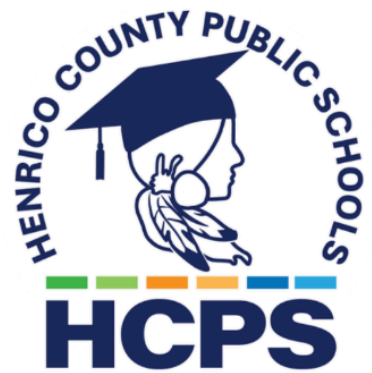




Digital Wellness Guidance

2026 – 2027 School Year

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Digital Wellness Guidance

Why This Guidance Exists

Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) is committed to empowering every learner through engaging, meaningful learning experiences that prepare students to become LifeReady. Guided by the school division's strategic plan: [Journey to 2030](#) and the [Henrico Learner Profile](#), every decision is centered on what is best for students. This **Digital Wellness Guidance** strengthens that commitment by providing a clear, research-informed framework for making purposeful and balanced technology decisions that support student learning, student well-being, and the knowledge and durable skills students need to thrive in school and beyond.

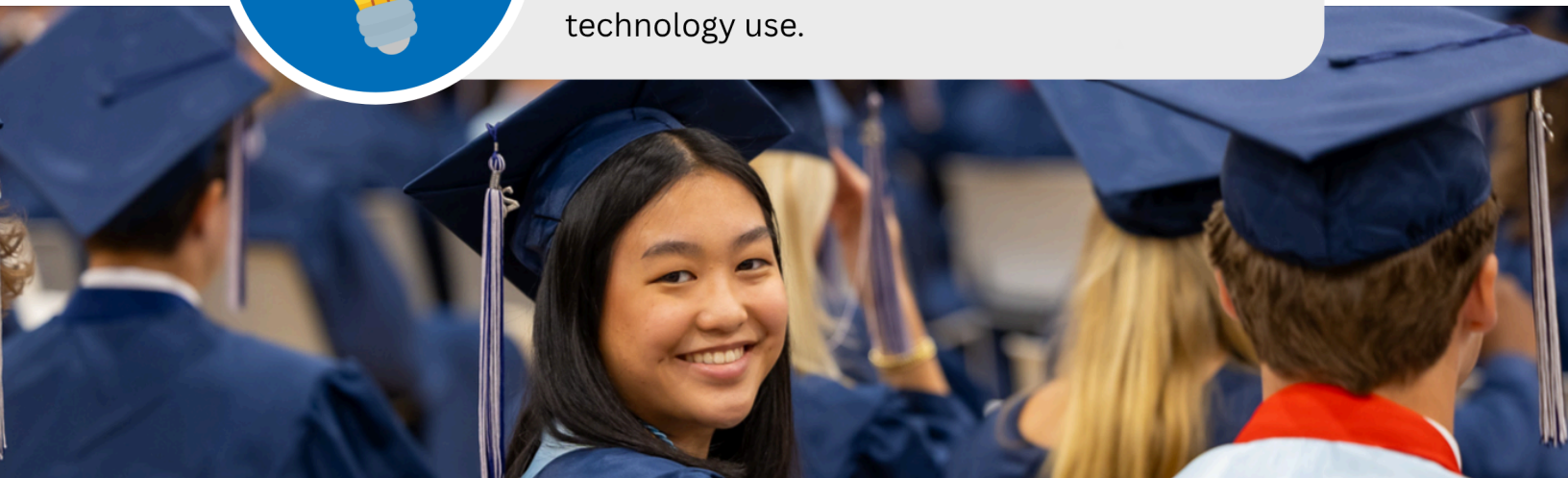


Outside Ring: Community, Educators, Leaders, Families
Inside Ring: Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Character, Citizenship, Communication, Collaboration
Inside Circle: Knowledge



Digital Wellness

The habits, skills, and decisions that guide purposeful, balanced, and responsible technology use.



Technology in Support of Learning

Every decision about technology use begins with student learning. Technology is one of many instructional resources available to educators. When intentionally selected, technology enhances learning experiences while preserving meaningful relationships, active learning, creativity, discussion, reading, writing, movement, and hands-on experiences that remain essential to healthy child development.

Technology is most valuable when it:

- Enhances teaching and learning
- Expands opportunities for students to explore, create, collaborate, and communicate
- Increases access and removes barriers to learning
- Strengthens the knowledge and durable skills of the Henrico Learner Profile
- Prepares students to become LifeReady

Why Now?

Preparing students to become **LifeReady** means preparing them for success in college, careers, and life. In an increasingly digital world, students need more than access to technology. They need judgment, digital literacy, self-regulation, and durable skills to use technology purposefully, responsibly, and ethically.

This updated guidance reflects five important realities that shape how HCPS approaches technology use today.

1. Technology has changed
2. Research has evolved
3. Our community asked for greater clarity
4. Digital wellness is a shared responsibility
5. Commitment to continuous improvement



1. Technology Has Changed

Technology continues to evolve rapidly, transforming how students learn, communicate, and prepare for their futures.

Advances in artificial intelligence, digital learning tools, and digital resources are transforming classrooms and redefining the skills students need for success. At the same time, the rapid growth of technology beyond the classroom, including commercial digital platforms and social media, has raised important questions about healthy technology habits and digital wellness. While educational technologies support teaching and learning, many commercial platforms, such as social media, are designed to maximize passive user engagement. This distinction makes it even more important for students to develop judgment, self-regulation, and responsible technology habits. The [Virginia Department of Education](#) also recognizes the importance of purposeful technology integration by calling on school divisions to maintain educational technology plans that support teaching, learning, digital citizenship, and continuous improvement. This guidance reflects that expectation while responding to the evolving needs of HCPS students, educators, and families.

2. Research Has Evolved

Research continues to deepen our understanding of how technology affects learning, child development, and student well-being.

Students need opportunities to develop digital literacy and technology skills, but research also highlights the importance of using technology thoughtfully to support healthy child development and well-being. Emerging research recognizes that children's digital experiences are shaped by a complex digital ecosystem and cannot be understood through screen time alone. Instead, the purpose, content, context, developmental appropriateness, and the design of digital experiences all influence their impact on learning and well-being. Guidance from organizations such as the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and the [Virginia Department of Education](#) reflects this shift by emphasizing purposeful, balanced, developmentally appropriate, and active technology use in support of learning.

3. Our Community Asked for Greater Clarity

Listening to our community reinforced the need for clearer expectations for technology use in HCPS.

Throughout community conversations, HCPS consistently heard a desire for a more purposeful and balanced approach to technology use. Families, educators, students, and school leaders expressed concerns about student screen time, unstructured device use, and preserving hands-on learning and meaningful human interaction, particularly for younger learners. This guidance reflects that feedback by establishing clearer expectations for technology use and implementing several [immediate actions beginning in the 2026-2027 school year](#). These actions include updated elementary technology practices, new PK-5 instructional technology planning guidance, expanded family support, strengthened classroom monitoring, enhanced professional learning, and ongoing review through the HCPS Digital Wellness Task Force.

4. Digital Wellness is a Shared Responsibility

Preparing students to use technology responsibly requires strong partnerships among schools, families, students, and the community.

