

# Managing Devices Outside of Home



Teens spend less time at home, enjoy more freedom, are starting to test boundaries, and now have endless access to the rest of the world.

You can help them make good decisions about how they use technology when away from home.

Most computers, tablets, and phones have the ability nowadays to connect to the Internet. Internet connection happens via:

- Your home Internet network (only able to connect in our home).
  - Be advised, when friends who are visiting are provided with access to your home Internet (you log them in once), on each visit to our home after that, the friends will most likely be logged in automatically on their device, in your home, on your network.
- A data plan associated with the device can connect anywhere they have coverage (e.g., Optus, Telstra, and other carriers with a data package)
- Free or paid Wi-Fi areas (e.g., library, shopping mall, stores like McDonald's).
- At a friend's house on their home network.
- School (some schools have Wi-Fi that allow children to access the Internet).

When your child leaves your home, maybe to go to school, to meet friends, or to a friend's house, you are not able to be there physically to manage their usage.

You can educate and talk with your child to encourage sound choices, to follow the rules as they would at home, and to focus on the activity on the device.

There will be times when your child is using the Internet/devices outside the home but in your presence. This can be a good opportunity to reinforce your expectations/rules when online, away from home.

## Educate

The focus is to empower your child/teen so that they know what actions are most likely to keep them safe while they have fun online.

Be clear that the house rules transfer to outside the home.

When your conversation includes the **consequences** of good or poor decisions, your teen is better able to see the logic of the choice rather than see it as an instruction/rule to test or ignore.

Ensure that you have set specific, clear rules. For example:

- Use respectful language and behaviour online.
- Access sites that are lawful (i.e., no pornography or illegal downloads).
- Send messages that you would be happy to show your parents/grandparents.
- Don't share passwords.
- Ask for an adult's permission before they connect to their friend's home network.

Use the fact sheets in the 'Rules and Boundaries' section to have these discussions.

Be very clear that public access Wi-Fi is not as secure as your home network. Hacking and loss of information is far more common in public access environments.

When at a friend's home, advise your child to be respectful of their rules but critical in their application. For example:

"You are to follow that family's rules as it applies to technology unless you know it is something that could lead you into trouble or that is just poor practice. You know what that means, and I trust your judgement. If you're not sure, you can check in with me or talk to me about it when you get home."

### Communicate

Talk to other parents about their technology rules in their home. It's a good idea to share your rules and expectations without expectation that the other parent will necessarily agree. Perhaps the other parent hasn't given it much thought. It's a useful exercise to see how your child's friend's parents manage technology in their homes. You may learn that there are more issues to discuss with your child.

Ask your children what happened and what they did during the day.

Talk to them about any issues they had when online when not at home.

Reassure them you are there to support them no matter where they are.

Understand that mistakes happen and that solutions can be found. You are here to help.

### Limit Access to Online Devices, and Reinforce School Rules

There may be times when you remove access to technology when away from home; for example, while playing sport, at the movies, at dinner with the family, or at school camp.



Some technology-free time on holidays is not going to kill them (despite their protests).

Check the school policy. Most schools limit when children can and can't have possession of or use their mobile device. It is helpful if we support and work with the school to enforce this policy, even if it is not popular with your child. For example, most schools do not allow students to take their phone on school camp, and many schools have a policy of phones in lockers.

Don't let your child convince you that "everybody else has their phone". Reinforce the need to follow the rules. School no-phone policies are designed to minimise the likelihood of cyberbullying, sexting, and inappropriate access to information and images on school property. These are all things you don't want your child involved in.

### Monitor and Filter

#### Schools

Schools usually have some sort of monitoring and filtering software installed in the network to limit and check students' access and communications on the Internet. School-issued devices are usually monitored when the device is used at home too. Of course, the school can't monitor your child's private mobile device if they are using a data plan. They can only monitor through the school network.

There is a large range of commercially-available products that can work on a variety of devices to monitor and filter activity no matter where children access the Internet. These are generally cloud-based programs that help parents control the activity and apps and to make a record of the activity.

These products are very parent/user friendly, and most are moving towards a yearly subscription. To monitor a phone outside the home, it will require an app that has been installed on the device.