Technology with Intention: Rock Hill Schools Screen Time Recommendations

Rock Hill Schools sees an opportunity to be more intentional about students on screens during the instructional day and reduce unnecessary screen time. This is a commitment to continually reflect, "How can we best provide high quality instruction to students each day?" Devices should earn their place in an instructional lesson through purpose, standards-alignment, and student engagement. As technology evolves, we need to keep asking the important questions: How does technology support learning? When should technology be used? When is a screen-free approach more appropriate for the instruction? In every case, educators in the classroom should reduce their reliance on digital worksheets.

The district will ensure that technology practices support equitable access for all students, including students with disabilities, English learners, and students requiring assistive technologies or accommodations. Nothing in this policy shall limit the use of assistive technology or specialized instructional supports required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or other educational accommodation.

What Research Tells Us About Screen Use:

Research suggests that the value of classroom technology depends on what students are doing with it and why. Recent *Educational Leadership* coverage and studies of literacy and mathematics instruction find that well-designed digital tasks can support learning, especially when they provide feedback, deepen thinking, or help students create and collaborate. Access to a device alone does not produce those benefits. For young children, research also points to the importance of adult interaction, age-appropriate content, and time for play and hands-on learning. Rock Hill Schools' screen time ranges provide practical guardrails; they should be paired with a clear instructional purpose for every use.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The district shall promote technology use that:

1. Supports high-quality instruction and student learning outcomes;
2. Is developmentally appropriate for students' ages and learning needs;
3. Encourages active engagement, creativity, communication, and collaboration;
4. Promotes student wellness, including physical, emotional, social, and mental health;
5. Balances digital learning with non-digital instructional practices;
6. Ensures equitable access and accessibility for all learners;
7. Encourages responsible digital citizenship and online safety; and
8. Strengthens partnerships between schools and families regarding healthy technology habits.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy:

Instructional Screen Time Time during which students use digital devices or screens for educational purposes during the school day.

Passive Screen Use Screen activities primarily involving consumption of digital content with limited interaction, including extended video viewing or scrolling activities.

Active Screen Use Interactive, creative, collaborative, or instructional uses of technology that require student participation, problem-solving, communication, or creation.

Digital Devices District-issued devices including student laptops

Elementary SCREEN TIME RECOMMENDATIONS

Devices should earn their place in every instructional lesson.		
Grade Level *State-Required assessments may require additional screen time	**Screen Time Guidance** *Technology should comply with district approved tools that meet standards for instructional quality as outlined in the Tier 1 Guidelines.	**Instructional Focus**
PreK Adult Guided	Teacher-directed only. No more than 10 continuous minutes of whole group screen time should be used before students shift to a non-screen task. Limited to 20-30 minutes daily; maximum 150 minutes weekly.	Prioritize play, students' use of language, movement, hands-on centers, and teacher read-alouds. Use teacher-directed media only when it purposefully enhances the lesson.
Kindergarten and 1st Grade Adult Guided	Limited to 20-30 minutes daily; maximum 150 minutes weekly.	Build foundational device routines through the IPAD. Provide explicit instruction in district provided digital citizenship lessons. Device use should be limited to required instructional platforms, Zearn and

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		Amira, as directed. Structured literacy routines that purposefully use the device is also appropriate.
Grade 2 Adult Guided	30-45 minutes daily; maximum 225 minutes weekly.	Strengthen independent navigation of device, and emphasize responsible use. Choose purposeful reading, writing, math, and creation tasks with timely feedback. Required instructional platforms are appropriate.
Grade 3-5 Adult Guided	45-60 minutes daily; maximum 300 minutes weekly.	Device usage should prioritize standards-aligned, curriculum aligned and focused on interactive opportunities. Required instructional platforms are appropriate.
ESE/IEP Exceptions: Individualized supports, accommodations, assistive technology, and services required by a student's IEP take precedence over these general time recommendations. Follow the IEP and use professional judgment to support access and learning.		

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Secondary SCREEN TIME RECOMMENDATIONS

Devices should earn their place in every instructional lesson.		
Grade Level *State-Required assessments may require additional screen time	**Screen Time Guidance** *Technology should comply with district approved tools that meet standards for instructional quality as outlined in the Tier 1 Guidelines.	**Instructional Focus**
Grade 6-8 Shared Responsibility	0-30 minutes per class period.	Screen time should remain purposeful and balanced. Students should not routinely spend most of a class period working independently on a device. Device free instructional activities should be included daily including student discourse, movement, labs, student collaboration, etc.
Grades 9-12 Student Managed	0-60 minutes per class period.	Teachers should continually ask, "Could this lesson be more

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		effective without a student using a device?" Workplace readiness should remain the focus. Use will vary by course. Build student judgement about when technology advances the learning goal and/or student output.
ESE/IEP Exceptions: Individualized supports, accommodations, assistive technology, and services required by a student's IEP take precedence over these general time recommendations. Follow the IEP and use professional judgment to support access and learning.		

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