60 minutes a day. Prolonged use of earphones should be avoided to prevent accumulative noise induced damage.

⚙ Sound with sudden rise and fall of noise level e.g. shooting, hammer, and firecracker in video games (impulse sound) and sound of noise level change drastically over time, e.g. road traffic noise, rock music (fluctuating sound) are more damaging than continuous noise with the same sound level. Adjust the output to a lower volume setting for music / game / film that include impulse and fluctuating sound.

⚙ Use the built-in "smart volume" feature which help to regulate the volume and cap the possible maximum output in the products, if available.

🛜 Avoid using mobile electronic screen products while doing other tasks requiring attention e.g. crossing the roads, etc.

🛜 Pay attention to personal hygiene, clean the surface of the screen regularly and avoid sharing the electronic screen products with others.

7. Ensure adequate sleep time and appropriate environment

- Total amount of adequate sleep time in a day is different for different age groups:
  - 5-12 years old: 9 - 11 hours
  - 12-18 years old: 8.5 - 9.5 hours

- Encourage a quiet, dim and comfortable sleeping place. Turn off the computer and keep other electronic screen products out of reach during sleep.

- Establish a soothing pre-sleep routine with a period of relaxing activities an hour or so before bed, e.g. take a bath, read a book, avoid stressful and stimulating activities such as video game playing as well as vigorous exercises.

8. Be aware of cyber-safety

- Protect our privacy and avoid exposing too much personal information.

- Learn how to set password and not to share with others, except your parents, if it is found necessary.

- Not to meet a "friend" only known online.

- Not to respond to messages or photos that make us feel uncomfortable or scared, and we should report the incidents to our parents or teachers and seek their help.

9. Behave oneself when using Internet and social networking sites

- Avoid gossiping, harassing or flaming others with mean or scornful messages that would harm other's reputation or relationship with friends or family. We have to be respectful and polite online and avoid sending mean messages or making someone look bad, which may remain in the Internet for a very long time with damages out of imaginations.

10. Restrict access to inappropriate content

- Install software for cyber-safety (e.g. filtering software) to limit access to inappropriate content, websites or other activities.

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Hotlines for Healthy Use of Internet

Name of Organization	Telephone
Education Bureau (EDB) & Hong Kong Playground Association (HKPA) – Healthy e-Generation Network One-stop Hotline	5721 4040 (Telephone/ WhatsApp/ WeChat) Monday to Saturday (except public holidays) 9:30am to 9:30pm
Hong Kong Christian Service – Online New Page – Online Addiction Counselling Centre	2561 0363 Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm & 2pm to 6pm
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals "Say No to Internet Addiction" Project	2827 1000 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 10am to 7pm & Tuesday and Friday 10am to 10pm
The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups – Youthline	2777 8899 Monday to Saturday 2pm to 2am *WhatsApp : 6277 8899 Monday to Friday 7pm -10pm

The above list is not exhaustive.

D evelopment

A wareness

R espect

E ffective Communication

S eeking Help

For further information on healthy use of Internet and electronic screen products, please visit website: http://www.shs.gov.hk/english/internet/health_effects.html

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