

Dear WCA Parent or Guardian,

We have created a Willow Creek Academy TECHNOLOGY CODE OF HONOR for our students to help them do better this fall--and to help YOU as parents--to establish some ground rules. We hope that these technology pledges will support you to help your student learn healthy boundaries around technology--no easy feat!

This pledge has been crafted after a close look at the best research on healthy tech habits--from several experts on healthy tech-life balance. To learn more visit <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-parental-controls>, <https://www.janellburleyhofmann.com/>, and the book "Social Media Wellness: Helping Tweens and Teens Thrive in an Unbalanced World," by Anan Homayoun.

As you know, the science around young peoples' brain development shows that too much screen time can lead to addiction as well as reduced social and emotional skills. Of course online school creates a dilemma, because we are asking our kids to be on screen more--and for this reason we hope this pledge will support you and your family to create some online manners and help you get your student to get off screen as much as possible after online classes are over.

If you need more ideas as to how to help your student be occupied when you are balancing working from home and the added challenge of having your kids home more, please talk to your teacher or your parent community for offline solutions!

We know this is a high bar and an enormous challenge to each parent. We are here to support you and answer any questions you may have.

We believe that the healthiest way to support your student's brain development after screen time is by allowing for safe outdoor time, exercise or hands on projects. It is proven that exercise improves academic performance--and helps kids re-regulate emotionally after screens are shut down. Of course please have them wear a mask and keep social distance when they are out in the community.

Some other great offline resources for items when you are busy are podcasts, radio, art projects, audio stories and real old fashioned books!

**PARENT/GUARDIAN TIPS FOR USING THE
WCA TECHNOLOGY CODE OF HONOR**

- ★ Read and discuss the TECHNOLOGY CODE OF HONOR with your student.
- ★ If they break the agreements in the pledge (as this is a learning process for everyone), discuss it with your student and his/her teacher to figure out the most appropriate consequence, and how to help them get back on track.
- ★ Try to model good tech-life balance yourself by creating screen-free times during the day and/or possibly screen-free days, as well as finding time for your family to be present with each other without your phones/screens on.
- ★ Establish a designated place (drawer, basket, etc) for phones/ipads/computer, etc. where tech devices will live when your family members are not using them.
- ★ Make sure that all adult content is blocked or has filters on any tech device your children have access to.
- ★ Check out apps such as BARK (www.bark.us) as tools for helping monitor any child “sneaking” of inappropriate content.
- ★ Create agreements for screen time limits for after “online school” hours.
- ★ Brainstorm with your student some fun privileges to reward their respectful and responsible on-line behavior, as an incentive to help them succeed during this challenging time!

Thank you for helping Willow Creek raise amazing digital citizens and wonderful humans. This pandemic is not forever. We will get through this together!

Sincerely,

Emily Cox
Principal
WCA