Helping children develop healthy and responsible technology habits takes all of us. Research shows that when schools, families, students, and the community work together, students are better equipped to use technology in ways that support learning, well-being, and lifelong success. This guidance outlines the shared expectations and responsibilities that strengthen these partnerships and help ensure technology supports learning, promotes student well-being, and prepares students to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

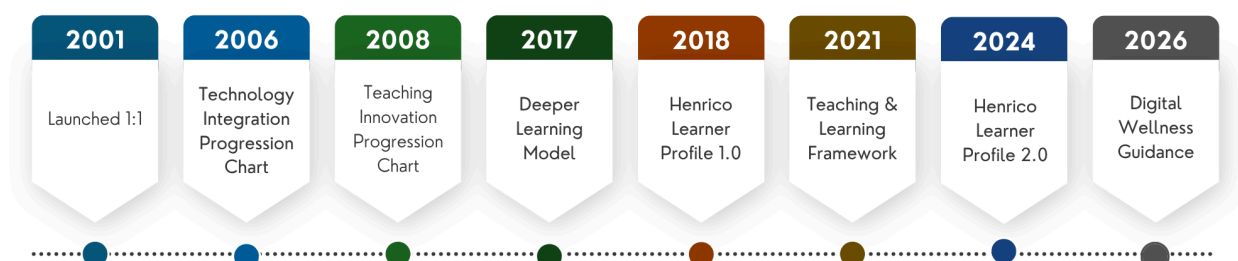
5. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Continuously improving technology use requires ongoing reflection, evidence, and collaboration.

Technology, research, and students' needs will continue to evolve, and so will HCPS' approach to educational technology. This guidance reflects our current understanding of purposeful, balanced, and developmentally appropriate technology use and will continue to be refined through implementation data, stakeholder feedback, emerging research, and ongoing collaboration with educators, families, and the community.

Evolution of Continuous Improvement

The timeline below shows how HCPS has continually evolved its approach to technology, from expanding access to ensuring technology is used purposefully to support student learning and well-being.



- **2001: Launched 1:1** - HCPS became one of the first large school divisions to launch a comprehensive 1:1 technology initiative.
- **2006: The Technology Integration Progression Chart (TIP-C)** was introduced, providing a framework organized around four essential skill areas to help teachers evaluate the effectiveness of technology integration.
- **2008:** The **Teaching Innovation Progression Chart** represented the next evolution of the TIP-C, helping educators design increasingly purposeful, student-centered learning experiences across PK–12.
- **2017:** The Teaching Innovation Progression Chart evolved into the **Deeper Learning Model**, which centered on four key pillars: learning that was anytime and anywhere, authentic and connected, student-owned, and community-supported.
- **2018:** HCPS expanded its focus from Deeper Learning to student-centered learning, laying the foundation for the **Henrico Learner Profile 1.0**.
- **2021:** The **Teaching and Learning Framework** was introduced, integrating the Henrico Learner Profile, aligned curriculum, the **HCPS Instructional Model**, and ongoing professional learning to support consistent, student-centered learning experiences.
- **2024:** The updated **Henrico Learner Profile 2.0** emphasized curriculum mastery and recognized the key stakeholders who support students in becoming LifeReady.
- **2026:** The **Digital Wellness Guide** launches, aligning technology use with the Teaching and Learning Framework to support purposeful, balanced, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences across HCPS.

Policy Alignment



The Digital Wellness Guidance builds on the school division's longstanding commitment to using technology in ways that support learning and student well-being. Rather than creating new expectations, the Digital Wellness Guidance aligns existing policies, regulations, instructional practices, and research into one consistent framework for instructional decision-making that supports student learning, student well-being, digital wellness, and equitable access for every learner.

Area	Existing HCPS Guidance	How Digital Wellness Expands This Work
Accessibility	IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and Assistive Technology	Ensures equitable access and participation for every learner.
Artificial Intelligence	Code of Student Conduct (see pages 10, 34, 50) HCPS AI Guidance	Supports developmentally appropriate, ethical, responsible AI literacy and teacher-authorized use.
Digital Resources	Henrico Digital Resource Menu (HDRM)	A menu of digital resources vetted by the division and approved for use with students. All staff are expected to use the HDRM to determine which digital resources are approved for classroom instruction and student use.
Mission & Strategic Plan	Journey to 2030 Henrico Learner Profile	Aligns technology use with the knowledge, durable skills, and experiences students need to become LifeReady.
School Board Policies	Student & Staff Acceptable Use of Technology	Reinforces responsible, ethical, and secure technology use for students and staff.
Student Conduct	Code of Student Conduct	Supports responsible technology use, digital citizenship, and academic integrity.
Teaching & Learning	Aligned Curriculum Instructional Model	Supports instructional decisions about when technology meaningfully enhances learning.

Technology Use Expectations

The **Technology Use Expectations** provide a shared framework for making thoughtful, research-informed decisions about technology use across HCPS. They help ensure technology is used purposefully, balanced with other instructional approaches, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with student learning and student well-being, digital wellness, and equitable access for every learner.

Technology Use Expectations



The Expectations That Guide Every Instructional Decision

Expectation	What it Means
 Purposeful	Technology is selected only when it meaningfully supports a learning goal with careful consideration of its purpose, quality, quantity, timing, and impact on student learning and well-being.
 Balanced	Technology is used as one of many instructional resources and is balanced with discussion, movement, hands-on learning, reading, writing, creativity, critical thinking, and meaningful relationships.
 Developmentally Appropriate	Technology use reflects students' age, developmental needs, and learning goals while supporting healthy cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.
 Active	Students actively engage in learning by creating, communicating, collaborating, investigating, and solving problems rather than primarily consuming information.

A Note About Assistive Technology: Assistive technology and accessibility features provide equitable access to learning by helping students with disabilities and diverse learning needs access, participate in, and demonstrate learning. Technology used as part of a student's IEP, 504 Plan, or documented accessibility accommodation is considered active technology use.

The Technology Use Expectations in Practice

The Technology Use Expectations guide instructional decisions across HCPS. Together, they ensure technology supports student learning, student well-being, thoughtful instructional decision-making, and strong partnerships among schools, families, students, and the community.



Student Learning

Technology use should:

- **Enhance learning** through meaningful, active experiences that deepen understanding and develop the knowledge and durable skills they need.
- **Support learning**, not drive it, and always align with clear learning goals.
- **Engage students** in creating, communicating, collaborating, investigating, and thinking critically rather than passively consuming information.
- **Increase access**, remove barriers, and expand opportunities for every learner.



Student Well-Being

Technology use should:

- **Support the whole child** through healthy, balanced, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster students' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive well-being.
- **Be balanced** with movement, discussion, reading, writing, play, hands-on learning, creativity, and meaningful interactions.
- **Reflect students' developmental needs** while supporting healthy cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.
- **Foster digital wellness** as part of overall student well-being.



Instructional Decision-Making

Educators should:

- **Make thoughtful, research-informed instructional decisions** about when technology meaningfully enhances learning and when another instructional approach is more effective.
- **Draw on their professional expertise**, content knowledge, pedagogy, and understanding of students' needs to design effective learning experiences.
- **Apply the HCPS Instructional Model** to determine when technology enhances learning throughout instructional design, delivery, assessment, and reflection.
- **Continuously reflect on the impact of technology use** and adapt instruction based on evidence of student learning.



Shared Responsibility

Schools, families, students, and the community should:

- **Work together** to help students develop healthy, balanced, and responsible technology habits.
- **Promote digital wellness** through consistent expectations and shared messaging.
- **Strengthen partnerships** that support student learning and well-being.
- **Provide feedback** that informs HCPS' continuous improvement.

Updates for 2026-2027

Actions Supporting **Digital Wellness**: What This Looks Like in Practice



The previous sections establish HCPS' vision and expectations for purposeful and balanced technology use. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, HCPS is implementing several updates that put this guidance into practice. Informed by research, child development, and feedback from educators, families, students, and the community, these actions strengthen student learning, student well-being, and digital wellness while reflecting HCPS' commitment to continuous improvement.

