Leading Technology Use in Schools

The integration of digital technologies for learning in schools can be a key leadership challenge. This challenge is not simply deciding whether technology should be used. It is deciding where it adds value, how it should be used, and how the school can support students, teachers and families to use it well.

School leaders must often **bridge the expectations** of education departments and systems with the needs of their own school community. Technology can generate enthusiasm, uncertainty and concern, sometimes at the same time. The practical advice in this guide suggests that leaders can establish the **conditions for purposeful use** while supporting students to develop the skills and knowledge to harness the uses of technologies in their lives.

Students should always be at the centre of this decision-making - ensuring that they have opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and behviours to flourish in a digital world.



DEVELOP STAFF CAPABILITY

Provide ongoing, practical professional learning, mentoring and shared planning that connects technology use with curriculum goals. Support teachers to select appropriate resources, teach digital skills explicitly and guide students in using emerging tools such as AI responsibly.

ENSURE RELIABLE TECHNOLOGIES

Plan for reliable devices, connectivity and technical support, including the ongoing costs of maintenance, licences and upgrades. Address gaps in access and provide timely troubleshooting so technical difficulties do not repeatedly disrupt teaching and learning.

WORK WITH FAMILIES

Explain how and why screens are used for learning, and invite families to share their concerns, expectations and children's needs. Provide practical guidance for home learning and online safety, working together towards purposeful and balanced screen use.



School leadership is critical. This guide provides a snapshot of how NSW school leaders currently understand and support the use of technologies in their schools. We hope it will start conversations within school communities. By building a shared understanding and more consistent expectations, we can better support children and young people to develop healthy and responsible screen habits.

NSW GOVERNMENT

Best Practice in Screen Use for Education

PROUDLY FUNDED BY THE NSW GOVERNMENT

In this research project, we surveyed 1057 NSW students, 1686 parents, 166 school leaders and 914 present and 805 future teachers, in both government and non-government schools. We also held 133 focus groups with 426 participants across these stakeholder groups and observed 68 classrooms in NSW government schools. All data were collected in 2025. For our full report, and toolkit resources for parents, teachers, students and school leaders, visit **http://screensineducation.org**

KEY LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES SCREENS FOR LEARNING

Learning-focused vision
Managing technology use requires more than a policy. It takes a learning-focused vision, carefully chosen technology, consistent expectations, capable and supported staff and strong partnerships with students and families. School leaders bring these elements together.

Pedagogy should lead technology use
Begin with what students need to learn, then ask how technology might support that learning. Do not allow a new product to define the learning need. Approach technology as a tool to meet student learning needs. Encourage staff to use a mix of on- and offscreen activities to maximise learning. Check that tools and instructions are accessible to students with disability or language needs.

Build ownership and consensus through consultation
Involve staff and families, communicate decisions clearly and align expectations across classrooms and homes. Explain how and why screens are used at school. Share practical guidance about home learning and online safety, invite questions and discuss support suited to each family. Discuss sleep, online pressures and healthy habits, and offer support when screen use affects learning or wellbeing.

Aligned expectations
Technology leadership involves understanding the learning journey of students and clearly communicating expectations. Establish consistent rules and routines across classes - agree when devices should be open, closed or put away. Revisit expectations regularly and combine supervision with reminders and support for students to manage their own use.

Develop staff capacity
Consistent implementation depends on developing staff capability, encouraging collaboration and supporting worthwhile innovation. Provide time for practical professional learning, mentoring and shared planning. Include resource selection, explicit teaching, AI use and assessment design.

Plan reliable, equitable and safe access
Budget for maintenance, licences and technical support as well as devices. Identify access gaps and provide loan equipment or other support so students can participate. Check whether tools support understanding, protect student data and provide safe access to relevant content across both school and home settings.

Move from restriction to self-regulation
Schools are a key site for the development of self-regulatory skills and help students and families develop the knowledge, skills and habits needed for responsible use. Teach file organisation, research, source checking and appropriate AI use. Model how to manage distractions, refocus and recognise when another approach would support learning.

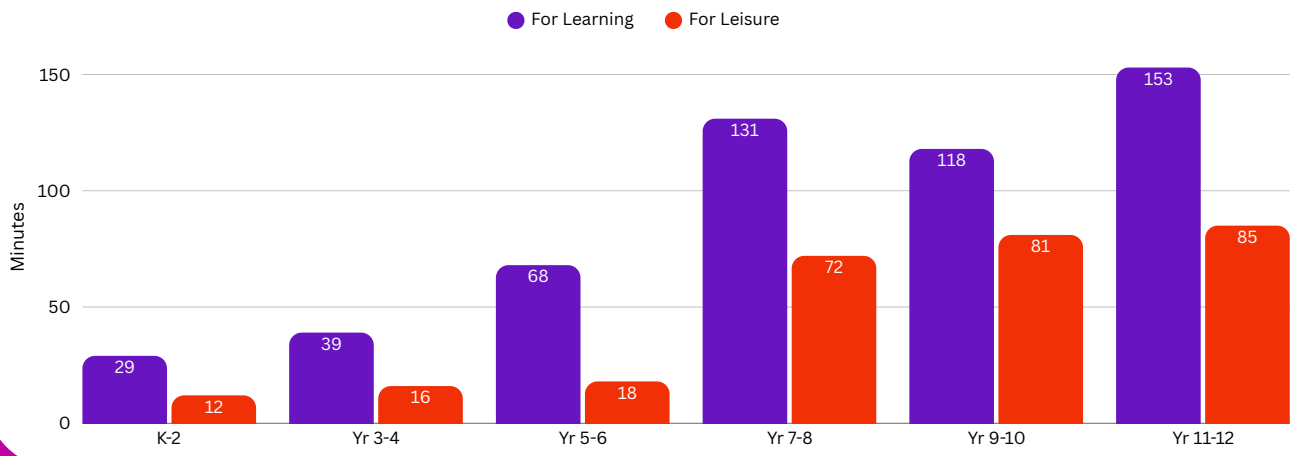
Other resources

- Best practice toolkit (Screens in Education)
- Screen Use Research & Resource Hub (NSW Department of Education)

Best Practice in Screen Use for Education

2025 Screen Use Snapshot
& School Leaders' Perspectives

Student reported time spent on screen at school on last school day



95%

of school leaders* **support the integration of technology into classes in school**.

72%

of school leaders agree* that their students are able to **use technology responsibly for learning.**

25%

of school leaders agree* that **students can self-regulate** their use of technology when learning (31% primary, 10% secondary)

60%

of school leaders reported that their school offers **professional development** on **integrating digital technologies** into the curriculum.

36%

of school leaders reported that their school offers **professional development** on **healthy technology use**.

63%

of school leaders agree that their school has **good technical support** (84% in high-SES school, 45% in low-SES schools)

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Based on the NSW statewide screen use survey findings with 1057 NSW K-12 students in **2025**, before implementation of the social media ban. The survey asked students to report their screen use in the last full school day at school, for learning and for leisure, as well as their experience with using screens for learning in general. In addition, a separate survey gathered responses from 166 NSW school leaders about their perceptions and practices regarding screen use in education. Surveys were conducted in both NSW government and non-government schools. * indicates strongly agree or agree on a 5-point agreement scale. For our full report, and toolkit resources for parents, teachers, students and school leaders, visit **http://screensineducation.org**