

SAN FRANCISCO WALDORF GRADE SCHOOL

Technology Guidelines

The process of introducing the media and technology into your child's home life will be unique and based on your family's goals and ideals, but here we give some basic guidelines for this introduction based on our observations of children and our understanding of child development.

- Parents are urged to provide their young children, **up to the age of 9**, with an environment free of electronic media of all types, including radio and audio books and recorded music. While we recognize the difficulties of this request, we believe it is so essential and beneficial to the young child's development, we ask you to embrace the challenge of incorporating a media-free lifestyle into your family life. We are happy to provide suggestions about how to make this work.
- **After the 9 yr. change**, parents may wish to occasionally introduce some type of movie or video experience into their children's lives. We recommend that you do this only on occasion, never during the school week, and as a family rather than solitary activity. Carefully selected and shared with a parent, this type of experience can be a special treat. However, time spent in nature, such as a trip to the beach, a bicycle ride, or a hike together; and all kinds of meaningful work and play, remain the best choices for your family time.
- **After the 12 yr. change**, parents may find their child is ready to navigate the world of electronic media and has some ability to filter and discriminate media messages and images. Gradually and with careful monitoring, parents may begin allowing the child to be exposed to computer games, movies, email and the internet, knowing that each new medium will require you to make choices and decisions about what, how much and when. Email and social media can be particularly slippery slopes for the young adolescent, because of the dangers of overuse and inappropriate content. We suggest that you look carefully at your own child and at your family life, asking the questions suggested above, as each new technology is introduced. You as parents need to retain control over the use of technology by your children. The Faculty is always ready to help you as you make this transition. Fellow parents, who might have already dealt with some of these questions with their older children, can also provide invaluable assistance and practical tips. Being respectful of other families' decisions about media use remains essential during these years of transition.
- **From age 14** and up, parental supervision is still necessary and a watchful guardian will need to be aware of the role of media in her child's life, no matter what her age. As parents you will continue to need to retain control over the use of technology by your children throughout the Grade School years and to monitor this use during the High School years. To assist you in this task, we highly recommend that any computer used by your children be kept in a central location in the home, never in a child's bedroom.
- Our Grade School Parent Handbook, found online at sfwaldorf.org, provides a complete outline of our rules and guidelines regarding the use of cell phones and electronic devices on campus and at school events. A copy of those guidelines is also included below.

Guidelines for Media at School Events (from current SFWGS Parent Handbook)

Cameras at School Events

Parents are requested to please refrain from photographing and videotaping special assemblies and class plays. Contact your class teacher for special arrangements.

Grade School Cell Phone Etiquette

While recognizing the necessity of cell phones as a communication tool, the school must draw some limits to prevent interruptions and intrusions into the environment we create for the children.

Student Use

Students may not use cell phones on campus during school hours or during after-care hours*, or off-campus during school hours such as when at the park or on field trips. If a student carries a cell phone in his/her belongings it must remain turned off and put away until after school. Phones or other electronic devices found outside of backpacks or bags will be confiscated. The teacher has the discretion to require a parent or guardian to come to the school office to retrieve any confiscated items. Students who wish to use their phones outside after dismissal will be asked to move down the sidewalk beyond the school property line.

*Students may ask permission from faculty or staff to use their phones in the school office for important family communications.

Adult Use

Cell phone use in the interior areas of the campus is distracting to others and should be avoided. It also sets a poor example for the students. If it is necessary to use a cell phone when on campus, we ask that the adult step out in front of the school and away from any outdoor classes or ask if there is a quiet spot in the offices that can be used for the moment.

Personal Music Devices

Use of personal music devices has much the same effect on social interactions and the school's learning atmosphere as does student use of cell phones, and are therefore subject to the same usage limitations as cell phones.