



Media Guidelines for Families

Introduction

A cornerstone of Steiner education is an intentional curriculum that supports its students through each stage of their development. Leaning Tree Steiner School seeks to help its students develop the capacity to deeply engage and actively participate in their own education, to cultivate their own unique imaginations, and to take ownership of their thoughts and actions. This philosophy is reflected in the School's guidelines regarding media. As a School, we place an emphasis on direct human interaction and authentic experience. Studies show that a direct experience, as opposed to a virtual one, has a measurable positive impact on brain development throughout childhood and adolescence.

Parents/caregivers are asked to carefully consider these guidelines and whether they can actively align with the school in support of their own children, as well as the other children in the LTSS community. We understand that this is a challenging task given the time and place in which we live, but it is an integral part of the philosophy of LTSS.

Guidelines

Playgroup through to Grade 2

We recommend minimal exposure at this age to electronic media in daily life. Additionally, it is recommended that your child only be exposed to limited amounts of radio with careful parent attention to appropriate stations, and age-appropriate recorded music. More importantly, especially minimise the viewing of the news on television, use of the internet, computers and mobile telephones. Video and online games are addictive and can adversely impact student work. Further, social media is not appropriate for this age. Children of this age should have no access to this media.

Grades 3 - 4

Aim for slow, gradual media exposure consciously selected by parents/caregivers. The viewing should be chosen with discretion for content, genre and limited to weekends. Again, it is recommended there be no exposure to mobile telephones, video, online games and social media. Parents should be prepared to discuss and unpack any content their child has viewed. From this age onward, it is highly recommended that content ratings be adhered to, regardless of peer/societal pressure of what is the norm or "the new normal".



Rated G: General Audiences – all ages admitted.

Rated PG: Parental Guidance Suggested – some material may not be suitable for children.

Rated PG-13: Parents Strongly Cautioned – some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Rated M: Advisory classification the content is moderate in impact. M films are not recommended for people aged under 15 as a level of maturity is required.

Rated MA 15: Legally restricted classification. The content is strong in impact. MA 15+ films are not suitable for people aged under 15.

Rated R: Restricted – under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian. Don't be tempted or pressured to permit viewing beyond recommended ages. There is a lot of great content for each age-group, hold back from leaping into the next bracket of ratings. Other than the inappropriateness of content, this teaches patience and delayed-satisfaction.

Use your own discretion. You may not approve of the behaviour being modelled in some G or PG content – how would you feel if your child were acting out this behaviour to you or another?

Grades 5 - 6

Strive to limit children at this age from watching excessive television or movies during the week. As children enter adolescence, LTSS will educate our students through conversation about the social implications of computer use and will introduce students to the use of the internet through carefully guided research projects. Aim to limit (if any) exposure at this age to mobile telephones, video and online games. Personal social media accounts are not appropriate for this age as they can negatively affect a student's mental wellbeing.

Grades 7 and beyond

In grade 7 and up, the teachers and class communities will discuss, craft and update these guidelines to shape the measured introduction of media when developmentally appropriate. We are aiming for responsible, global digital citizenship, meaning balanced children who are able to understand the importance of self-regulation in regard to all types



of media. Again, personal social media accounts are not appropriate for this age. Students are not permitted to use mobile telephones whilst at school.

School Community

To reflect these guidelines, it is recommended that all adults in our setting also adhere to global digital citizenship principles:

- Parents/caregivers refrain from using mobile telephones for conversations/text messages/social media on school grounds. Our screens create a barrier to human contact, your kids love to see your faces eagerly waiting to meet them at the end of the day.
- Parents/caregivers respect other family's privacy decisions and be mindful when taking photographs.
- Do not publish images of children (other than your own, if this is your wish) on social media.
- Do not name children on social media.
- Do not download school images for use on personal social media unless under the media umbrella of LTSS.
- T.H.I.N.K. - Only use school/class social media accounts for Thoughtful, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind content or questions. We encourage using this as a guide for your personal accounts, to always be setting a noble example for your children.

In the event of major class presentations, LTSS will provide a recording to families if they wish, for personal viewing only. This will eliminate the need of recording by families. Performers and audience members alike can enjoy the moment and not be otherwise distracted.

From these understandings, we forge our community partnership each year to renew our commitment to the healthiest possible childhood for the children under our care.