



AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Integrity • Respect • Intellectual Growth

Parent Advice on Computers and Kids

Set Rules

Sit down as a family and discuss how you and your child feel about everyone's concerns regarding computer use at home. Make family rules that your child and you can live by. These might include times when computers can and cannot be used, family activities when computers are not turned on, etc. It is good if the rules are ones that the parents can also follow. Children are more likely to buy into the rules if they see that their parents also abide by them. The following are possible rules to consider:

- The computer can only be used in a specific location where the parents can see how it is being used.
- Recreational computer use should be limited. Many families only allow the recreational use after homework is done.
- Set a nightly time after which the computer is not used.
- Tell your child that you will occasionally check the computer's Internet browsing history as a condition to using it at home.
- Be aware of how social networking sites are used. Some parents insist on knowing their child's login information for email and social networking sites.

Be Consistent

The rules that you create should be ones that you are prepared to follow and enforce on a regular basis. Don't set rules and then make exceptions. It undermines the process and encourages additional deviation from the norm that you are trying to create.

Homework

The computer should not create a situation that requires more time than was needed before your child had a computer. Your child's teacher should be able to advise you about how much time your child should be spending on homework at night. If your child has difficulty completing his/her homework in the allotted time, you may need to provide support by monitoring and checking periodically to see how much homework your child has completed.

Talk With Your Child

Have a conversation with your child about his/her computer use. Discuss ways in which computer use can be good and ways in which it can be bad. Talk with them about the amount of time they spend on the computer and if that amount of time is good for them. If you show an interest in what your child does on the computer, he/she is more likely to listen when you express your concerns. Encourage your child to report incidents of cyberbullying to you. Your child should feel comfortable about sharing negative experiences without fear of reprisal.

The Bottom Line

You are the parent and you make the rules. You have to feel good about how and when technology is used in your house. Be consistent in following the guidelines you set. Communicate with your child and take a sincere interest in what he/she does on the computer.