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
Eliminate devices for the youngest students. Remove digital devices from early education through 2nd grade classrooms, except where required for mandated assessments.	HCPS has significantly reduced device access for its youngest learners through a developmentally appropriate progression: • PK: Very limited, teacher-guided access to classroom iPads with only two approved instructional applications (Lexia, Imagine Math), supporting early literacy and mathematics that remain stored when not in use. • Kindergarten: Very limited, teacher-guided access to classroom iPads with a limited set of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies division-approved instructional applications that remain stored when not in use. • Grades 1-2: Limited, teacher-directed access to individually assigned devices that remain stored when not in use. <i>This limited, teacher-directed approach helps students build foundational digital skills and become familiar with approved instructional tools before participating in required state and division digital assessments, while preserving the vast majority</i>

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
	<i>of learning time for hands-on, discussion-based, movement, and other non-digital learning experiences.</i> All elementary devices will remain at school and be stored in classroom technology stations when not in use. When devices are used for instruction, students will access learning through division-approved digital resources, including Schoology, HCPS' learning management system (LMS), which serves as the central hub for instructional materials, assignments, communication, and learning activities. <i>*Exceptions will be made for students who require devices as assistive technology or documented accommodations through an IEP, Section 504 Plan, or other approved instructional supports.</i>
Set specific, enforceable screen time limits by grade level.	Elementary: Implement PK-5 instructional planning & screen time guidance with grade-level planning targets that support purposeful, balanced, and developmentally appropriate technology use. Teachers will design learning experiences that incorporate a variety of digital and non-digital instructional strategies, ensuring technology is used when it meaningfully enhances learning. Middle & High: The varying demands of secondary content areas and specialized courses require greater flexibility than the Elementary level. Consistent with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, rather than setting specific time guidelines for technology use, Secondary teachers will prioritize purposeful, balanced, developmentally appropriate, and active use of technology with students. Teachers will balance digital and non-digital learning experiences, avoid prolonged student use of technology, and build in structured screen breaks. <i>*Exceptions will be made for students who require devices as assistive technology or documented accommodations through an IEP, Section 504 Plan, or other approved instructional supports.</i>

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
	<i>**HCPS's learning management system (Schoology) serves as the central digital hub for learning, including instructional materials, assignments, the calendar, and communication, both during and outside of class time. Consequently, engagement with Schoology should not be interpreted as continuous screen-based instruction.</i> • Deliver initial and ongoing professional learning for all educators on the Digital Wellness Guidance, including expectations for technology use being purposeful, balanced, developmentally appropriate, and active when designing and delivering learning experiences. School and division leaders receive additional professional learning and training to monitor the Digital Wellness implementation and ensure technology use aligns with the guidance.
Block non-educational platforms on district devices.	• Block direct student access to YouTube for elementary and middle school students. • Continue limiting YouTube access for high school students using the highest instructional restriction setting, and monitor usage throughout the school year. • Restrict Minecraft Education to approved courses, certified school clubs, and division-approved initiatives. • Continue strengthening web filtering by transitioning from blocking individual websites to an approved-site filtering model.
Reduce and/or ban unnecessary device use during unstructured time.	• Elementary: Devices remain stored in classroom technology stations and are used only when directed by the teacher for instruction. Devices remain stored during lunch, recess, and other non-instructional times. • Middle School: Students begin each class with devices closed and away until the teacher directs otherwise. Devices remain closed and away during lunch, transitions between classes, and other designated non-instructional times. • High School: Students are expected to use devices responsibly and in accordance with teacher direction and the Code of Student Conduct. Teachers determine

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
	when students should store or use devices based on instructional goals. <i>*Exceptions will be made for students who require assistive technology, accessibility features, or documented accommodations through an IEP, Section 504 Plan, or other approved instructional supports. Additional exceptions may be made for approved instructional or school-sponsored activities.</i>
Ensure technology is used purposefully during instruction.	• Strengthen classroom monitoring and instructional technology oversight through guidance, professional learning, and instructional support for educators and school leaders. • Use Securly Classroom in Grades 1-12 to actively monitor and manage student device use during instruction. • Use Securly Reveal to review instructional technology usage trends, support implementation, and inform continuous improvement at the school and district level. • Continue active teacher supervision and established classroom management practices in PK and Kindergarten, where Securly Classroom is not currently available for teacher-directed iPads.
Provide parents with transparency and meaningful opt-out rights.	Continue providing families with transparent information about instructional technology expectations and division-approved resources. Families who would like to limit or opt their child out of certain technology use may work directly with their school to discuss individual needs and requests. Families should contact their child's classroom teacher and school administrator to review the student's courses, learning needs, and use of specific digital programs and resources. Together, they can discuss when, how, and why technology is used and determine the appropriate approach for the individual student. Our goal is to ensure families understand what technology will be used, how it supports learning, and when learning will take place without a device so schools and families can make informed decisions together.

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
Encourage paper, physical textbooks, and off-screen homework.	● Elementary: Digital homework will not be assigned in the 2026-2027 school year. ● Secondary: Review middle and high school homework practices during the 2026-2027 school year to ensure homework is purposeful, high quality, and uses digital resources only when they meaningfully enhance learning.
Evaluate all EdTech contracts for educational value and student data privacy.	In accordance with School Board policy: ● Continue enforcing HCPS' instructional technology review process and use of division-approved resources. ● Continue requiring all digital resources to undergo review for instructional value, accessibility, student data privacy, security, and alignment with instructional goals before classroom use. ● Continue reviewing the approved Henrico Digital Resource Menu to eliminate redundant tools, reduce the overall number of approved applications where appropriate, and ensure each approved resource provides meaningful instructional value.
Strengthen teacher and leader support.	● Continue investing in Innovative Learning Coaches (ILCs) in every school to provide job-embedded coaching and support for purposeful, balanced, active, and developmentally appropriate technology integration. (Instructional Technology Resource Teacher Virginia Department of Education) ● Provide ongoing professional learning for educators focused on implementing the HCPS Technology Use Expectations. ● Provide school leaders with implementation guidance and classroom observation support aligned to the HCPS Technology Use Expectations, including identifying active and passive technology use.

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
Strengthen Digital Wellness Education	● Continue implementing age-appropriate digital wellness instruction that helps students develop healthy technology habits, understand the impact of screen time, and recognize the potential addictive features of electronic devices and digital platforms, consistent with Virginia law. ● Integrate digital wellness instruction through elementary Innovation and Library Resource lessons, secondary library lessons, and other developmentally appropriate instructional experiences. ● Partner with schools to develop student-led digital wellness initiatives, including opportunities to gather student perspectives on technology use, explore student research on screen time and digital habits, and empower students to lead awareness campaigns and peer learning. ● Explore peer mentorship opportunities, such as high school students partnering with middle school students to model healthy technology habits, responsible digital citizenship, and balanced technology use. ● Use student feedback to continuously refine digital wellness practices and strengthen student ownership of healthy technology use.
Keyboarding & Typing Skills	HCPS provides developmentally appropriate keyboarding instruction and practice across the PK–12 journey, with foundational skill development in the elementary grades and optional, on-demand keyboarding tools available as needed in grades 6–12. ● PK–K: Foundational iPad skills and developmentally appropriate device use ● Grade 1: Introduction to keyboarding and typing skills ● Grades 2–5: Explicit keyboarding instruction and practice through Typing Agent, Innovation resources, and classroom instruction ● Grades 6–12: As-needed keyboarding practice and skill development through TypingClub (see <i>HDRM</i>).

