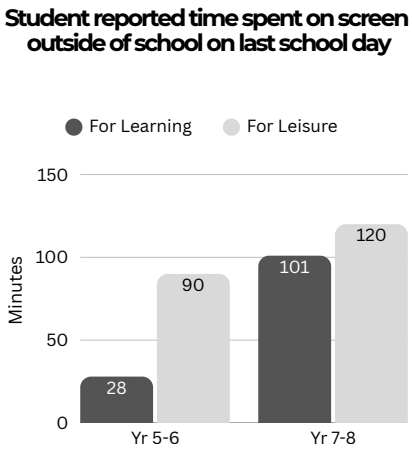
TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

Did you know that, on average, students in Years 7-8 reported more than three times as much screen time as students in Years 5-6? Students in Year 7-8 often experience challenges with distraction, blurred boundaries between homework and entertainment, and pressure to stay connected.



Research shows that problematic screen use becomes more prevalent after the transition to high school, and that managing those problems becomes more difficult for the child and the family. This may be partly because peers are becoming more important, and there are more pressures to use screen media. Screen design elements can also encourage overuse and addictive patterns.

Thus the transition to high school is a crucial time to support your child emotionally, to help them set up healthy patterns including with screen media, to be alert for emerging issues, and to intervene early if you become concerned.

A key is to balance screen use boundaries and monitoring with care and support, active co-use, encouragement of autonomy and good modelling. Here are some ideas to help your child prepare for high school.

Set up a device for learning
Check the high school's device requirements before you buy anything. If your child is getting a new device for school, set it up with only the apps and resources they need for learning. If they'll be using an existing device, consider creating a separate schoolwork profile and keep it limited to school tools only, with games and personal messaging left off. Be clear about the expectation that this profile is for schoolwork, and consider using parental controls or a routine check-in to keep things on track. You can also schedule regular breaks, encouraging off-screen downtime where possible, or allowing leisure screen time on a separate device or profile.

Ask about homework expectations early
At orientation or early in Year 7, ask the year adviser or teachers how much total time your child should usually spend on homework across subjects, and how much is expected to involve screens. Ask what to do if work regularly takes longer and who to contact about individual tasks. Learn how homework and assessments are distributed, what apps or programs they will be using, and help your child organise school bookmarks and subject folders.

Keep a short log if you are concerned
Together, record a week or two of homework and device use. Note the task and purpose, apps or websites used, time spent, breaks or distractions, and what was completed. Separate learning from recreation. Digital device usage reports can help, but they cannot always tell you what your child was doing.

Discuss persistent concerns with your child and the school
If your child consistently spends longer than the school's suggested homework time, first explore what is making it difficult. They may be distracted, unsure of instructions, struggling with the work or having technical problems. Share the log with the year adviser or relevant teacher and agree on support, workload adjustments or clearer routines.

Seek school support promptly if chats involve bullying or threats, or device use is causing significant distress or sleep disruption.

Best Practice in Screen Use for Education