



ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter - December 2015

The holiday season is almost upon us and while many of us will celebrate in different ways, with the end of the school year we will all be seeing much more of our children and young people. At first, we might be overcome with romantic ideals of spending quality time together as a family, but when we are faced with the reality of these close quarters, we may start counting down the days until the 2016 school year. During this time, some tensions may arise over the use and misuse of technology so with our final ThinkUKnow eNewsletter of 2015 we're going to identify some strategies to assist in keeping the peace this season.

Setting expectations

While some parents might possess some mind-reading capabilities, it can be difficult for a young person to know what their parents expect of them unless they are told. Having an honest and upfront conversation about family rules around technology usage over the holidays will ensure that everyone is on the same page. If mobile phones aren't to be used at the dinner table, establish that as a family rule from the beginning, or if you want technology-free time, establish a routine so everyone knows when it's time to switch off and do something different.

Even though they don't have to be up early to go to school, it's still important to get a good night's sleep without interruptions. Devices still need to be put away at least half an hour before bed to allow the body to prepare for rest. Even though curfews may be extended during the holidays, technology still needs to go away earlier than the young person.

Homework for the holidays

Homework over the holidays sounds a bit like cruel and unusual punishment, but this homework isn't for your child, it's for you as a parent or carer. Try and take the time these holidays to learn

Time2Talk

In this section we look at ways to start talking with children and young people about their use of technology.

When should we, as a family, use technology together and when should we have technology-free time?

Which app, game or site do you think you'll spend most of

your time on over the holidays? What does it involve?

Who can you speak to if something upsets you online?

Do you know how to block and report on every game, site and app you use?

from your child about what they do online and why they do it. Perhaps even play a game with your child – they may defeat you convincingly, but it's a great way to connect and relate to them.

If your child isn't forthcoming with explaining the apps or games they are using, do some internet searching to learn more or check out our [Factsheets](#) on popular apps on our website. Once you have a bit more background information, try and start the conversation again and demonstrate to your child that you are interested in their digital activities and want to be a part of them. Who knows, you may find a new app to get hooked on yourself!

Seeking support

Throughout the year, many parents and carers will seek support from schools for issues affecting their child online. With school holidays in effect, this resource is no longer available. That doesn't mean it's time to panic or shoulder the problem on your own, there is plenty of support out there. With online incidents, always report it to the site, game or app on which it has occurred in the first instance. For cyberbullying incidents, if the game, site or app doesn't remove the content within 48 hours, you can refer the complaint to the [Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner](#). You may also wish to provide your child with contact information for support services such as [Kids Helpline](#), [Youth Beyond Blue](#) and [Reach Out!](#)

The holidays may be an overwhelming time for a variety of reasons, so if you need to seek support for yourself, there are plenty of options out there. You can contact [LifeLine](#) on 13 11 14 and speak to someone to help you work through concerns.

From all of us here at ThinkUKnow, we wish you all a happy holiday season and look forward to continuing to provide cyber safety and security resources in 2016. We hope you can find a way to use technology for positive interactions as a family and, if all else fails, you can start a back to school countdown!

