



# Gooseberry Alert 27

## Screen Time – what's your limit?

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### Gooseberry Student 'Discussions' of the week

We use our technology to connect, create and learn online. We are more aware than ever, that excessive time spent online can have an impact upon our physical and mental health. But how would you feel if someone restricted what you did online and how much time you spent using your devices?

The UK Government has recently proposed plans to limit children's screen time, also restricting content and access to certain social media sites to better protect you online.

#### The Big Opinion:

Discuss the idea: that other **people should be able to limit your time online**, as well as restrict access to certain websites and apps?

#### Discuss the following questions:

- How much time do you spend online each day?
- How much is 'too much time' online?
- How do you like to spend your time offline?
- How do you know when you have been spending too much time online?
- How can restricting your time online helpful?
- What other ideas are there for you managing your own time online?

**Key Messages:** Not having the opportunity to make decisions for yourself about how you spend and manage your time online might feel frustrating but it may be necessary. Learning how to make safer decisions for yourself and demonstrating how you manage your time online responsibly can help.

Please share with students.

### Gooseberry Teacher 'Thoughts' of the week

As educators, you have an important role to play, encouraging your students to lead a balanced and healthy lifestyle. This includes a balanced and healthy lifestyle online.

#### But the big question is: how can this be achieved effectively?

The increasing amount of time that children and young people spend online is a concern for many. We know that excessive screen time is linked to an array of physical and mental health issues.

According to Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner for England, children aged between 12 and 15 spend around 20 hours a week on the internet. Matt Hancock, Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, has proposed that **internet cut-off times, based on age, should be imposed on children**. Hancock also wants popular social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat to **ensure** that users are all over the age of 13.

How do you know when you are spending too much time online?





Though the logistics of how to implement such measures are in the early stages, for those concerned about how much time children spend online, the opportunity to debate the issues and practicalities surrounding the new proposals may be welcome.

How do you feel about the new proposals? A step too far or not enough?  
Should we be less reliant on technology in our learning spaces and homes?

How can we promote balanced use of technology?

How appropriate it is for the Government to impose restrictions upon children's screen time?

**Key Messages: The use of screen time in moderation combined with the many alternatives to digital technology, for teaching and learning, can help your students to learn, explore their world in a balanced, positive and healthy way.**

**Teaching children to become independent and responsible users of technology can promote confidence and help them to manage their own lives online.**

Please share with staff.

## Gooseberry Parent 'Thoughts' of the week

**As parents and carers, you have an important role to play in managing your child's time online.**

Use of technology is so common that we can forget the impact it has upon our children's wellbeing.

As parents and carers, you must manage your child's use of digital technology and their lives online. Encourage your child to participate in more offline, 'real world' activities. Provide them with opportunities to socialise with friends in person and take part in physical activities outdoors.

**For your own health and wellbeing, be sure to manage how much time you too spend online!**



In the news... In the news... In the news... In the news... In the news...

## Touchscreen Children Cannot Hold a Pencil!

The Times has recently reported on a growing trend that sees young children beginning school without the hand strength and dexterity required to grip and use a pencil. Paediatric doctors believe this is due to children's excessive use of touchscreen technology, such as that of tablets and smart phones.

According to Dr Sally Payne, Head Paediatric Occupational Therapist at the Heart of England Foundation NHS Trust: developing children need lots of practice to gain the fine motor skills necessary to hold and use a pencil.

As the use of tablets and phones to occupy children is on the increase, these important skills are commonly no longer obtained prior to starting school. This has led to many children being delayed in acquiring handwriting skills, sometimes even requiring them to have occupational therapy to correct the problem.

Find out more at:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/touchscreen-children-cannot-grip-a-pencil-wd60g2ln8>



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