



## GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA

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Michael Oak recognises that Electronic Media in its various forms is a powerful tool that serves the school and society in innumerable ways. However we are also conscious that what is appropriate for adults is not always appropriate for adolescents and children and we take pride in the fact that as a school we keep exposure to the adult aspects of this technology in its place. The power of modern handheld devices is quite amazing and linked visually and audibly to the very best and the very worst that society has produced.

For the growing child there is no substitute for the living human voice, for free imagination and for complete rest after healthy physical movement. Unfortunately, electronic media works actively against all these essential formative elements. How interesting that many top executives in Silicon Valley send their children to Waldorf Schools precisely to protect them from the common levels of exposure to electronic media there.

Michael Oak Teachers also believe that it is of upmost importance for families to manage actively any devices in their homes with access to Electronic Media.

Leadership and special responsibility are called for in an era of saturated exposure at all ages.

It is now well documented that concerns about both the content and the distractive power of this technology are well founded. It often exposes young children to highly undesirable anti-social content while stunting their verbal communication skills as well as their healthy physical mobility and development.

We consider the use of smart phones, tablets and computers to be completely inappropriate for children in the Primary School. If for practical reasons a phone is needed, let it be a simple phone for SMS's and phone calls only. For obvious reasons we strongly discourage allowing permanent screens in children's bedrooms.

Screen time should be reserved for special times at weekends and in the presence of adults through the first three years of Primary School. For older Primary School children viewing should be of agreed upon programs only.

In the High School we think it wise that these devices are excluded from meal times (parents included) and that they are collected before bedtime. Just for a restful sleep this is important. It can become a simple habit that is shared by all in our school. This should remain the parents' prerogative while the child is living in your home.

As Michael Oak teachers and parents, let us take pride in managing this with clarity. Let us stand up for "The right tools at the right time."

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THE RIGHT TOOLS AT THE RIGHT TIME		
Guidelines for the home use of Electronic Media		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsupervised internet access, on any device, is the area to be most cautious of when establishing rules around electronic media. Set wise and well-monitored rules early on.</li> <li>• Permanent screens in children’s bedrooms should be very strongly discouraged.</li> </ul>		
Class	Device	Suggestion
Playgroup and Kindergarten	Any electronic media with a screen including TV, computer, iPad, cell phone and iPod etc.	Every effort should be made to protect the Kindergarten child from electronic devices and flickering screens
Lower Primary Classes 1,2 & 3	Any electronic media with a screen including TV, computer, iPad, cell phone and iPod etc.	We believe that there is no place for access to Electronic media in the Primary School. Research for projects can be done at the library, from books at home and through talking to people. Arrangements for playdates etc. can be made using a landline.
Middle Primary Classes 4 & 5	Any electronic media with a screen including TV, computer, iPad, cell phone and iPod etc. Limited TV and DVD viewing	It can be wonderful as a family to sit together on a weekend and watch a program that you all enjoy. We recommend that programs be agreed on beforehand and that adults are present.
Upper Primary Classes 6 & 7	Simple “non-smart” cell phone without internet access. Limited TV and DVD viewing	By the time a child reaches 12/13 it may become appropriate for them to have a practical means of their parents around travel plans, lifts or logistics with extra murals etc. In this instance it is strongly recommended to provide a cheap and simple “non-smart” phone for them.
Lower High School Classes 8,9 & 10	Limited TV and DVD viewing, with strong boundaries around internet access on smart devices.	We think it is wise to exclude smart phones and tablets form mealtimes (parents included) and that they be collected before bedtime.
Upper High School Classes 11,12 & Matric		It remains the parents’ prerogative to set the rules “of the house” while the child/young adult is at home.