Parent Perspectives & Considerations for Tech Use at Swansea

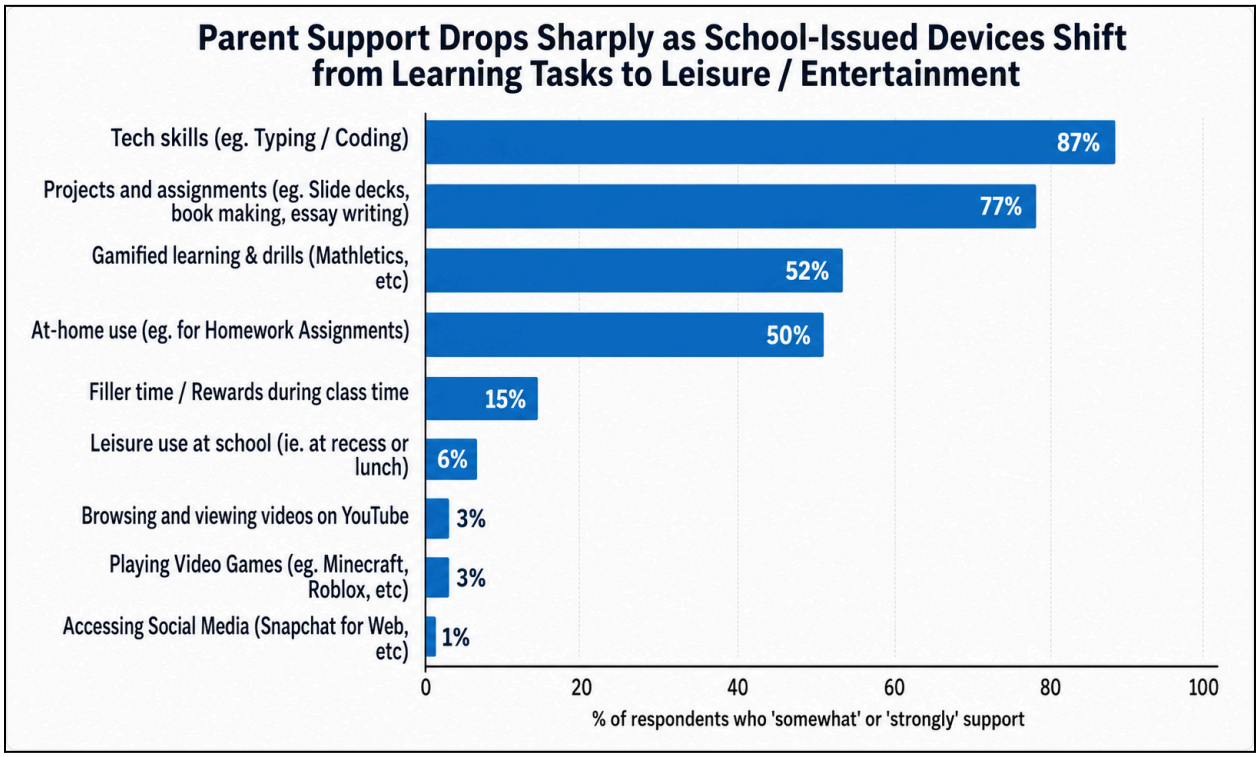
About this document: This document summarizes feedback from Swansea families and offers considerations for school staff and administrators regarding the use of technology at Swansea.

Purpose: To ensure technology at Swansea is used thoughtfully, for clear educational purposes, and in ways that are age-appropriate, time-limited, and intentional.

Rationale: To protect attention spans**,** mental health, and physical health (eyesight, posture/alignment, movement), as well as prevent exposure to inappropriate content and people online.

