



Washington Waldorf School

THINK CLEARLY
FEEL COMPASSIONATELY
ACT PURPOSEFULLY

MEDIA GUIDELINES & SAMPLE CLASS AGREEMENTS

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About the Washington Waldorf School

WWS is a PreK - 12 independent school in Bethesda, MD, founded in 1969. Part of the global Waldorf education movement, WWS is a small school offering arts integrated education that limits digital technology in the classroom and prioritizes hands-on experiential learning. WWS alums go on to top colleges and meaningful careers in a wide range of fields.

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Early Childhood Guidance

From the Early Childhood Faculty

As Early Childhood teachers at Washington Waldorf School, we do not recommend any form of digital media for children under the age of 7. We know that doing real things, with real people, in real time provides the best opportunities for developing children. High-quality, frequent connections between children and caregivers are scientifically supported to enhance body motor skills, cognitive development, language acquisition, and social-emotional skills in children. We know that the human voice is essential to language acquisition. We know that children's involvement in a rich daily life supplies them with the building blocks for a rich imaginative world.

We also know that reasonable exceptions exist, and that media exposure with adult supervision can be necessary and helpful. We can think of many examples from our own home lives: long car rides with an audiobook or an age-appropriate podcast, sharing beloved recorded music together, video-calling family members, or hosting a family movie night. We created our media use advice based on current knowledge of human development and on the impact of media on children's health and wellbeing.

We offer the following resources. We know there are many opinions about media use. Here are some that we, as an Early Childhood faculty, have found useful.

We look forward to working together, teachers and caregivers, as we navigate this new digital landscape.



Resources for Caregivers

- [WECAN Statement on Digital Media](#)
- [The Children and Screens Guide for Early Child Development and Media Use](#) (Infants - age 5) from the Institute of Digital Media and Child Development
- [Young Children in the Digital Age](#): A Parents Guide by Nancy Carlsson-Paige, Ed. D.
- [Conscious Parenting Guide](#) has a section on The Effects of Media
- [Simplicity Parenting](#) (Kim John Payne) has a book, online resources, and trainings
- [Digital Ecosystems, Children, and Adolescents: Policy Statement](#) by the American Academy of Pediatrics

Media & Digital Technology Guidance for Grades 1-12

At Home Practices That Align With School Practices

MEDIUM	Grades 1 -4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
COMMUNICATION									
Email			■	■	▲	◆	●	●	●
Independent Video Chat			■	■	▲	◆	◆	●	●
Text Messaging			■	■	■	▲	◆	●	●
Group Texting				■	■	▲	◆	●	●
Social Media					■	■	▲	◆	●
INFORMATION & ENTERTAINMENT									
Recorded Music & Stories	■	■	▲	▲	▲	●	●	●	●
Radio News & Podcasts			■	■	▲	●	●	●	●
Streaming Media on School Nights						▲	▲	◆	●
Streaming Media Weekends & Holidays	■	■	■	■	■	◆	◆	●	●
Web Browsing			■	■	■	▲	◆	●	●
Video Games			■	■	■	▲	▲	◆	●
DEVICES									
Simple Cell Phones (Flip, Gabb, etc.)		■	■	■	▲	●	●	●	●
Computer or Tablet			■	■	▲	◆	◆	●	●
Gaming Console			■	■	■	▲	▲	◆	●
Smart Phone / Smart Watch					■	▲	▲	◆	●
LEGEND & NOTES									
 WASHINGTON Waldorf School		■	▲	◆	●				
	Not recommended. Reasonable exceptions apply with adult supervision.	Limited, monitored, and age appropriate.	Actively support and observe responsible usage: discuss and set expectations and house rules; view screen/activity when needed	Guide child toward independence: continue to discuss responsible usage, notice behavior, identify concerns and any possible misuse.	Support independence: step back to observe, advise and negotiate as necessary, step in if observing negative effects.	Notes These guidelines are independent of the use of assistive technology that supports access and equity			

Sample Class Agreements

WWS Class of 2035

Community Technology/Media Use Agreement for the 2025-26 School Year

We, the families of the Washington Waldorf School's class of 2035:

- understanding that a central tenet of Waldorf education is to protect and foster students' capacities for imagination, warm interaction, independent thinking, and healthy feeling by discouraging and limiting media exposure via television, video games, social media, and the internet in the daily experience of students;
- recognizing that technology is an integral part of our modern world with myriad beneficial uses for students when used with guidance from informed adults;
- realizing that we never know which of the many possible mistakes relating to technology use our child will make, and we are all facing this issue together; and
- desiring to foster a non-judgmental, supportive, compassionate dialogue with each other that shares responsibility for the social education of all of our children;

make the following commitments to each other for the 2025-26 school year:

- We agree that students of our class will not communicate with each other using text messaging, email, chats, online games, or any form of social media. They may communicate face to face, speaking over the phone, or using something like Skype or FaceTime in an open space at home (no closed doors).
- We agree that by default, there will be no screens offered to children during playdates (including television, the internet, YouTube, video/app/online games, smartphones, tablets, computers, etc.). Exceptions to the default will be made only with express permission from a caregiver of all children present, and content limits will be applied, with content rated TV-Y and TV-G presumed acceptable.
 - We have a [class resource list](#) to collect enjoyable age- and developmentally-appropriate movies and television shows—please contribute your ideas!
 - [Common Sense Media](#) is another good resource for ratings and reviews.
- Given the pervasiveness of screens in public spaces, caregivers will make their best effort to communicate and agree in advance to the parameters for screen use during playdates in public spaces (e.g., museums) and, if that's not possible, will use their best judgment to navigate the situation.
- Once we agree to lift some or all of the restrictions we agree to in #1 above, we further agree that we will check and monitor our children's media usage when they text message, send email, or use social media or gaming programs. We do this to ensure that we (a) have the chance to prevent something upsetting or dangerous from occurring and/or (b) will be in a position to intervene and help our children and other families in a supportive and compassionate manner if something does occur.

Sample Class Agreements

WWS Class of 2035

Community Technology/Media Use Agreement for the 2025-26 School Year

Continued...

- We agree not to share images of children other than our own on social media platforms; if we want to share a photo, we will send it directly and privately to the relevant adults. Photos may also be shared on the class Signal group chat.
- Device Curfew: If/when you choose to allow your child to use some kind of device, please ensure that there is an early curfew for use that includes removing it from the child's bedroom. It is too much to ask a child to self regulate device usage; they need clear and consistent external boundaries.
- Avoid School Nights: Device usage has a causative link to sleep disturbance, and the presence of a device in a child's bedroom increases the chances that their sleep will be disturbed, with consequent impacts on their own, and potentially others', learning on the following day.
- We agree to reconvene at the beginning of each school year to continue the dialogue about this agreement, make any adjustments we agree are necessary, and renew our commitments.

Please indicate that you have reviewed and assent to the commitments set forth above by checking off your name below.

[illegible]

Sample Class Agreements

Class of 2030

Community media agreement

2021-22 School Year

- We are aiming to create a supportive, empathic and compassionate community that shares the social education of all our children. We intend to support each other and to work carefully within our community to help each participant learn how to navigate both our digital and real world!
- We agree that students of our class will not communicate amongst each other using text, e-mail, chats, gaming platforms. NO social media in 4th grade. They can communicate face to face, speaking over the phone, or using something like Skype or FaceTime when monitored.
- We agree that there will be no technology used on play dates among classmates (including using the internet, Youtube, games etc. and not using phones, tablets, computers etc.) Movies should be used with express permission from both parents, and limits should be applied even when permission is granted. Please consider sharing amongst the parent body enjoyable, age and developmentally appropriate movie ideas. Common Sense Media is a good resource.
- We commit to being open and honest with each other without judgment for the benefit of this community of children.

Please note that parents do not wish to have images of their children shared on social media platforms. If you want to share a photo, send it directly and privately to the relevant adults.

Additional Resources

Resources to Support Parents

- [List of resources](#) compiled by the WWS Parent/Family Organization
- [Common Sense Media](#) is a good resource for ratings and reviews.
- [MAMA \(mothers against media addiction\)](#) and their recommended [books](#) by relevant category.
- [ScreenStrong](#) offers support for preventing and reversing addictive screen habits in children.
- [fairplay](#) is an advocacy group for kids against big tech

Articles, Media & Book Recommendations

- "The Anxious Generation" by Jonathan Haidt
- [Psychology Today: Growing Up in a False Reality](#)
- [The Atlantic: Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?](#)
- [#KidsOnTech](#) documentary