

Downsville Central School Technology FAQ

Downsville Central School believes technology can be a valuable tool for learning when it is used safely, responsibly, and purposefully. We are committed to providing a safe digital learning environment while working in partnership with parents to help students develop healthy technology habits and responsible digital citizenship.

This FAQ explains our technology safeguards, student responsibilities, and approach to classroom screen time.

1. Does Downsville Central School use a filtering system?

Yes. Our school uses internet filtering systems to help protect students from inappropriate or harmful online content. These filters are designed to restrict access to websites and materials that are not suitable for students in a school setting.

While filtering systems provide an important layer of protection, they don't always catch everything which is why we also recognize that technology safety requires ongoing monitoring, education, and communication between the school and families.

2. What are the school's expectations for appropriate technology use?

Students are expected to use school technology, internet access, applications, and devices responsibly and for their intended educational purposes.

Our technology expectations include:

- Educational use: Students should use technology for learning activities assigned or approved by their teachers.
- Appropriate content: Students must not intentionally search for, access, create, or share inappropriate, offensive, or harmful content.
- Respectful communication: Students must communicate respectfully online and must not use technology to bully, harass, threaten, or embarrass others.
- Digital safety and privacy: Students should protect their passwords and personal information and respect the privacy of others.
- Responsible device use: Students should care for school-issued devices and follow classroom expectations for when and how technology may be used.
- Following school policies: Students must follow the school's Internet Protection policy, the Code of Conduct, student handbook, and any additional classroom technology guidelines.
- Accountability: Students are responsible for their choices when using technology. Misuse may result in appropriate school consequences in accordance with school policy.

Our goal is not simply to restrict access but to teach students how to become responsible digital citizens who make safe, ethical, and thoughtful decisions.

3. What is the school's responsibility, and what is the parents' responsibility?

Keeping students safe and teaching responsible technology use is a shared responsibility between the school and families.

The school is responsible for providing appropriate safeguards, establishing clear expectations, monitoring technology use when appropriate, addressing concerns, and teaching students how to use technology responsibly for learning.

Parents and guardians play an equally important role by reinforcing these expectations at home, discussing online safety, monitoring personal devices and internet use, and modeling healthy technology habits.

Together, we can help students understand that appropriate technology use is not just about following rules when someone is watching. It is about making responsible choices even when no one is monitoring their activity.

We encourage families to:

- Talk regularly with their children about what they do online.
 - Discuss the importance of privacy, kindness, and responsible digital communication.
 - Establish reasonable screen-time limits and device-free times at home.
 - Monitor age-appropriate content and applications on personal devices.
 - Communicate with the school if concerns arise regarding online behavior or digital safety.
- When families and educators work together, we create a consistent message that supports student safety, accountability, and well-being.

4. How much screen time does the average student receive at school?

Technology use varies depending on a student's age, grade level, subject, lesson objectives, and individual learning needs. Our school uses technology as a tool to support instruction—not as a replacement for effective teaching, hands-on learning, discussion, reading, writing, or personal interaction.

A recent survey (September 2026) with DCS teachers shared the average daily screen-time estimates for school-based instructional technology are:

Grade level	Approximate average daily screen time
PK- K	Less than 15 minutes
Grades 1–3	About 15 minutes
Grades 4–6	About 30 minutes
Grades 7–12	About 30 minutes

These figures are estimates, not daily requirements or fixed limits. Technology is rarely used every day, and the amount of screen time may vary depending on the learning activity and instructional needs.

When technology is used, it is intended to serve a specific educational purpose, such as practicing a skill, researching a topic, completing an assignment, receiving feedback, or accessing a learning resource.

We strive to use technology thoughtfully and in developmentally appropriate ways that support student learning while maintaining a balanced educational experience.

5. Does using technology mean students spend their entire lesson on a device?

No. Technology is one of many instructional tools available to teachers. Lessons may include direct instruction, classroom discussion, collaborative projects, independent work, books, manipulatives, experiments, physical activities, and other hands-on experiences.

When technology is incorporated, it is selected to support a learning objective. Our goal is to ensure that students benefit from technology without allowing it to unnecessarily replace meaningful face-to-face instruction and other valuable learning experiences.

6. What happens if a student misuses technology?

When a student misuses technology, the school will address the concern in accordance with its technology acceptable-use policy, student handbook, and applicable disciplinary procedures.