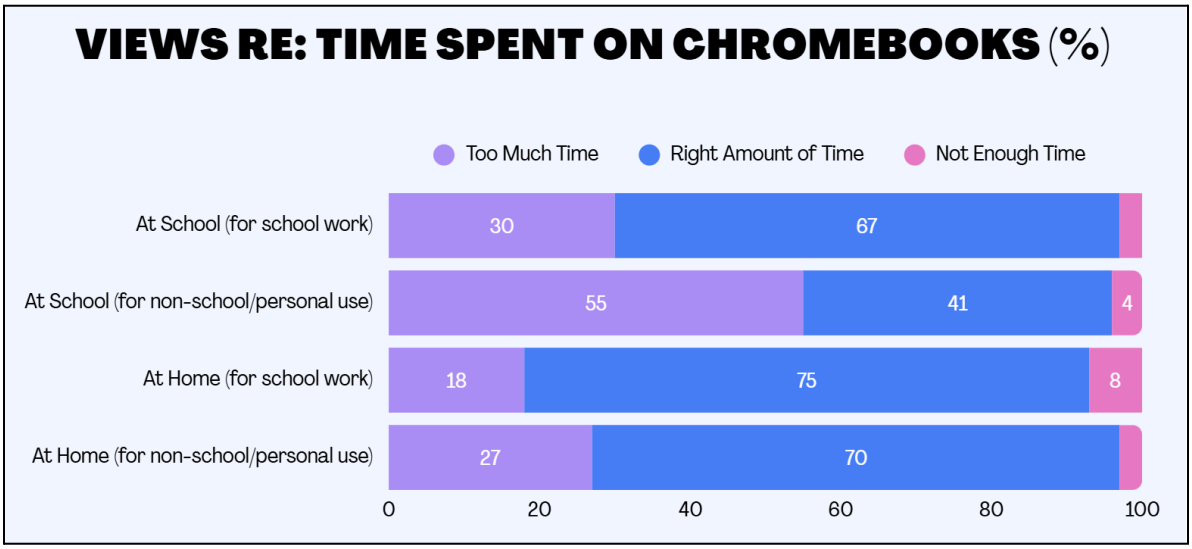
Background

The Swansea Digital Wellness Survey conducted in April 2026, revealed that Swansea parents/caregivers generally support educational uses of tech, but are strongly opposed to non-educational uses. *In particular, they do not want tech used for rewards or filler time, video games, social media or to browse/view YouTube videos.* (To be clear, it is only direct student access to YouTube which parents take issue with – teachers showing educational YouTube videos to the entire class wouldn't be included in this).



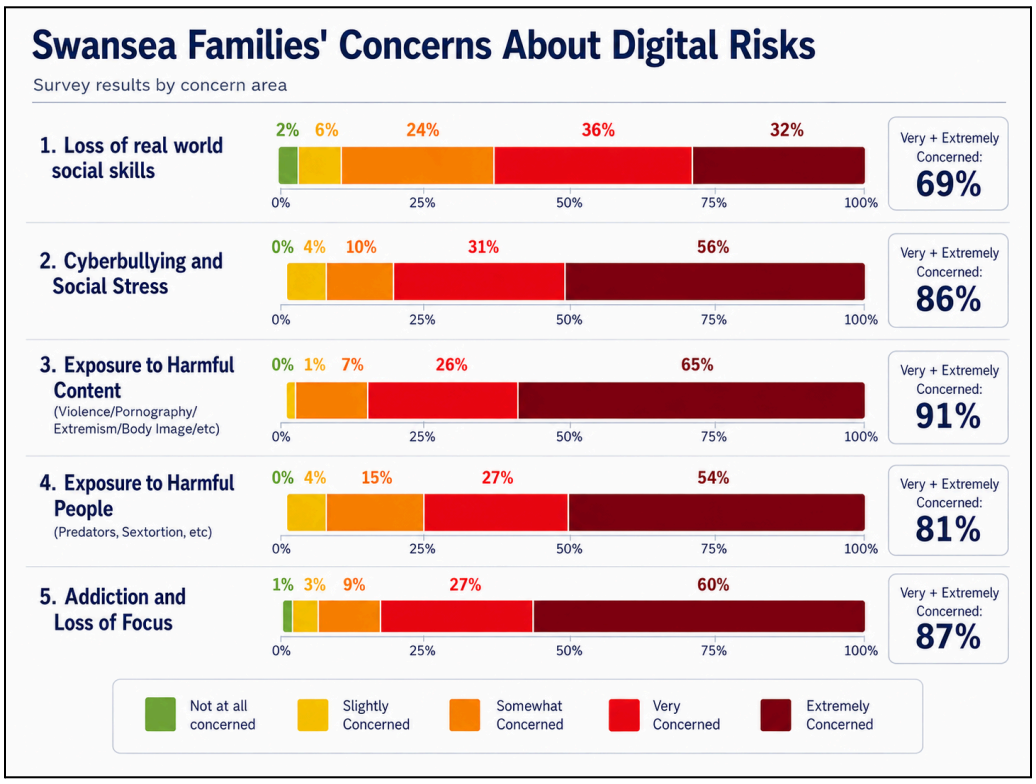
SOURCE: The Swansea Digital Wellness Parent & Caregiver Survey conducted in April 2026 (251 Responses)

