



International Schools Association (ISA)

STEAM Project

CTRL + ME

Growing Conscious Digital Citizens

Main Areas of Focus

Digital Citizenship / Psychology & Wellbeing / Health & Eye Health / Social-Emotional Learning / Media Literacy

Aimed at

students between 5 and 18 years old

Participant Schools

TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Supporting Organizations

Academic
Advisor

Organizational
Endowment

Academic
Advisor

TBD



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

International Schools
Association - ISA
(Switzerland)

TBD

School term:

October 2026 - December 2027

Project

CTRL + ME

Growing Conscious Digital Citizens



An International Schools Association Initiative

that addresses the responsible use of digital technologies, including social media, screen time, and digital content. The project adopts a coordinated, educational, and student-centred approach that does not prohibit technology, but instead promotes conscious, healthy, and age-appropriate use, mediated by adults and supported by peer leadership.

Geneva, 2026

I. Background and Rationale

Children today grow up in an environment where digital devices, social media, and online interaction are present from very early ages. Mobile phones, tablets, gaming platforms, and social networks have become part of daily life for students of primary and secondary school age. While technology offers significant educational and social benefits, unmediated and excessive use may pose risks to children's cognitive development, emotional wellbeing, attention span, social skills, mental health, and physical wellbeing, including eye health. Prolonged screen use and near-work, insufficient visual breaks, and reduced time spent outdoors may contribute to visual fatigue and unhealthy visual habits, making eye health an important component of responsible digital use. Schools increasingly observe:



- 🚨 *Reduced attention and deep focus*
- 🚨 *Emotional dysregulation linked to excessive or problematic screen use*
- 🚨 *Social comparison and anxiety related to social media*
- 🚨 *Reduced face-to-face communication skills*
- 🚨 *Early exposure to inappropriate or overwhelming content*
- 🚨 *Eye strain, visual fatigue, and unhealthy screen-viewing habits*
- 🚨 *Reduced balance between indoor screen-based activities and time outdoors*

At the same time, children are rarely taught **how** to use digital tools consciously, ethically, and in balance with their emotional and physical development. Parents and teachers often struggle to find a shared language and approach.

The **International Schools Association (ISA)** addresses this challenge through a **coordinated, educational, and student-centred initiative** that does not prohibit technology, but teaches **conscious, healthy, and age-appropriate use**, mediated by adults and supported by peer leadership.

II. Project Aim

CTRL + ME is designed as an evidence-informed initiative in which pilot implementation and school-based measurement lead to the development of a validated **ISA Best Practice Guideline** for conscious and responsible digital use within the school community.

Through the creation of the **Best Practice Guideline** for schools, ISA aims to create a new culture of conscious digital citizenship by empowering students, educators, and families to understand, reflect on, and develop informed and responsible approaches to digital device and social media use, while promoting cognitive, emotional, social, mental, and physical wellbeing, including healthy visual habits.

III. Target Groups

► Primary focus



Students aged 5–18

► Secondary focus



Teachers and school leaders



Parents and caregivers

► Key contributors



School psychologists and counsellors



School nurses and health professionals (Eye-health specialists, where available)



Student leaders (middle and secondary school)

IV. “Students Teaching Students” as a Key Concept

A central element of the project is a **peer-to-peer learning model**, in which older students take an active role in supporting younger students’ understanding of conscious and responsible digital use.

How it works in practice

- **Selection and preparation**

A small group of middle and secondary school students is selected as *student mentors*. With guidance from school psychologists, health professionals, and eye-health specialists, they receive short training sessions on digital awareness topics and age-appropriate communication.

- **Co-design of activities**

Student mentors work with the relevant professionals leading the project in their schools to design simple, practical activities for younger students. Activities may address different

dimensions of healthy digital use, including attention and concentration, emotional self-regulation, social media awareness, face-to-face communication, healthy screen habits, visual breaks, appropriate viewing distance, and the importance of balancing screen-based activities with time outdoors.

Activities may take the form of short talks, guided discussions, classroom games, role-play scenarios, challenges, or visual materials.

- **Peer-led sessions**

The activities are delivered by older students during agreed school times (for example, advisory periods, project days, or special workshops), always with an appropriate member of school staff present.

Students may, for example, lead a concentration challenge exploring how digital interruptions affect attention; discuss how social media can influence emotions and relationships; or conduct a healthy vision activity in which younger students identify good screen-viewing habits, practise regular visual breaks, and reflect on the balance between screen use and outdoor activities.

- **Reflection and feedback**

After each activity, both younger and older students reflect on what was learned and whether the activity helped them identify changes they could make in their own digital habits. Teachers, psychologists and other participating professionals support this process and gather brief feedback on areas such as attention, emotional wellbeing, social interaction, screen habits, and eye-health awareness.

The feedback is used to improve future sessions and contributes to the evidence and conclusions informing the ISA Best Practice Guideline.

V. Project Implementation

- ▶ **Project draft development**
Until February 2026
- ▶ **Project approval by the ISA Board**
March 2026 Board Meeting
- ▶ **ISA call for schools to participate**
March–September 2026

► **Project coordination and preparation phase**

Creation of a coordination group for participating school psychologists and health professionals, including eye-health specialists where available, with an initial online meeting to introduce participants, align expectations, and exchange ideas.

► **Project start**

1 October 2026

► **Pilot implementation phase**

October 2026 – 1 June 2027

► **Elaboration of conclusions and external consultation**

June–1 September 2027

► **Publication of the ISA Best Practice Guideline**

October–December 2027

VI. The Development of the ISA Best Practice Guideline

The ISA Best Practice Guideline will be developed on the basis of evidence gathered from participating schools involved in the project. These schools, located in different countries and cultural contexts, will implement the proposed activities and engage in structured reflection and feedback processes, as described above.

Each participating school will document its key observations, outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned, drawing on the perspectives of students, teachers, school leaders, school psychologists, and participating health professionals. These school-level conclusions will not be treated as isolated cases but will be collected, compared, and synthesised to identify shared patterns, effective practices, and context-specific differences.

The consolidated findings will then be brought together into a single shared framework, forming the foundation of the **ISA Best Practice Guideline**. This process ensures that the Guideline reflects diverse educational contexts, while identifying common principles, effective practices, and transferable approaches to conscious and responsible digital use within the school community.

To ensure quality and validity, the draft Guideline will be reviewed and discussed with participating school psychologists and health professionals and further informed through consultation with external organisations and specialists actively engaged in research and practice in the fields of digital wellbeing,

youth development, eye health, and education. Through this collaborative and evidence-informed process, the ISA Best Practice Guideline will be validated, context-aware, and practically applicable across school settings.

VII. Conclusions

CTRL + ME is not a campaign against technology. It is an educational, human-centred initiative that recognises the reality of the digital world while placing children’s wellbeing, development, and agency at its core.

By starting with a pilot, involving school professionals, empowering students, and scaling through ISA, this project can become a **sustainable international movement** led by schools, for students, and with students.

=====END of the DOCUMENT=====