



# Cedarwood School

113 - 117 Dunmaglass Road, Glenferness

Prep Switchboard: 011 465 9830  
Emergency: 071 609 7253

College Switchboard: 011 467 4889  
Emergency: 072 617 5291

[www.cedarwoodschool.co.za](http://www.cedarwoodschool.co.za)



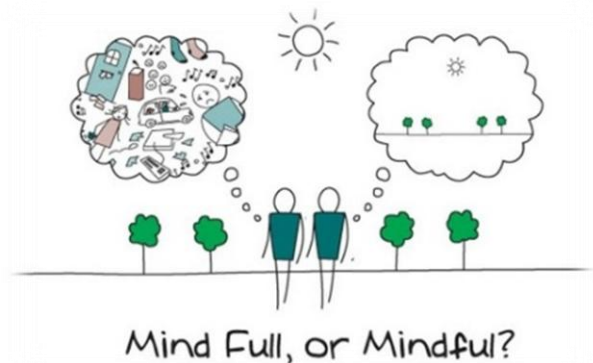
## Mindful and Merry: Thriving This Holiday Season

The school holidays bring a break from routine, a chance to reconnect, and an opportunity to recharge. However, they also present challenges for parents balancing work, responsibilities, and quality time with their children. Being present, fostering meaningful interactions, and maintaining good sleep hygiene can create a fulfilling holiday experience for the entire family.

### What Does It Mean to Be Present?

Being present means truly engaging with your child *in the moment*. It's not just about spending time together physically but also mentally and emotionally tuning into their world. Whether reading a book, playing a game, or sharing a quiet moment, the goal is prioritising **connection** over perfection.

Children thrive on undivided attention. Simple acts, such as sitting down for a meal without distractions or asking about their day with genuine interest, build trust and emotional security.



### To be present, try to:

- ✓ **Set aside distractions:** Put away phones and other interruptions during dedicated family time.
- ✓ **Listen actively:** Show your children that their thoughts and feelings are valued.
- ✓ **Engage in their interests:** Whether it's a craft project, a favourite show, or a game, your involvement makes the activity more meaningful.

This sense of connection becomes even more impactful when paired with routines that promote rest and well-being.



## Spending Time Together: Quality Over Quantity

When school has closed for the holidays, children may seek your time and attention in various ways. Younger children might directly ask you to play with them, while teens may signal their need for connection through subtle actions like hanging around the kitchen or initiating casual conversation.

The school holidays are a unique opportunity to build memories and deepen your bond as a family. Even small gestures of togetherness can make a big difference in your child's emotional well-being.

### Ideas for Meaningful Time Together

- ❖ **Outdoor adventures:** Plan a family hike, a picnic in the park, or a day at one of our botanical gardens or a nature reserve nearby Magaliesburg.
- ❖ **Creative pursuits:** Bake, paint, or build something together.
- ❖ **Shared routines:** Cook meals as a family, decorate the Christmas tree together, or create a holiday tradition like a movie marathon.

While exciting outings can be fun, shared routines at home—like preparing meals or bedtime rituals—provide invaluable moments of connection.



## The Role of Sleep in Family Time

While holidays often bring relaxed routines, maintaining good sleep hygiene is essential for everyone's well-being. A well-rested child is better able to enjoy the time spent with family, manage emotions, and engage meaningfully in activities. Maintaining consistent sleep routines during the holidays ensures your child feels their best, allowing you to make the most of your time together.

### Tips for Supporting Sleep Hygiene ([Huberman Sleep Toolkit](#))

1. **Stick to a schedule:** Aim for consistent bedtimes and wake-up times, even on weekends.
2. **Create a calming bedtime routine:** Include activities like reading or listening to soothing music to help children wind down.
3. **Limit screen time:** Reduce exposure to screens at least an hour before bedtime to promote better sleep quality.
4. **Encourage physical activity:** Outdoor play and exercise during the day can help regulate energy levels and support better rest.

Teaching children the value of rest also helps them manage their emotions better and prepares them to return to school feeling refreshed.

## The Importance of Limiting Screen Time

While digital devices can offer entertainment and educational value, excessive screen time can interfere with meaningful family interactions, sleep quality, and overall well-being. By setting clear boundaries for screen use, such as device-free meals or designated digital detox hours, families can create opportunities for deeper connections and more engaging activities.

### Tips for Healthy Screen Use:

- **Establish device-free zones:** Keep screens out of bedrooms and family spaces during bonding time.
- **Set consistent limits:** Allocate specific times for gaming or social media, balancing them with physical and creative pursuits.
- **Model balanced use:** Parents' habits significantly influence children's behaviours; lead by example by prioritizing face-to-face engagement.

By fostering a balanced approach, you encourage your child to develop healthier habits and focus on what truly matters during the holidays—family, rest, and shared joy. Consistency is key with screen-time boundaries.

### Balancing Your Own Needs as a Parent

Amid the holiday busyness, it's easy for parents to neglect their own needs. However, taking care of yourself is essential to being present and emotionally available for your children.

### How Sleep Helps You Be Present

Just as your child thrives with good sleep, so do you. By prioritising rest, you'll have more energy and patience to engage with your family. Model good sleep hygiene by setting your own bedtime routine, ensuring you're recharged and ready for the day ahead.

CHILDREN HAVE NEVER BEEN VERY GOOD  
AT LISTENING TO THEIR ELDERS, BUT THEY  
HAVE NEVER FAILED TO IMITATE THEM.  
THEY MUST, THEY HAVE NO OTHER  
MODELS.

- JAMES BALDWIN -

### Creating a Memorable and Restful Holiday Season

Parenting during the school holidays is an opportunity to foster connection, create lasting memories, and set the foundation for healthy habits. By being present, integrating meaningful routines, and emphasizing rest through good sleep hygiene, you create a balanced environment where everyone can thrive. Ultimately, the goal is not to fill every moment with activity but to prioritize connection, rest, and care. In doing so, you give your family the gift of being truly together, creating cherished memories that will last a lifetime.