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
Physical Wellness & Screen Health	Aligned with the VDOE Digital Devices in the Classroom: Health and Safety Guidelines, HCPS promotes practices that support physical wellness, reduce digital eye strain, and balance device use with movement and offline experiences. VDOE specifically recommends preserving offline experiences and structuring the learning day ● Screen Breaks & Movement: Incorporate physical movement and breaks during sustained device use. VDOE recommends a 1–2 minute break every 15–20 minutes or a 5-minute break every hour, along with intermittent movement and brain breaks to support focus and engagement. ● 20-20-20: When applicable, use the 20-20-20 practice to reduce eye strain: every 20 minutes, look at something at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. ● Ergonomics & Posture: Teach and reinforce healthy posture and device positioning, including supported feet, relaxed shoulders, neutral wrists and neck positioning, and appropriate screen placement. VDOE recommends screens about 18–24 inches away and positioned so students can look straight ahead or slightly downward.
Continue partnering with families and providing information on division-approved resources.	● Expand communication with families by sharing grade-level expectations, digital wellness resources, and information about division-approved instructional technology resources, their instructional purpose, and how they support student learning. ● Increase family awareness and use of Securly Home and other school-home partnership resources. ● Continue district-level Digital Wellness Focus Groups to share updates, gather feedback, and inform the continuous improvement of HCPS' Digital Wellness Guidance. ● Schools will provide school-based opportunities for family engagement, including focus groups or similar forums, to discuss technology use, digital wellness, answer questions, and gather feedback.

What We Heard	How HCPS Responded
	Encourage ongoing partnerships between families, classroom teachers, and school leaders to support student learning and digital wellness.
Continue evaluating and improving these practices.	Continuously Monitor and Improve - Convene the HCPS Digital Wellness Task Force quarterly beginning in Fall 2026 to review implementation data, instructional technology usage, stakeholder feedback, classroom observations, and emerging research. - Use findings to refine the Digital Wellness Guidance, identify opportunities for additional supports or policy changes, and provide regular progress updates to the School Board and community.

Elementary Instructional Technology Planning Guidance

Grade PK Up to 15 min/day	Grade K Up to 45 min/day	Grade 1 Up to 60 min/day	Grade 2 Up to 75 min/day	Grade 3-5 Up to 90 min/day
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*Estimated instructional planning guidance, not required student technology time.
Actual use may be lower based on learning goals and student needs.*

Please note: These planning estimates represent average instructional screen time over a typical week and are intended to guide lesson design, not establish fixed daily

limits. Required state and federal assessments are excluded. Technology use will vary based on instructional goals, student needs, accessibility accommodations, assistive technology, intervention services, personalized learning, project-based learning, and other instructional considerations. Educators determine when technology meaningfully enhances learning. Devices will not be used during lunch, recess, between classes, or other designated non-instructional times, except for documented accommodations, assistive technology, health-related needs, or other approved educational purposes.

During these instructional technology planning minutes, students will primarily be:

- Completing required state and division digital assessments.
- Completing digital diagnostic assessments (e.g., i-Ready Reading and Mathematics Diagnostics, VKRP Mathematics, CogAT).
- Reading and interacting with digital instructional materials when they provide a clear instructional advantage or provide essential background knowledge (Especially English Learners and SPED).
- Conducting research, locating information **using approved digital resources**, and building HLP durable skills through critically analyzing and synthesizing information.
- Writing, revising, publishing, and providing feedback using digital productivity tools.
- Creating presentations, videos, multimedia products, coding projects, or other authentic demonstrations of learning, building independence and durable skills in our HLP
- **Collaborating and communicating with classmates** and teachers using approved instructional platforms.
- **Accessing high-quality digital curriculum resources** that support instruction in mathematics, science, social studies, English language arts, and related content areas.
- **Receiving targeted intervention or enrichment** based on identified instructional needs.
- **Using digital assistive technology and documented accommodations** to access learning.

During these instructional technology planning minutes, students would not be:

- Spending time on non-instructional screen activities.
- Using devices for entertainment or free-choice activities.
- Completing "may-do" or early-finisher activities on a device.
- Using devices during lunch, recess, or other designated non-instructional times.
- Completing digital homework
- Spending extended periods on repetitive adaptive practice software beyond its intended instructional purpose.
- Replacing hands-on learning, discussion, reading, writing, movement, art, music, or other non-digital instructional experiences when those approaches are more effective.

These planning guidance estimates are intended to **prioritize high-value instructional uses of technology** while ensuring that the majority of every elementary school day remains centered on relationships, discussion, hands-on learning, reading, writing, movement, creativity, and other meaningful non-digital learning experiences.

PK-12 Progression



How Technology Use Evolves Across the PK-12 Journey

The [Technology Use Expectations](#) remain the same across every grade level. What evolves is how students experience technology as they build the knowledge, responsibility, and independence needed to become LifeReady.

Henrico Learner Technology Progression

Grade	PK-2	3-5	6-8	9-12
Student Experience	Limited & Highly Guided	Building Responsibility	Developing Independence	Independent & LifeReady
Educator Role	Direct	Guide	Coach	Facilitate
Student Responsibility	Follow routines	Make guided choices	Make responsible choices	Use technology independently and responsibly
Digital Wellness	Build healthy habits	Practice healthy habits	Develop self-regulation	Demonstrate healthy, independent habits

View Expectations by Grade Level

[PK-2](#)[3-5](#)[6-8](#)[9-12](#)

Why Technology Evolves Across PK-12

HCPS' approach to technology use is grounded in research, child development, and the evolving needs of learners. Rather than viewing technology as something to be maximized or minimized, **we intentionally align technology experiences to students' developmental readiness**. As students grow, technology use evolves to support increasing independence, responsibility, and the knowledge and durable skills needed to become LifeReady.

- **Child Development Shapes Technology Use:** Technology use should reflect students' cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. As students mature, they become increasingly capable of using technology responsibly, working independently, and engaging in more authentic and complex learning experiences.
- **Purposeful Technology Supports Learning:** The value of technology depends on how it is used. When used purposefully, technology enhances learning by supporting communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. It also expands access through accessibility features and assistive technology. Technology is one of many instructional resources and complements, never replaces, excellent teaching, meaningful relationships, and authentic learning experiences.
- **Preparing LifeReady Learners:** Becoming a responsible, independent technology user takes time. Throughout the PK-12 journey, students gradually build digital literacy, healthy technology habits, self-regulation, and the knowledge and durable skills of the Henrico Learner Profile. As students mature, technology experiences become increasingly authentic and independent, preparing them to use technology purposefully, responsibly, and confidently in school, at home, and beyond.

School Libraries: Supporting Reading and Digital Wellness

HCPS school libraries promote balanced learning experiences by providing students with access to both print and digital resources. Throughout the school day, students engage with books, research, and digital resources in ways that support literacy, curiosity, and healthy technology habits.

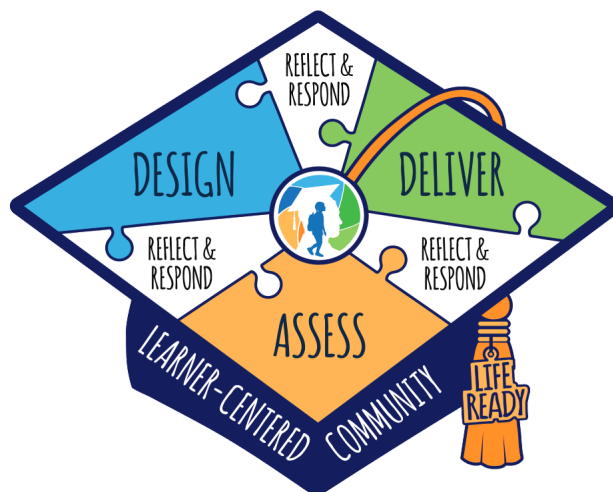
Grade Band	Typical Library Experience
PK-2	Primarily print books, read-alouds, storytelling, hands-on exploration, with limited, teacher-directed digital experiences.
Grades 3-5	Continued emphasis on print reading while introducing digital research, e-books, and responsible use of technology when it enhances learning.
Middle School	Students independently access both print and digital resources, conduct research, and build digital literacy skills.
High School	Students independently select from print and digital resources based on learning needs while developing information literacy, research, and responsible technology habits.