Depending on the nature and severity of the behavior, the response may include reteaching expectations, a conversation with the student, parent or guardian communication, restricted technology privileges, or additional disciplinary action consistent with school policy.

We view these situations as opportunities to reinforce responsible decision-making while maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

7. How can parents help their children develop healthy technology habits?

Parents can support healthy technology habits by setting clear expectations, maintaining open communication, and helping children balance digital activities with sleep, physical activity, reading, hobbies, and in-person relationships.

Helpful practices include:

- Establishing clear rules for personal devices and recreational screen time.
- Keeping younger children's device use in shared family spaces when appropriate.
- Encouraging children to ask an adult for help when they encounter something uncomfortable or inappropriate online.
- Teaching children to think critically about online information and interactions.
- Modeling balanced technology use as adults.
- Reviewing school technology expectations with children and reinforcing them at home.

8. Is my student's personal information protected?

Yes. Education Law § 2-d requires New York educational agencies to protect the privacy and security of personally identifiable information about students, teachers, and principals. Our school is committed to protecting student information and following applicable state and federal privacy and data security requirements.

These protections include safeguards for student information when using educational technology, online learning platforms, and third-party applications. The law also establishes requirements for how student data is accessed, used, stored, and shared with outside vendors.

9. What do students most often try to access that they shouldn't?

Games are one of the most common things students attempt to access when they should be focused on educational activities. Students sometimes try to get around internet filters or find creative and innovative ways to access games and other non-educational websites on their school-issued devices such as YouTube, social media sites (Instagram, TikTok and Facebook), Pinterest, and music.

Although our school uses internet filtering systems and GoGuardian to help monitor student activity and identify potentially inappropriate online behavior, some students may attempt to find ways around these safeguards.

These attempts provide an opportunity to reinforce the importance of following school technology policies and using devices for their intended educational purposes. Situations such as this also allows the district to add these attempted sites to our blocked list.

Circumventing internet filters or attempting to bypass school technology restrictions is not permitted.

10. What should my child do if a school-issued device or charger is lost, damaged, or not working?

Students should notify their teacher or the appropriate school staff member as soon as possible if a school-issued device or charger is lost, damaged, malfunctioning, or suspected of being compromised.

Students should not attempt repairs, bypass security settings, or make unauthorized changes to school devices. If a device is lost or potentially stolen, students should report it promptly so the school can take appropriate steps to protect school resources and information.

Our school will provide guidance on troubleshooting, repairs, replacement procedures, and any applicable school policies. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they have questions or concerns regarding a school-issued device.

We ask students and families to help care for school technology so that devices remain safe, secure, and available to support learning. We also ask that students do not add things like stickers to their device.

11. Can school staff see what my child is doing on their school-issued device?

Yes. Our school uses technology monitoring tools, including GoGuardian, to help support student safety and responsible technology use. GoGuardian allows authorized school staff to monitor certain online activity on school-managed devices, identify and block potentially inappropriate content, and receive alerts when concerning activity is detected. This is an added protection to our filtering system. GoGuardian allows assigned staff to see both online activity during the school day and outside of the school day.

We encourage parents to speak with their children about responsible online behavior and to reinforce the expectation that school-issued technology is a tool for learning.

12. What is the SCRIC, and how do they support our DCS?

The South Central Regional Information Center (SCRIC) is a regional educational technology organization in New York State that provides technology services, resources, and support to participating school districts. Downsville CSD contracts with the SCRIC to support our technology infrastructure, data management, cybersecurity, and student data privacy efforts.

SCRIC helps support our school by providing resources and guidance in these areas such as:

- Data privacy and security: Providing guidance, tools, and resources to help schools protect student information and meet applicable requirements under New York State Education Law § 2-d and related regulations.
- Cybersecurity: Supporting efforts to strengthen technology security and protect school systems and information.
- Educational technology systems: Supporting technology infrastructure, software systems, and other services that help schools operate effectively.
- Vendor and application review support: Providing resources to assist schools with reviewing educational technology providers and data privacy agreements.
- Training and resources: Offering professional learning opportunities, guidance, and resources related to data privacy, security awareness, and technology management.

These are just a few ways the SCRIC serves as a resource and partner to help our school make informed technology decisions, strengthen data protection practices, and support a secure learning environment.

Thank you for partnering with DCS to help students use technology safely, responsibly, and effectively—both at school and at home. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with questions or concerns about school-issued devices, online safety, or student technology use.