

Managing Technology

Today's parents are challenged at every turn by the extensive availability of technology. The research is clear that all of us can benefit from moderating our use and taking regular breaks. In addition, high school and college students are experiencing significant levels of anxiety, and there is little doubt that the constant availability of cell phones and computers amplifies their stress, even if teens are convinced otherwise.

To add to the challenge, student access to technology is essential for both completing online assignments and maintaining social relationships. All of this is complicated by the fact that their frontal cortex responsible for decision-making and managing priorities is not yet fully developed. What can parents realistically do?

- 1) **Be sympathetic.** Share how hard it is for you to stay on task when the phone and computer keep buzzing with notifications.
- 2) **Model good behavior.** Put your own phone away when conversing with your child or others. Teens are sensitive to hypocrisy and will question rules if you don't follow them as well. Establish phone-free family times (for example, over dinner or while watching a movie together).
- 3) **Dock all family devices at an agreed-upon time and space that makes sense, knowing your child and family.** We find that many teens struggle to shut down on their own and resist the temptation to retrieve their devices during the night. Students will inevitably adjust if you stand firm on the policy that all tech-related homework must be completed by the designated time. All family members can use an old-fashioned clock as an alarm.
- 4) **Share a workspace with your children.** Interact with your child regularly to help them stay on task and discuss timed breaks. If your child struggles with distractions, consider an app like [Self-Control](#), which limits access to frequently used websites.

To support a holiday free from academic pressure, Staples High School has instituted a homework-free Thanksgiving Day weekend. The Staples Resilience Project proposes that students, staff, and their families consider at least 24 hours technology-free in order to give their full attention and gratitude to the spirit of the season.

For more on this topic, we recommend the below:

[Screenagers Tech Talk Tuesdays](#)

[Common Sense Media](#)

Previous Resilience Project emails on this topic ([here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#))

The Staples Resilience Project is an ongoing endeavor by the Staples Guidance Department aimed to promote the well-being of our students and foster a positive, inclusive school community.

shs.westportps.org/departments/guidance/staples-resilience-project