MANAGING DEVICES AT HOME

Dear parents and guardians of TCRCE students,

A number of students are bringing computers home from school (most often Chromebooks). These devices may be part of the students' assistive technology, part of the grades 7-12 Chromebook initiative, or they may be participating in the grade six Edwin pilot program.

When a student has access to computers outside of the classroom, it's a great opportunity for them to go further with their school work, to collaborate with their classroom learning teams, to practice skills, study, and create. These devices have the ability to advance our student's learning in significant and lasting ways.

While we encourage students to use their devices, we recognize it's important to do so in a safe manner and in such a way that supports their learning rather than fostering bad habits or encouraging inappropriate use.

This document is meant to provide guidance and tips to support the safe and productive use of these devices at home.

TIPS FOR DEVICES AT HOME

What is a Chromebook?

A TCRCE Chromebook is a computer which students must sign into using a GNSPES account. Everything a student does on a Chromebook is done by accessing the internet through the Chrome web browser.

The NS Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, provides students with access to Google Workspace for Education (GNSPES).

Online Safety

It's important to know that while students are encouraged to use their Google tools, they still have access to anything online through the web browser.

In a school setting, not only are students supervised and directed to pre-approved resources, access is also managed through internet filtering. At home, your Wi-Fi may not have this filtering.
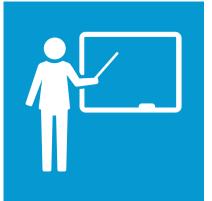
Google tools are extremely useful for creating, sharing, and being part of a classroom, however, there is the possibility students may access age-inappropriate & questionable material, and may connect with others outside of the school community. This is why supervision and monitoring is important to ensure safe and productive uses of these important tools.

Supervision

The level of supervision will depend on individual circumstances and will depend on the age and maturity of the child. You may find it a good idea to have students store and use their Chromebook in a common area of the home, complete work during set times (screen-free times and zones could be initiated) and keep an open line of communication about what the child is trying to achieve while on the device.

Please take time to discuss what your child should do if they come across inappropriate materials or if someone acting inappropriately online.

Expectations

It's important to understand the expectations of your child's teachers and how they intend for students to use these devices at home. They may be used for homework and practice, for collaborating with other students, or for special project work.

Maintain an open line of communication with teachers about the use of the device. You may even ask the teacher if you could be added to receive Google Classroom updates directly.

In general, devices are to be used for completing or extending classroom work. A child's teacher should be able to provide guidance as to how much time they should be spending doing schoolwork each day or week.

Digital Citizenship/Digital Literacy

Work with your child on developing healthy online habits. There is plenty of information from sources such as MediaSmarts for support on topics such as digital literacy, digital citizenship, password and account management, cyberbullying, apps, and the internet.

While schools work closely with students to develop good online habits, it's important that these behaviours be reinforced at home. Consequences for misuse of school technology, even outside of the school, including cyberbullying, will be dealt with by the school following the guidelines set out in the School Code of Conduct.

Device Care

The provincial School Code of Conduct states that students will treat the property of the school with respect. This includes devices taken home by students. Students should not put stickers on, or deface devices, nor should they intentionally damage devices.

Care should be taken in transporting, storing, and using devices. General care for devices includes: wiping the screen and keyboard with a damp (not wet) cloth, keeping it out of direct sunlight and extreme temperatures, keeping away from liquids, keeping components together in one place, and bringing the device to school charged and with the cord each day.

Should damage to the device occur, have the student report it to the office or teacher at the school as soon as possible. Students are asked to take care of their device, however, we understand accidents may still occur. Families and students will not be responsible for accidental damage or normal wear and tear of devices.