Instructional Decision-Making Guidance

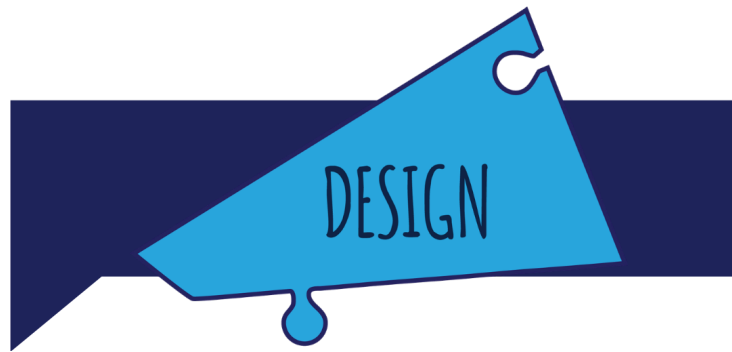
Applying the Expectations Through the Instructional Model

The [Technology Use Expectations](#) establish a shared framework for technology use across HCPS. The [PK-12 Henrico Learner Technology Progression](#) explains how technology use evolves as students grow and develop. The [HCPS Instructional Model](#) brings both together by helping educators make thoughtful instructional decisions throughout every stage of teaching and learning.

Every instructional decision begins with clear learning goals, student needs, and educators' professional expertise. Throughout the HCPS Instructional Model, educators determine whether technology meaningfully strengthens learning, supports student well-being, increases access, and reflects students' developmental readiness. Technology is one of many instructional resources and should be selected only when it best supports the intended learning outcome.



Design	Deliver	Assess	Learner-Centered
Technology is purposeful and balanced .	Technology promotes active learning.	Technology provides meaningful evidence of learning.	Technology is developmentally appropriate and supports the whole child.
←←←←← Reflect & Respond →→→→→			



Technology should be purposeful and balanced.

Learning experiences are intentionally designed, aligned to standards, and responsive to student needs. During planning, educators determine whether technology meaningfully strengthens learning while preserving the experiences technology cannot replace.

Questions to Consider	Evidence in Practice
Does technology strengthen learning intentions, authenticity, communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, personalization, or access?	Technology enhances lesson design rather than simply replacing paper with a screen.
Is technology the best instructional tool to develop intentional learning experiences that are authentic and connected?	Technology adds value because it improves learning, not simply because it is available.
Does technology provide opportunities for personalized learning and career pathways?	Technology provides authentic career-connected experiences or expands opportunities beyond the classroom.
Does technology meet the needs of all learners while also reflecting students' diverse lived experiences?	Technology is used to increase equity or access for all learners.

Reflect & Respond



Technology should promote active learning.

Technology should strengthen instruction, not replace it. Students should actively think, create, communicate, collaborate, investigate, and solve problems.

Questions to Consider	Evidence in Practice
Does technology establish high expectations for all learners while promoting deeper learning and durable skills?	Students have voice and choice, actively engage in their learning, and make meaningful connections between their learning and the world around them.
Does the technology provide timely, actionable feedback that promotes students' ownership of their learning?	Students receive personalized, timely feedback that helps them understand current performance and set goals for improvement.
Does the technology provide opportunities to incorporate direct, small-group, and independent experiences that provide multiple pathways to mastery?	Students have varied and balanced learning experiences that include independent and collaborative time using a device, alongside device-free small-group and whole-group instruction.
Does the technology incorporate strategies and questions that promote higher-level thinking and complex problem-solving?	Students create, design, communicate, collaborate, investigate, and solve problems. Activities require thinking, creativity, and interaction, and promote deeper learning and durable skills

Reflect & Respond



Technology should provide meaningful evidence of learning.

Technology should improve assessment by providing meaningful evidence of learning, strengthening feedback, and expanding opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding.

Assessing Questions	Evidence in Practice
Does technology provide meaningful evidence to inform instruction and monitor student progress?	Teachers use assessment data from digital tools to identify strengths, address learning gaps, flexibly group students, and personalize instruction.
Does technology provide timely feedback that helps students improve?	Students receive timely feedback that supports reflection, goal setting, and continuous improvement.
Does technology personalize learning based on student needs, progress, or performance?	Adaptive technologies provide personalized pathways, practice, or supports based on individual student needs while complementing, not replacing, teacher judgment.
Does technology empower students to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways?	Students have options to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple formats, including written work, recorded video or audio, multimedia presentations, and other authentic products.



Technology should support the whole child.

Technology should strengthen relationships, a sense of belonging, access, and inclusion while supporting students' cognitive, social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Digital wellness develops over time through intentional instruction, guided practice, supportive relationships, and consistent expectations across school and home.

Educators support digital wellness by:

- Modeling healthy and purposeful technology use.
- Teaching students to make responsible digital decisions.
- Providing opportunities for students to reflect on their use of technology.
- Balancing technology with discussion, movement, hands-on learning, creativity, and meaningful relationships.
- Helping students develop the habits and skills they need to use technology responsibly throughout their lives.

Supporting digital wellness is a shared responsibility. Schools, families, students, and the community all play an important role in helping children develop healthy technology habits and responsible digital behaviors.



Additional Decision-Making Resources

While the HCPS Instructional Model guides instructional planning and decision-making, the following research-based tools offer additional perspectives to help educators and families make thoughtful decisions about technology use.

- [EdTech Triangle](#): A research-based visual model that helps teachers categorize tech use as *Transformative*, *Supportive*, *Restrictive*, or *Disruptive*, encouraging them to adopt practices that yield unique outcomes and minimize disruptive tech habits. Five Cs Framework
- [Five Cs Framework](#): Developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, it provides educators and families with an additional lens for considering the purpose, quality, and context of technology use. Rather than focusing only on screen time, the Five Cs encourage thoughtful conversations that keep student learning and well-being at the center of every technology decision.
- [Triple E Framework](#) & [Rubric](#): A tool to measure whether the integration of a technology tool actively helps students *Engage* in, *Enhance*, and *Extend* their learning goals.
- [SAMR Model](#): A framework (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) that helps teachers evaluate if technology is being used to transform learning or simply act as a passive digital substitution for an analog practice.
- [TPACK Framework](#): A framework that helps educators align technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge to ensure technology meaningfully supports instructional goals, effective teaching, and student learning.

**Every technology decision is ultimately a learning decision
and a future-readiness decision.**

Accessibility & Inclusive Learning

Technology should increase access to learning by reducing barriers and providing students with multiple ways to engage with content, participate in learning, and demonstrate understanding. Guided by [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#), educators thoughtfully integrate accessibility features, assistive technologies, and flexible instructional strategies to support every learner while maintaining high expectations.

Questions to Consider



- Does this technology remove barriers to learning?
- Does it increase access for students with diverse learning needs?
- Are accessibility features or assistive technologies available and being used appropriately?
- Does this provide multiple ways for students to access information, engage in learning, or demonstrate understanding?

HCPS supports accessibility and inclusive learning by:

- Designing learning experiences that provide multiple ways for students to access information, engage in learning, and demonstrate understanding.
- Utilizing accessibility features and assistive technologies to support individual learning and communication needs.
- Increasing access for multilingual learners through translation and language support tools.
- Providing technology that removes barriers while promoting independence and student success.
- Ensuring instructional technology is reviewed for accessibility as part of the HCPS digital resource approval process.

Examples of Accessibility Supports

- Text-to-speech
- Speech-to-text
- Closed captioning
- Translation and language support tools
- Built-in device accessibility features
- Augmentative and alternative communication devices (AAC)
- Assistive technologies identified through individualized education programs (IEP).
- Multiple options for demonstrating learning

Shared Responsibility



Students are most successful when schools, families, and the community work together to model responsible technology use, establish consistent expectations, and reinforce healthy habits over time. Together, we create consistent experiences that help students develop digital wellness, make responsible technology decisions, and build healthy habits that prepare them to use technology purposefully and responsibly throughout their lives.

