

Parkville School iPad Safety Tips

Digital safety is of the utmost importance. Frequent discussions with your child are necessary and allow you to be proactive in protecting your child and further educating him or her. Experts warn that children are most vulnerable to online dangers while at home. While many potential dangers are filtered and blocked on the school's network, children often have complete, unrestricted access to inappropriate sites at home. It is important that at home students continue to remember that the iPad is a school-issued tool, no different than a textbook. It is meant to be used for educational purposes only.

Here are some basic tips that you can use, as a parent, to ensure that your child is using his or her iPad in a safe manner when they leave school.

iPad Restrictions

The iPad is configured with certain restrictions that control what students can do. We take a few steps to help make sure that the iPad is used in an appropriate, educational manner. Below is the list of restrictions that we place on every iPad, prior to handing it out to a student.

1. iMessage and FaceTime are disabled.
2. Students cannot put email accounts on a school iPad
3. Siri is disabled
4. The YouTube app is removed
5. The iTunes Store is removed
6. Game Center and Multi-Player gaming are disabled
7. TV and Movies are restricted to G ratings
8. iTunes will not play any song flagged as containing "explicit lyrics"

Monitor & Limit Screen Time

Have your student(s) use the iPad in a central place at home, such as the kitchen or family room, rather than away from adult supervision or behind a closed door. Know what your child is doing with technology and how his or her time is being spent. Technology can be a great tool and resource, but also has the potential to be a big distraction. Help your child learn to focus on completing tasks or assignments prior to engaging in other activities. Teaching today's children how to manage multiple sources of information and potential distractions is a critical skill, one best learned before heading off to college or the workplace.

It is important to note that the iPad does not use cellular data. That means that in order to connect to the Internet, it has to be connected through WiFi. If you are providing the WiFi in your home, you have control over how and when your child can access the Internet. You may want to consider not giving him or her the password to your wireless network, giving you control over when

he or she can use the iPad to access the Internet. You can also shut down the WiFi at a designated time, either for the whole house or on your student's iPad.

Minimizing Eye Strain

While there is no evidence showing that iPad use hurts a child's eyes, there are some steps you can take to minimize any strain that your child might feel. Some of the things you can do are: ensure that the iPad is being used in proper lighting, minimize glare, reduce the brightness of the screen in low lit rooms, increase (or bold) the font, and take regular breaks every 20-30 minutes.

Put the iPad to Bed, But Not in the Bedroom

It is a good idea to leave all technology devices, from cell phones to iPads, in a common family room overnight to discourage late night, unmonitored use and sleep disruption. Don't allow your child to sleep with the iPad. You may also want to consider installing the iPad's charger in your bedroom instead of a room that your child has access to.

Remember...

The best way to control what your child is doing on an iPad, or any Internet-connected device (Smartphone, computer, etc.) is to set clear, reasonable limits and to actively monitor his or her activities.

The fact that there are risks is no reason to avoid using technology or keep it away from your children. But it is important to think about what you and your children can do to reduce risk and learn how to recover if something goes wrong. We all learn a lot from making mistakes and recovering from them.

Just as with everything in life, we can't eliminate every possible risk associated with technology, but by using common sense and taking reasonable precautions, we can greatly reduce our risk. Security risks are a problem, but benefits of today's technology are life-changing.