Communicating with Families about Screen Use for Learning

Screens are a regular part of learning at school and at home. Students benefit most when expectations and routines are consistent across settings, and many still need parent monitoring while they develop self-regulation skills. It's therefore important to clearly communicate screen-use expectations to parents, sharing them at the start of each term and again whenever tools or expectations change.
Below are some points to explain to families.



Learning purpose

Name the tools and explain the tasks they support. Give concrete examples of what students will learn or practise.

Classroom routines

Describe how often devices are used, how teachers guide their use and how students manage distractions. Explain how technology fits alongside other analogue activities, such as handwriting and discussion.

Home expectations

State what work is expected, how long it should take and whether a device is needed. Include practical ways families can support learning and whom to contact about access difficulties.

Access and support

Provide clear login instructions, direct links to relevant assessment information and technical support details. Invite questions through email or an arranged conversation.

Use Generative AI to draft parent notes
Teachers can use Generative AI (GenAI) to draft parent notes. Supply the year level, learning purpose, classroom routines and confirmed school expectations. Paste relevant current guidance into the prompt. See p.2-3 for example prompts. NSW Department of Education teachers are encouraged to try them in EduChat at chat.education.nsw.gov.au.

Engaging families from LOTE backgrounds
Our research found that parents who speak languages other than English (LOTE) often sought screen use guidance through social media and were the group most interested in receiving more information from schools. Generative AI can translate any notes your provide into the languages families use, alongside English. See p.4 for instructions.

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**

Example 1 - Primary English:

I am a Year 1 teacher and we will be using Reading Eggs in our classes this term, once a week during using our class iPad set. Write a note to parents to explain the benefits of Reading Eggs and how it complements reading, handwriting and teaching other literacy skills. Give ideas for parents on how to support reading at home. Give some advice to parents who are not comfortable with English. They can also email me or catch me in the classroom after school to ask questions. Use Australian spelling, short paragraphs and helpful bullet points. Keep the note to about 250 words. Use placeholders for missing details.

Sample EduChat output

Dear Parents and Carers,

This term, our class will be using Reading Eggs once a week during class time using our class iPad set. Reading Eggs is a fun, interactive program that supports early reading development through short activities and games that build key skills in a structured way.

Reading Eggs helps children to:

- practise phonics (letter–sound knowledge) and blending
- develop sight word recognition and reading fluency
- improve listening skills and comprehension through stories and quizzes
- build confidence by working at their own level and celebrating progress

In class, Reading Eggs will complement (not replace) our daily literacy learning. We will continue to focus on:

- shared and guided reading with real books
- handwriting (correct letter formation and pencil grip)
- spelling and sentence writing
- oral language, vocabulary, and other literacy activities

You can support reading at home by:

- reading together for 10–15 minutes each day
- asking your child to “tell you about the story” (beginning, middle, end)
- encouraging your child to point to words as they read
- practising tricky/sight words from home readers or notes
- making reading part of your routine (after dinner or before bed)

If English is not comfortable for your family:

- it is wonderful to read and talk about books in your home language
- ask your child to explain what they learned in Reading Eggs using pictures or simple words
- please contact me if you would like support or translated information

If you have any questions, you are welcome to email me at [TEACHER EMAIL] or catch me after school in [CLASSROOM/LOCATION].

Kind regards,
[TEACHER NAME]
[CLASS / SCHOOL NAME]



Make sure you check and edit *before* sharing with parents!

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Example 2 - Year 7 Advisor:

I'm a Year 7 advisor. Write a note to let parents know the technologies we use at high school – Google Classroom for organisation, Microsoft Word and PPT for essay writing and presentations, Google Docs for collaboration. Tell them that we adhere to the NSW screen guidelines in class, and at our school, we expect Year 7 screen-based homework to be limited to 1 hour a day. If their children exceeds an hour, we encourage them to have conversations with their child. Parents are also welcome to check this term's assessment planner/notifications at [direct link] to find out the tasks and technologies are used to complete them, and make a time to speak with us. Keep the note to about 250 words. Use placeholders for missing details.

Sample EduChat output

Dear Parents and Carers,

As your child settles into Year 7, we would like to share the main technologies students will use at [SCHOOL NAME] to support learning and organisation.

In most subjects, students will use:

- Google Classroom for day-to-day organisation (classwork, instructions, resources and due dates)
- Microsoft Word for drafting and submitting written work such as essays and reports
- Microsoft PowerPoint (PPT) for creating presentations
- Google Docs for collaboration when students are working together (shared documents, peer feedback and group planning)

We also want to support healthy technology habits. In class, staff adhere to the NSW screen guidelines, including balancing screen tasks with explicit teaching, discussion, handwriting, reading, and practical activities.

At [SCHOOL NAME], our expectation is that Year 7 screens-based homework is limited to up to 1 hour per day. If you notice your child regularly exceeding an hour, we encourage you to have a calm conversation with them about:

- what tasks they are doing and what is due
- planning and time management
- taking short breaks and setting a clear finish time

You are welcome to check this term's assessment planner and notifications at: [DIRECT LINK]. This will help you see upcoming tasks, due dates and the technologies students may need to complete them.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at [ADVISOR EMAIL] or arrange a time to speak with the Year 7 team via [CONTACT METHOD].

Kind regards,
[NAME]
Year 7 Advisor, [SCHOOL NAME]



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USE GENERATIVE AI TO TRANSLATE NOTES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

One way to engage families who speak languages other than English is to communicate in their preferred language. Ask families which written language and script they prefer, then use generative AI to translate school notes into the languages used in your school community. AI translations can contain errors, so, where possible, ask someone proficient in the language to check that the translation conveys the intended meaning.

STEPS FOR PREPARING A TRANSLATED NOTE

1. **Check your English version is clear and accurate.**

2. **Choose the target language**.

3. **Ask your chosen GenAI tool to translate the note.** Sample translation prompt:

   > Translate into [the target language].
   > ***[Paste the checked English note.]***

4. **Add a AI translation disclaimer** in the target language to let the reader know that the translation is generated by AI and there could be mistakes or inaccuracies.

5. **Include English version along side the translation** and invite families to contact the school if anything is unclear.

SPECIAL NOTE FOR NSW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TEACHERS

The NSW Department of Education identified languages with generally reliable translations when using EduChat, suitable for routine communications such as emails and newsletter articles. Accuracy still varies. Use the list below to guide language selection and check the department's current translation advice before distributing notes.

These languages are verified by the department for general reliability: Afrikaans, Arabic, Bisaya/Cebuano, Bosnian, Cantonese (Traditional Chinese), Croatian, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Kirondi, Korean, Macedonian, Malay, Mandarin (Simplified Chinese), Māori (Cook Island), Māori (New Zealand), Marathi, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Tagalog (Filipino), Thai, Tongan, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese.

The department has existing translated disclaimers in these languages. **Copy the department approved translated disclaimer** from the Translation advice and accuracy page rather than asking EduChat to recreate it. The English wording is:

> "This text has been translated using Artificial Intelligence technology. While the technology strives for accuracy, please be aware that there may be mistakes or inaccuracies in the translation."

Other resources:

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

Best Practice in Screen Use for Education