TIPS FOR YEARS 7-8 PARENTS

Stay involved, but give them more say
Starting high school brings greater independence. Young teenagers still need boundaries, but they increasingly want your trust and to have a say in how those boundaries work. Review your family tech agreement and set screen time limits that respect their learning and leisure/social needs on screens.

Try working alongside them and avoid excessive monitoring
Be present and approachable, without hovering over their screen. Simply reading or doing your own work nearby can create a calm environment for study. Continued use of technical parental controls allow passive monitoring, noting that very strict surveillance or internet restrictions can interfere with schoolwork and may affect trust. Aim for boundaries that keep your young person safe while still allowing appropriate independence.

Keep the conversation open
Ask them about what apps and websites they and their friends use. Discuss current news about effects of screens and ask for their perspectives on screen use. Ask about what they are learning and get them to show you their work in the school learning management system. Also ask about what apps they use to learn in class and for homework. Encourage them to set study goals and reflect on their progress. Teach them ways to monitor their own screen use.

Give choices rather than commands
Giving teenagers choices can reduce conflict. Invite them to join you in an activity instead of telling them to get off their phone. When they need to study, ask them if they want to put their phone in a different room to help them concentrate.

Keep devices out of bedrooms at night
A family charging area outside bedrooms can make it easier for teenagers to switch off. For desktop computers, consider removing keyboards and mouse. Research shows that avoiding screen use an hour before bedtime helps improve sleep.

Model the habits you want to see
Teenagers notice what adults do. If you want phones away during family time or study time, try putting your own phone away too.

Leverage the school community
Read school newsletters to stay up-to-date with the latest research around screen use. Participate in school-organised forums to help shape community standards for screen use that is consistent for your teenager and their friends.

Other resources

- Family tech agreement (eSafety Commissioner)
- Parental controls (eSafety Commissioner)
- Best practice toolkit (Screens in Education)

Best Practice in Screen Use for Education