Chapter 6: Managing and Mastering Screens

Lesson Plan: Safe with my screens

Frame: Safe with my screens

Why use it?

There is no getting away from the fact that screens are a big part of everyday life for most children. As adults, we find it very hard to place boundaries around our screen use – for children this is so much harder and they will absolutely need support with it. As we discussed in *Chapter 6*, we first need to educate them about the risks and dangers of screens and the online world, then help them tune in to how screen use feels for them, and eventually guide them to place appropriate boundaries around their screens, in terms of the time they spend and also the activities they choose. This lesson focuses on the two latter parts of this process. It can be adapted for use with any age group – it is relevant for all.

What next?

This lesson is intended to be a beginning step on the journey to helping children master their screen use. The conversations that arise during this lesson need to be continued and teaching about healthy and responsible interaction with screens will need to be embedded across the curriculum. Use the key issues that come up to plan further lessons and activities tailored to your class. Make a point of having screen-free days or times in school to demonstrate that we can learn and have fun without them. Some children will need specific support around their screen use at home – be mindful of the impact this may be having on them in terms of tiredness, ability to learn and exposure to things that might not be appropriate for their age. Having conversations about this with parents will never be easy, but preparing for them and having an agreed plan in school for these circumstances will help.

Lesson Plan: Safe with my screens

KS1/KS2 Whole class or small group

Time: 1 hour or in shorter slots over several sessions. Follow up over several weeks.

Curriculum links:
PSHE

Learning Outcomes:
- To identify the key screens that they use and how they can be useful.
- To identify how they feel after screen use.
- To understand that there are benefits and drawbacks to using screens.
- To identify some healthy boundaries for their screen use.

Key vocabulary:
screens, digital, internet, online, addiction, boundary, limit

Resources:
- Slides for whiteboard (see plan below)
- Whiteboards and pens
- Frame: 'Safe with my screens'
- Pencils/Pens

Introduction: Show a picture of an old computer from the 1980s. *What do you think this is?* Show a picture of a tablet on the other side of the screen. *Which would you rather have?* Tell funny stories of your own computer use in childhood or adulthood and demonstrate how lucky we are today that screens and the internet can make our lives easier and provide us with entertainment.

Main teaching:
- *What screens do we have?* Show pictures of a variety of screens (TV, laptop, tablet, phone, watch, games console). *What do we use them for?* Discuss the different uses and explore what they can help us with (work, learning, food shopping, connecting with friends, music, films, playing fun games). Paired discussion: *What is your favourite screen?* Share your own and a reason and allow children to share.

- Paired discussion: *Are we always safe when we use our screens? When might things not be safe?* Briefly explore ideas including: sharing personal information and photos, meeting people online who may not be who they say they are and seeing things that aren't appropriate for our age. (This section can be expanded to fill several more lessons, depending on the age of the children and the needs of the class).

- *Can you imagine a life without screens?* We all agree that screens and the internet are fun and helpful, but sometimes we can have too much of a good thing. *What does this mean?* Explain that the more we use screens, the more we want to use them. Our brains love the feeling they get from watching funny things, receiving messages and playing games. But our brains aren't designed to cope with this all the time. Sometimes we find it really hard to put our screens down and we don't feel good when we do – in our minds and our bodies. We sometimes use the word 'addiction' to describe the situation when we can't put things down and keep coming back for more, even when it is not good for us.
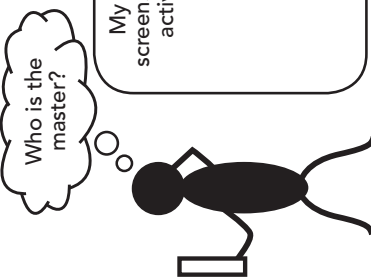
Activity: To protect ourselves from the things that are unsafe online and to keep our minds and bodies healthy, we need to put boundaries or limits around our screen use. This is important for adults and children. Model your own 'Safe with my screens' frame, before supporting children to complete their own. Explain that adults in school will help with boundaries in the classroom and at home, they can ask their parents to help. The boundaries might be different in each place. Focus on discussing: *When do I want to use screens and what could I do instead? How do I know when I have had long enough using a screen? What can I do when I see something I don't like on a screen?* This activity may take several sessions, especially if the idea of boundaries is new to children.

Wrapping up: Paired discussion: *What will your target be to make your screen use healthier?* Model your own example e.g. I use my phone late in the evening and it stops me from sleeping. My target is to always put my phone on silent and on charge downstairs by 8pm every evening. Children to share their ideas and write on their frame. Explain everyone can check in with targets over the coming days and weeks and encourage each other. Display yours in the classroom and ask children to prompt you about it.

Extension: Paired discussion: *What helpful ideas can you give to younger children to help them to become masters of their screens too?* Explore further ideas that have arisen during activity. Produce a set of rules in age-appropriate language that the class can share in an assembly with younger children (assuming that consistent messages about screens are being given across the school).

Follow up: Ask how children have been getting on with their targets. Give an update on your progress too.

Safe with my screens

Who is the master?

My favourite screens and screen activities are:

When do I want to use screens?

What could I do instead of using a screen?

What are the signs that I've had enough screen time?

My healthy screen time limits:

School days
_____ minutes

Switch off at _____ pm

Weekends
_____ minutes

Switch off at _____ pm

What can I do if I see something I don't like on my screen?

How can I keep myself safe on my screens?