Stakeholder	Responsibility
Students	Develop the knowledge, skills, and judgment to use technology purposefully, responsibly, and safely while building the competencies of the Henrico Learner Profile. [PAUSE]
Classroom Teachers	Design purposeful learning experiences, collaborate with colleagues to plan instruction, make thoughtful instructional decisions, teach responsible technology use, and balance digital and non-digital learning.
Instructional Support Staff	Coach educators in modeling effective instructional practices, provide professional learning, and support the implementation of purposeful and balanced technology use.
School Leaders	Lead a culture of purposeful and balanced technology use by supporting educators, reinforcing consistent expectations, and monitoring implementation.
Families	Reinforce healthy technology habits, establish routines, communicate with schools, and partner in supporting student learning and digital wellness.
Community Partners	Support students and families by reinforcing shared expectations and providing resources and opportunities that promote safe, responsible, and balanced technology use.

Safe, Secure & Responsible Technology Use

Keeping students safe while using technology requires multiple layers of support. HCPS combines educator supervision, digital citizenship instruction, [internet safety](#), approved instructional resources, privacy protections, technology safeguards, and strong family partnerships to create safe, secure, and supportive digital learning environments.

Student Safety Supports

Priority	How HCPS Supports Students
Safeguarding Learning Environments	Maintain safe and focused learning environments through educator supervision, classroom management, web filtering, and student safety tools.
Protecting Student Privacy & Information	Protect student information through approved instructional resources , responsible data practices, secure systems, and vendor accountability.
Partnering with Families	Provide families with communication, transparency, resources , and tools that support healthy technology habits at home.

Together, these priorities help create safe, secure, and responsible technology use across HCPS.



Safeguarding Learning Environments

HCPS uses the Securly Platform to support safe, secure, and responsible technology use. By implementing multiple Securly tools, HCPS protects students, supports educators, keeps families informed, and provides school leaders with the information they need to monitor implementation and support student well-being.

Supports	Tool	Primary Purpose
Students	Securly Filter	Protect Students. Provides division-wide web filtering to block unsafe content, apply age-appropriate policies, and support CIPA compliance across all school-issued devices.
Teachers	Securly Classroom (New 2026–2027)	Support Instruction. Helps teachers monitor and manage student devices during instruction, minimizing distractions and keeping students engaged in learning.
Families	Securly Home	Partner with Families. Gives families visibility into student web activity on school-issued devices and allows scheduled downtime outside the school day. Please visit HCPS Online Services for additional information.
School & Division Leaders	Securly Reveal (New 2026–2027)	Inform Continuous Improvement. Provides instructional technology usage data that helps school and division leaders monitor implementation, identify digital wellness trends, and support continuous improvement.
Department of Safety	Securly Aware	Support Student Safety. Provides 24/7 student safety monitoring by identifying indicators of self-harm, threats, or other safety concerns requiring intervention.

Protect Student Privacy & Information

Protecting student information is essential to responsible technology use. HCPS has processes in place to carefully review digital resources before they are used in classrooms and help keep student information safe, secure, and protected.

HCPS protects student information through four key areas:

Protection Area	How HCPS Protects Student Information
Approved Digital Resources	Digital resources are reviewed for instructional value, accessibility, privacy, security, and alignment with instructional goals before approval. • Henrico Digital Resource Menu - All HCPS Resources • Clever Portal - School-Specific Resources • Clever Student Page - Student-Specific Resources
Student Data Privacy Agreements	Technology providers must sign an approved student data privacy agreement before student use, establishing expectations for how student information is collected, protected, used, and retained.
Vendor Accountability	Vendors are expected to comply with applicable federal, state, and local privacy laws, contractual requirements, and recognized student data privacy standards.
Responsible Staff Practices	Staff receive guidance and training for responsible data use and for protecting student information. As a Common Sense District , HCPS uses nationally recognized resources and professional learning to support educators in teaching digital citizenship, promoting digital wellness, and modeling safe, responsible, and ethical technology use.

Protecting student privacy is a shared responsibility. Through careful review, responsible practices, and ongoing oversight, HCPS helps ensure student information remains protected while supporting meaningful learning opportunities.

Partnering with Families

Families play an important role in helping students develop safe, healthy, and responsible technology habits. HCPS is committed to partnering with families by providing information, resources, and ongoing communication that support digital wellness at school and at home.

Together We Support Students

HCPS Will...	Families Can...
Communicate how instructional technology supports learning.	Talk regularly with their children about healthy technology habits.
Provide transparency about approved digital resources and student privacy.	Reinforce balanced technology use and establish healthy routines at home.
Share resources, tools, and guidance that support digital wellness, including Common Sense Education resources and Securly Home .	Use available family resources and tools, including Securly Home , to support their child's technology use.
Share updates as technology, research, and guidance evolve.	Ask questions and communicate with teachers and school leaders about instructional technology.
Encourage ongoing school-home partnerships that support student learning and well-being.	Partner with schools to reinforce responsible, ethical, and balanced technology use.

Safe, secure, and responsible technology use is developed through strong instruction, thoughtful safeguards, and trusted partnerships among schools, families, and the community.

Implementation & Continuous Improvement

HCPS is committed to implementing this guidance thoughtfully, monitoring its impact, and continuously strengthening our approach through implementation data, stakeholder feedback, and emerging research. Digital wellness is not a one-time initiative; it is an ongoing commitment to supporting student learning, well-being, and responsible technology use.

Please note: Implementation timelines, dates, and specific actions may change as HCPS monitors implementation and responds to emerging needs, feedback, and research. Updates will be reflected on the HCPS website as needed.

Phase	Key Actions
 Listen & Learn	Purpose: Review research, engage educators, families, students, and community members, and use stakeholder feedback to develop and refine the Digital Wellness Guidance. Stakeholder Engagement ☒ April 30: School Board Update ☒ May 18: Elementary Teachers & Leaders ☒ May 26: Secondary Teachers & Leaders Focus Group ☒ May 27: Elementary Teachers & Leaders Focus Group ☒ May 28: Central VA Balance Project Meeting ☒ June 3: Secondary Teachers & Leaders Focus Group ☒ June 11: School Board Public Forum ☒ June 23: Family Focus Group Meeting ☒ July 14: Family Focus Group Meeting ☒ July 23: School Leaders Focus Group Meeting ☒ July 29-30: Empowering Leaders Symposium Sessions ☒ July 30: PK-12 School Leadership Team Feedback & Planning Outcome: A research-informed Digital Wellness Guidance shaped by stakeholder voice and designed to support consistent, purposeful, and balanced technology use across HCPS.