A similar picture emerges when Swansea parents/caregivers were asked about the amount of time spent on school-issued devices:



SOURCE: The Swansea Digital Wellness Parent & Caregiver Survey conducted in April 2026 (251 Responses)

The intensity of Swansea families' concern is high: Of the 250+ responses to the survey, 91% of parents described themselves as "very or extremely concerned" about exposure to harmful content online, with the remaining ~8% indicating that they were at least slightly or somewhat concerned. Exposure to inappropriate content on devices at school (via Chromebooks, smartphones and even smartwatches) is unfortunately quite common.



SOURCE: The Swansea Digital Wellness Parent & Caregiver Survey conducted in April

2026 (251 Responses)

Parent Perspective & Considerations

Given the feedback we heard from Swansea families, the Digital Wellness Committee would like to share some parent perspectives and considerations for technology use at Swansea.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Keeping families informed about classroom technology**
  One consistent theme in the survey comments was that parents would appreciate more information about what technology their children are using at school and why. Sharing planned technology use at the beginning of the school year, perhaps by email or at Curriculum Night would be helpful for parents to feel informed.

- **Considering pen-and-paper and other off-screen approaches where appropriate**
  Many parents would prefer technology to be used primarily when it supports technology-specific skills (e.g., coding, typing, digital assessments). For reading, math, science, projects, and assignments, families may appreciate opportunities to use books, writing, hands-on activities, and pen-and-paper approaches where appropriate.
    - For example: The new Nelson Edwin platform is designed to allow off-screen use (ie. printed worksheets, projector, etc). Using this approach may have benefits in decreasing distraction, risk of exposure to harmful content and harmful people, and the physical adverse effects of screens on posture and eyesight, while increasing social interaction and engagement.

- **Being mindful of total screen time**
  Families expressed concern about the amount of time children spend on screens during the school day, particularly when screen use is not essential to the learning objective. Parents may appreciate consideration of whether an activity could achieve the same goal with less screen time.

- **Exercising extra caution with internet access**
  Parents expressed particular concern about students having direct access to the internet and the possibility of encountering inappropriate or harmful content. Careful consideration of whether the educational benefit outweighs these risks and whether an offline alternative is available would be appreciated by many families.

- **Keeping screen use purposeful**
  Families indicated a strong preference that screens be used for educational activities rather than class filler, rewards, parties, or leisure during recess and lunch (with the exception of movies during indoor recess due to inclement weather).

- **Avoiding direct student access to YouTube, video games, social media, and AI chatbots**

Parents almost unanimously expressed significant concern about students independently accessing these platforms (as opposed to a teacher screening a selected educational video for the class)

- **Supporting the bell-to-bell personal-device expectations**
  Consistent enforcement of existing expectations around smartphones, smartwatches, and other personal devices may help reduce distractions, limit exposure to harmful content on peers' devices, and increase student engagement and face-to-face interaction.

- **Using gamified learning thoughtfully**
  Parent perspectives on gamified learning were mixed. While some families see value in it, others have concerns about whether frequent use may contribute to shorter attention spans or make sustained, non-digital learning more challenging. Families may appreciate a thoughtful balance between gamified activities and other forms of learning.

