

## A CLASSICAL AND CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO MEDIA

St. Timothy's Classical Academy asserts that the at-home regulation of today's media, be it television, the internet, or video games, is a necessary component of a thorough and well-balanced education.

A classical education requires students to engage in serious and contemplative work at home. As the years progress, St. Timothy's assignments, test preparation, and research demand of the student diligence and thoroughness, not just business. Only through private study can the child guarantee preparedness in the classroom. It is, therefore, essential the St. Timothy's student have a place at home free of noise and distraction for at least a couple of hours a day.

As Christians, we believe the careful monitoring of our children's media-intake to be necessary for two reasons: We are to raise our children to think on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8), and to be good stewards of their time. Not only is much of the current media a waste of time and antithetical to the aforementioned qualities, we believe it compromises the imagination and stifles a child's natural inquisitiveness. Reading, drawing, playing of an instrument, outdoor activity – these are activities which feed a child's imagination and spirit, and invite him/her to pursue further studies.

St. Timothy's cannot enforce students' behaviour outside of the school. We do, however, offer these suggestions to the parents to encourage our students to use off-school time wisely.

1. Turn off the television and/or radio while studying. Also, restrict the amount of television watched per day. We recommend no more than one show a day. Movies are rather different than television. Classic films both of the past and present can be both entertaining and of educational value. However, watching movie after movie can be as destructive to the imagination as television. Remember, as well, that what our culture deems as age-appropriate viewing material likely does not meet the standard upheld in a Christian home. For a good discussion around the issue of television, we suggest Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*.
2. Since music speaks directly to the passions, we must be careful what sorts of music our children listen to. We strongly urge parents to monitor not only the amount of time their children spend listening to music, but also the quality of that music. Alan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* and William Kilpatrick's *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong*, while both American in their focus, each contain pertinent sections around the topic of music.
3. Video games are another questionable use of one's time, and again the time your child spends playing them ought to be restricted. It should also go without saying that a child should not be allowed to move from one mind-stultifying activity to another. Watching a television show, then listening to a CD, capped off with 45 minutes of playing a video game, is an unacceptable use of time.
4. The use of computers is a necessary part of the age in which we live. However, unrestricted access to the internet and e-mail is greatly discouraged. We recommend placing your computer in a high-traffic, highly visible part of your home. A short time limit ought also to be set for "non-academic" use of the computer.

These suggestions are not made to spoil children's fun or to deny them rest after a busy day; rather, they are made to promote a higher concept of leisure than that currently held by most young people. While not denying children "free time" in which they should be allowed to choose what they would like to do, they ought to be guided towards activities that develop their mind, character, and body. In this way, St. Timothy's hopes to guide our students towards being fully alive to the glory of God, be it in their studies, hobbies, and varied pursuits.