Phase	Key Actions
 Launch	Purpose: Finalize and publish the Digital Wellness Guidance, introduce expectations to school leaders and staff, communicate with families, and provide the resources and professional learning needed to support successful implementation. Implementation Milestones: ☒ August 4: ILC Securly Training (Filter, Classroom, Reveal, Home) ☒ August 13: ☒ HCPS School Board receives an overview of the Digital Wellness Guidance prior to implementation. ☒ HCPS Principals receive parent and teacher communications from Communications. ☒ August 15: Attending Families - Back-to-School Digital Wellness Zone with resources for families to support digital wellness. ☒ August 17-21: Teachers - Teacher Return Week: Classroom Implementation & Securly Professional Learning ☐ August 24-25: Students & Families receive the Digital Wellness Guidance, and implementation begins across all schools Outcome: Shared expectations, resources, and support are in place for consistent implementation of Digital Wellness across HCPS.
 Implement	Purpose: Implement the Digital Wellness Guidance in every school by introducing school-based expectations, applying the PK–5 instructional screen time planning guidance, establishing classroom routines, deploying digital safety tools, and providing ongoing professional learning and implementation support. Implementation Milestones ☐ August 24: Divisionwide implementation begins; PK–5 planning guidance takes effect; Securly Classroom and Securly Reveal available to all schools; school-based professional learning continues throughout the year until all instructional staff is trained. ☐ September 28: Divisionwide Professional Learning & Implementation Check-In ☐ October 28: Task Force - Quarter 1 Implementation Review

Phase	Key Actions
	☐ November 10: Family Engagement Focus Group, Virginia Randolph Hub 7:00-8:00 PM ☐ January 12: Family Engagement Focus Group, Lunch & Learn - Virtual 12:15-1:15 PM ☐ January 20: Task Force - Quarter 2 Implementation Review ☐ March 26: Task Force - Quarter 3 Implementation Review ☐ May 11: Family Engagement Focus Group Oak Avenue Complex 7:00-8:00 PM ☐ June 4: Task Force - Quarter 4 Implementation Review Outcome: Digital Wellness practices are consistently implemented, supported, and strengthened across all HCPS schools.
 Monitor & Improve	Purpose: Review implementation, monitor data, gather stakeholder feedback, and use continuous improvement processes to refine the Digital Wellness Guidance over time. Key Milestones • Quarterly implementation reviews • Quarterly Digital Wellness Task Force meetings • Quarterly Family, Leader, and Teacher Focus Groups • Superintendent Advisory Group feedback • Annual Board update • Evaluate implementation findings and recommend any needed updates to guidance, practices, or Board policy. Outcome: Digital Wellness guidance, practices, and policies are continuously strengthened through implementation data, research, and stakeholder feedback.

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms

Understanding the Language of This Guide

Find definitions of the key instructional, technology, and digital wellness terms used throughout this guide to support a shared understanding across the HCPS community.

1:1 Computing: A learning environment in which each student is provided access to an individual digital device, such as a Chromebook or tablet.

Academic Integrity: Doing one's own learning and representing work honestly, including following teacher expectations for when and how technology or AI may be used.

Accessibility: Designing learning experiences, materials, and tools so students with a wide range of abilities, languages, and learning needs can access, participate in, and demonstrate learning.

Active Technology Use: Engaging with digital tools to analyze, build, create, collaborate, and problem-solve (e.g., coding, media production, or interactive simulations) rather than passively observing.

Adaptive Technology: Digital tools that adjust content, practice, feedback, or support based on a student's responses or progress.

Artificial Intelligence: Computing systems designed to perform tasks normally associated with human cognition such as recognizing patterns, making predictions, prescribing decisions, generating content, or adapting behavior based on data.

AI Literacy: The foundational skills and knowledge needed to engage with and comprehend artificial intelligence systems effectively. It requires users to understand how AI operates, apply it responsibly, and evaluate its societal influence. Students learn to identify both the benefits and limitations of this technology.

Assistive Technology: A device, tool, or service used to increase access, participation, communication, or independence. Examples include speech-to-text, communication devices, screen readers, and specialized software.

Balanced Technology Use: Using technology as one of many learning tools while making time for discussion, reading, writing, movement, hands-on learning, creativity, play, relationships, and rest. Balance considers the purpose, quality, amount, timing, and impact of technology use.

Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA): A federal law that requires schools and libraries receiving certain federal funding to use internet-safety measures, including filters that protect minors from harmful online content.

Classroom Technology Station: Designated classroom locations where elementary student devices are stored and charged when not in use. Elementary devices remain at school and are accessed only when directed by the teacher for instructional purposes.

Cognitive Offloading: Using a tool, including AI, to reduce mental effort by transferring part of a thinking task to the tool. Offloading can support learning when used purposefully, but may hinder learning when it replaces essential thinking, practice, or problem-solving.

Developmentally Appropriate Technology Use: Technology use that reflects students' age, developmental needs, readiness, and learning goals while supporting healthy cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

Digital Citizenship: The knowledge, skills, and behaviors students use to participate responsibly in an interconnected digital world, including acting in ways that are **safe, legal, and ethical** while learning, working, communicating, and creating with technology.

Digital Literacy: The ability to find, evaluate, create, communicate, and use information with digital tools safely, responsibly, and effectively.

Digital Resource: A website, app, software program, online platform, or digital content used to support teaching and learning.

Digital Well-Being (the outcome): The positive outcome of using technology in healthy and balanced ways so it supports learning, relationships, physical health, mental well-being, and overall quality of life.

Digital Wellness (the process): The habits, skills, and decisions that guide purposeful, balanced, and responsible technology use.

Focus Group: A structured discussion with a selected group of stakeholders used to gather experiences, perspectives, concerns, and feedback about a specific topic. Focus groups inform understanding and decision-making but do not make formal recommendations or decisions.

Foundational Childhood Experiences: The everyday experiences that support children's learning, development, and well-being, including:

- Sleep, physical movement, and exercise
- School and homework
- Reading
- Pretend or other creative play, hobbies, or extracurricular activities
- Emotional regulation
- Relationship formation and health (e.g., friendships and family time)

Generative AI: A technology that can generate new content, such as text, images, audio, and video, that resembles what humans can produce.

Green Time: Intentional, screen-free periods during the school day or at home that emphasize tactile, physical, social, or non-digital experiences. While it can include stepping outside for a physical break to act as a "biological buffer" that restores attention and lowers anxiety, in an instructional context, it broadly refers to meaningful learning and interaction that takes place without a device. Examples of green time include face-to-face group discussions, hands-on project work, manual handwriting or analog sketchnoting, using physical math manipulatives, conducting science experiments, and walk-and-talk lectures.

Henrico Digital Resource Menu (HDRM): HCPS' official menu of digital resources vetted by the division and approved for use with students. All staff are expected to use the HDRM to determine which digital resources are approved for classroom instruction and student use. Students may use only division-approved digital resources listed on the HDRM with teacher and/or administrator approval for instructional purposes (Source: Code of Student Conduct).

Henrico Learner Profile (HLP): A framework defining the six LifeReady durable skills students need to thrive in school, work, and life: Character, Citizenship, Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creative Thinking.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written plan for a student who qualifies for special education services. It identifies needed supports, services, and learning goals.

Instructional Model: The HCPS framework defining the best practices that guide teaching and learning experiences, setting expectations for the design, delivery, and assessment of student-centered learning.

Instructional Screen Time: The amount of instructional time during which students are actively engaged with a school-issued digital device to support learning. It does not include teacher-led digital presentations when students are not actively using devices, brief classroom management or administrative tasks, or required state and federal assessments.

Instructional Technology Use: Technology intentionally used to support a learning goal, including creating, communicating, collaborating, practicing, researching, or demonstrating understanding.

P.A.U.S.E. Self-Check: A tool to help students actively evaluate their own tech use by checking their **P**urpose, **A**ttention, **U**se, **S**econds, and **E**motion.

Passive Technology Use: Using technology mainly to receive or consume information, such as watching, scrolling, clicking, or listening, with limited opportunities to think, respond, create, or interact. Passive use may still have a place when it serves a clear learning purpose and is paired with active learning, e.g., watching educational videos or completing a digital worksheet.

Purposeful Technology Use: Selecting and using technology intentionally because it meaningfully supports a specific learning goal, student need, or access need better than, or alongside, other available approaches.

Recreational & Personal Technology Use: Technology used primarily for entertainment, social interaction, gaming, streaming, or other personal purposes rather than a specific learning goal.

Research-informed: Decisions and practices that are guided by the best available research to support student learning and well-being.

Screen Time: The amount of time spent using digital devices such as phones, tablets, computers, and TVs. In HCPS, screen time refers to intentional periods when digital devices are used to support a specific learning goal. Screen time is expected to be purposeful, balanced, developmentally appropriate, and active, with students using technology as directed by the teacher to learn, create, communicate, practice, collaborate, or demonstrate understanding.