- **Considering the implications of sending devices home**
  Parent perspectives on at-home device use were also mixed. Some families value having access to school devices, while others have concerns about supervision, monitoring, and the ways school-issued devices may affect technology boundaries at home. Some parents have shared that their efforts to limit recreational screen use can feel undermined when a school device is readily available outside of school hours. Families may appreciate consideration of whether devices need to go home and how often.

Overall, the parent perspective we heard was not opposition to technology, but a desire for it to be used thoughtfully, intentionally, and primarily when it adds meaningful value to student learning.

Resources for Swansea Teachers

The Swansea Digital Wellness Committee recognizes that reducing tech use in the classroom may be challenging and we would love to hear from Swansea teachers about ways we can support you towards this goal. Here are some resources we have invested in and ones we are planning for next year.

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:

- Class set (35 copies) of *The Amazing Generation: Your Guide to Fun and Freedom in a Screen-Filled World (Catherine Anne Price and Jonathan Haidt)* housed at the school

library for teachers to use for mental health and digital/media literacy curriculum (recommended as a classroom resource for Grades 4-7)
- Staff Book Club of *The Digital Delusion: How Classroom Technology Harms Our Kids' Learning – and How to Help Them Thrive Again (Jared Cooney Horvath)* starting in the fall (please reach out to Matt Davies if interested in joining the book club)

IN PLANNING FOR 2026/2027 SCHOOL YEAR:

- A "Board Games & Activities" donation drive (for teachers to have physical materials in their classrooms for filler/reward time, eg. lego, chess, checkers, cards, board games, etc.)

HOW ELSE CAN WE HELP?

- Please send us your ideas! Email SwanseaDigitalWellness@gmail.com

Parent/Caregiver Voices

- School-issued devices were the most frequently mentioned topic in the survey comments, appearing in **95 responses**.
- Of these, **86 expressed concern**, frustration, or a desire for less technology use at school, while **9 were supportive**.

86 (out of 95) Comments expressed concern about school-issued devices.

A few sample comments:

The Chromebook has created major challenges in our household. Our son is not able to manage his use of computers and is already developing unhealthy habits, but we don't have time to monitor its use and we don't feel that taking it away is a good option since he needs to do his schoolwork. We don't believe it is an appropriate use of school resources and we would like to use the smartbook program ended. Computer-related learning can be done on devices that stay at the school.

My son is addicted to his computer thank you TDSB, and we find it hard for him to turn it off even when we are supervising him now.

TDSB lax policy to allow grade 3's unsupervised access to internet (without parental controls) is in direct opposition to the way we parent and what we want for our child. This should not be allowed.

Please do not use iPads and things like matheletics at school. We had gone to extraordinary lengths to not introduce this technology to our kids and now th teachers are requiring this for homework.

Concerned about children's vision getting worse

Supervised classroom use for learning certain subjects like coding is one thing, but it is a slippery slope when it comes to gamified learning such as mathletics. Regardless of content, the impact on attention spans and capacity to create addictive behaviour remains."

I wish no computers were assigned until highschool

Could we go back to workbook, books with curriculum. Stop doing everything online

My child does not learn well doing wrote learning on a device. Why is teaching and learning primarily dependent on digital platforms?

So many parents I know have worked very hard to keep their kids as screen-free as possible and the last thing we want is for schools to undermine our efforts

9 (out of 95) Comments expressed support for school-issued devices.

A few sample comments:

Homework should be done electronically and rid of heavy backpacks

Kids learning tech is important for development in coding skills, finding their comfort zone maybe discover passion for specific field to pursuit as future career

Use of computers in schools is absolutely necessary today. Both parents and schools must adapt quickly to the reality that the workforce uses computers regularly and the modern world will be tech based. Everything is digital today and will continue to be. You just need to find the right kind of app, not remove computer or from school settings; in fact, doing so would be a true disservice to kids.

I would like to learn more about leveraging online games such as Minecraft and its possibilities as I do believe that kids can have some device time. I'd like to learn more about the games that they are interested in through the parental lens so we can navigate the world with them.