Section 504 Plan: A plan that provides accommodations for a student with a disability so they can access learning and participate fully in school.

Securly Platform: The division's comprehensive suite of digital safety and management tools. It includes *Filter* (blocks unsafe content), *Classroom* (teacher monitoring), *Reveal* (administrative analytics) and *Home* (parent/caregiver oversight).

Self-Regulation: The ability to manage attention, emotions, behavior, and choices. In digital wellness, this includes knowing when to focus, take a break, seek help, or put a device away.

Student Data Privacy: Protecting information about students so it is collected, used, shared, stored, and deleted responsibly and only for appropriate educational purposes.

Task Force: A designated group of internal leaders and external experts convened to study, monitor, and advance a specific area of work. A task force reviews research, implementation data, emerging practices, and stakeholder feedback to identify needs and recommend continuous improvement.

The 5 C's of Media Use: A framework from the American Academy of Pediatrics used to customize and guide healthy media habits by evaluating the **C**hild, **C**ontent, **C**alm, **C**rowding Out, and **C**ommunication.

- **Child:** Who is the child, and what are their strengths?
- **Content:** The content that is being consumed.
- **Calm:** Does media calm or antagonize children when it is used by them?
- **Crowding Out:** When technology use takes time or attention away from important experiences that support learning, health, and development, such as

sleep, movement, play, reading, conversation, relationships, and hands-on learning.

- **Communication:** The conversations and communication that your child receives about media, especially from their family.

Appendix B: Index of Resources

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- [Accessibility](#)
- [AI Guide for Students](#)
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Appendix C: Research & References

Research That Informed This Guidance

Explore the research, state guidance, professional recommendations, and other references that informed the development of this guidance and continue to shape HCPS' approach to purposeful and balanced technology use.

Source	Context and Highlights
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Screen time and children	Supports the HCPS PK-5 emphasis on age-appropriate limits, adult guidance, and content quality. Provides guidance for families on routines that protect sleep, reading, movement, outdoor activity, and relationships. Emphasizes that content quality is a major factor that determines how technology use impacts children.
American Academy of Pediatrics (2026) Digital ecosystems, children, and adolescents: Policy statement	Supports the distinction between developmentally designed educational media and commercial ecosystems optimized for engagement, as well as the guidance's attention to displacement of sleep, movement, play, relationships, and shared responsibility. Provides a current, comprehensive framework for understanding children's digital experiences. The AAP states that media use cannot be viewed through screen limits alone and emphasizes developmental appropriateness, content quality, digital design, context, and displacement. It distinguishes child-centered digital experiences that can support learning and well-being from engagement-driven environments designed to prolong use. For young children, it identifies potential benefits of high-quality educational content while raising concerns about heavier noneducational and solo use. For school-age children, it notes that well-designed digital media with learning goals, used in moderation, can support learning while excessive use is associated with poorer outcomes. This strongly aligns with HCPS' emphasis on purposeful, balanced, developmentally appropriate use; curated resources; screen-free experiences; and protecting movement, sleep, reading, play, relationships, and other healthy activities.
American Academy of Pediatrics. Screen time at school	Outlines differences in active and passive use of technology and emphasizes how active technology can be useful for all students. Emphasizes making instructional decisions based on the value of technology using the 5 Cs of Media Use as a guide. This guidance helped to form the basis for how we define active technology use in the classroom.
American Academy of Pediatrics Screen time for teenagers	Emphasizes the importance of screen time quality over arbitrary limits. Cautions against excessive use of social media or other passive uses of technology in favor of active, meaningful use. Encourages families to create routines that promote healthy boundaries with technology and promotes self-reflection of teens about how technology makes them feel and whether they engage in unhealthy habits. This aligns with HCPS' focus on building autonomy in teens so they can make good decisions about their digital wellness and the type of content they engage with.

American Academy of Pediatrics The 5 Cs of media use	Introduces the 5 Cs of Media Use as a method for determining if technology should be used, instead of using screen time limits. HCPS used these recommendations to inform guidance on technology-free time to ensure technology use promotes student development.
Barnwell, P. (2025). Screen time in school: Finding the right balance	Provides practitioner-facing support for asking whether classroom screens add instructional value, reducing passive or distracting use, and balancing digital work with discussion, print, and hands-on learning. This guidance was used in the development of our Technology Decision Framework for teachers.
Blaschke, C. & Consortium for School Networking (CoSN). Screens in balance: The 2025 Blaschke report	The report provides findings and guidance on the benefits of EdTech in the classroom, including how it can be used to improve access and differentiation. It also stresses the importance of a balanced approach to technology implementation that prioritizes active student engagement and the development of key socio-emotional skills.
CAST. (2024). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0	The CAST UDL guidelines support reducing barriers and providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression, including assistive technology, accessible resource review, flexible pathways, and varied demonstrations of learning.
Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Education. (2020). Digital learning integration Standards of Learning for Virginia public schools	Provides the repeated expectations for digital literacy and fluency, digital citizenship, communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and responsible use across the PK-12 progression. These standards help anchor our guidance in educator responsibilities for the state of Virginia.
Consortium for School Networking. Screens in Balance Toolkit	The toolkit contains evidence-based educator reflection tools, administrative audits, family materials, and shared language that align with HCPS walkthroughs, professional learning, family communication, monitoring, and continuous-improvement processes.
Federal Communications Commission. Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)	CIPA provides legal guidance on harmful and obscene content that minors are protected from. The Securly system used by HCPS is CIPA-compliant to block these forms of harmful content.
Henrico County Public Schools. (2026). Instructional technology in public education: Navigating benefits, risks, and employer demands (HCPS Literature Review).	Internal literature review conducted by the Department of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation. This research was used heavily to inform our guidance and vision to ensure our approach to digital wellness is based on recent, vetted evidence.
Hutton, J. S. (2022, November 9). Screen usage linked to differences in brain structure in young children . Research Horizons, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center.	Supports preserving shared reading, print, conversation, and analog experiences for young children and informs the no-digital-homework rationale for young children.
ISTE + ASCD. (n.d.). From screentime to screen value: ISTE+ ASCD digital wellness	The International Society for Transforming Education released this guide in Summer 2026 to reflect the growing conversations about purposeful technology in education. It outlines the distinction

guide.	between consumer technology and educational technology, the importance of implementation quality, and the benefits well-designed technology can have on educational access and personalization.
Kuepper-Tetzel, C. The Learning Scientists. Handwritten versus typed note-taking effects on college students' performance.	Provides an overview of meta-analytic evidence on the impact of typing vs handwriting for student retention. Concludes that how students take notes is more important than the medium on which they read and take notes. Results showing a negative effect for digital notetaking are primarily driven by students using different strategies when taking notes digitally vs on paper. Students often engage in more passive copying vs active notetaking when using digital devices, making it important for educators to monitor how technology is used.
OECD. (2024). Managing screen time: how to protect and equip students against distraction	Finds that the educational value of technology depends on how it is used. Moderate, purposeful technology use for learning is associated with stronger academic performance and a greater sense of belonging, while excessive leisure use is associated with increased distraction and lower performance. The report recommends reducing digital distractions through clear expectations, strong classroom management, teacher professional learning, student self-regulation, and family partnerships. These findings support HCPS' emphasis on purposeful technology use, classroom routines, teacher monitoring, digital wellness, and continuous improvement.
U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology. (2024). National Educational Technology Plan.	Provides guidance on the active-versus-passive distinction, access and accessibility, Universal Design for Learning, educator capacity, and the need to close divides in digital access, design, and use. Guidance from this document informed our approach to technology integration for improved student access and outcomes.