

Back to school screen-time advice; China's sad horse goes viral; the great jellyfish beach invasion; and the policeman who became a frog.

Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what's happening in the world around you.

I'm Bryce Corbett

It's Thursday, January 29 - we're baaack!

In Squiz Kids Today ... Back to school screen-time advice; China's sad horse goes viral; the great jellyfish beach invasion; and the policeman who became a frog.

That's what's making news, kids' style ...

THE LOWDOWN

—

Well hello there, one and all - and welcome back to a new year of Squiz Kids - I hope you're as excited as I am to be leaping into a brand new year ..

And we start today's podcast with new recommendations from experts on limiting screen time now that we're all back at school.

Scientists this week released a new set of guidelines to make sure we're all scaling back our holiday screen-time to make sure we're getting enough sleep to make our brains work efficiently at school.

You know how the rules on screen time were a bit more relaxed over the Christmas hols? It's time, according to experts, to limit the amount of time we spend on our electronic devices - especially before bed time - to give our brains the rest they need to be our best selves at school.

No more than two hours per day of passive screen time for primary school kids is the recommended amount - whether scrolling apps or watching TV or YouTube - unless you're doing homework or engaged in active research or making videos.

And parents - the experts are coming after you too. They say if parents are expecting kids to get off the screens - they have model that same behaviour - meaning they have to get off their phones too.

You might even end up talking to each other — imagine that?

—

It's probably a good thing we're all back at school and back from our beach breaks - because an army of jellyfish has invaded Port Philip Bay in Melbourne - prompting authorities to recommend people stay out of the water there.

A massive smack of lion's mane jellyfish is currently blobbing through the bay - forcing the closure of beaches.

And yes: I didn't know that either - but 'smack' is the collective noun for a group of jellyfish ... just as flock is the collective noun for a group of sheep and 'pack' is the collective noun for a group of wolves.

See - stick with me and you'll learn something new every day ..

SPIN THE GLOBE

—————

Each day we give the world globe a spin and find a new story from wherever it stops - and today we've landed in China .. where a sad horse plush toy is flying off shop shelves.

Shop shelves ... try saying that three times quickly.

It's the Year of The Horse according to the Chinese calendar .. and thanks to an error at the factory creating this particular soft toy, the horse has been produced with a frown instead of a smile.

But rather than putting shoppers off: they've been flocking to store to buy the horse with the frown - saying it reflects their mood.

Because obviously we'd all like to be smiling all the time - but it's perfectly normal most days for a frown to creep across our faces ..

Like when you realise it's only week one of a new school term and the Easter school holidays are 9 weeks away ... agggghhh!

WEIRD SCIENCE

Science is one of my favourite subjects ever ... just because you get to do cool experiments that tell us about the world we live in and why things work the way they do.

Take for instance the most recent scientific experiment being undertaken by a bunch of scientists in the United States – where they've been teaching rats to drive cars.

Not the cars you drive around in. Because clearly they wouldn't reach the pedals or see over the steering wheel. But teeny tiny little rat cars - made specifically to test rat's intelligence - and also measure their joy.

Yep: scientists have been testing the levels of happiness that a bunch of lab rats get from driving little cars to a little fake tree adorned with Froot Loops - which they promptly eat. It's all part of an effort to understand the link between doing fun things and anticipating happiness and happy experiences can make human lives better.

Like the happiness you get from school holidays ... in 9 weeks time... Focus on the destination, people - not the journey.

NEWSHOUNDS

Every Thursday Squiz E the Newshound pops his head into Squiz Kids HQ to report back on fishy things he's sniffed out on the internet .. and today his nose is twitching following reports a policeman in the United States was turned into a frog.

Sounds like something from a fairy tale, doesn't it. Except in reverse ...

So Squiz-E did some sniffing and discovered that artificial intelligence was responsible..

You see: police in the state of Utah in the US have started using AI to turn video to text .. which is to say, vision they record on their body-worn cameras is run through AI which produces a written report. And one policeman's body-camera captured the movie The Princess And The Frog playing in the background of a scene it was filming - which AI wrote up as the police officer turning into a frog. Which obviously he hadn't.

It's a timely reminder that while all this new fangled technology - like artificial intelligence - is going to be really useful in lots of way - but we still need to do as Squiz-E always tells us, and that's to STOP THINK and CHECK before believing everything we see, read or hear online.

And a shout out to the almost 5-and-half-thousand teachers who have already signed their classes up to do Newshounds - Squiz Kids very own, very free digital literacy classroom program. If you're not among them - the new school year is the perfect time to get involved. Go to squizkids.com.au to sign up for your free account today.

THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. What blobby creature has invaded Melbourne's Port Philip Bay?
2. According to the Chinese calendar, 2026 is the Year of the What?
3. Name the movie that confused an AI bot being used by police officers in the United States ..

SHOUT OUTS

It's Thursday, January 29, birthday of champion Aussie surfer, Stephanie Gilmore

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today... Vincent from Canberra, Pevon from Forest Lake, Lewis from Killarney Heights and Jemima from Mernda.

If you had a birthday over the Christmas break, your shoutout was featured in the weekly Quizzes released each Friday during the holidays. For anyone who missed the cut-off, don't worry — we'll be sharing your belated holiday shoutouts in this week's episodes... starting with...

Belated shoutouts to... Mia from Newport, Freddie from Perth, Will from Rivett, twins Huxley and Imogen from Sutherland, Emma from Heritage Park, Primrose from Indooroopilly, Ezra from Ashwood, Ashayon and Cooper from Paraburdoo, Carter from Hunters Hill and Gauri, Arin, Kanwar and Tashan from Forest Lake.

Classroom shoutouts will resume next week! Teachers, send us your class details now so we can give your students a shoutout on the podcast.

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. Jellyfish
2. Horse
3. The Princess and the Frog

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after a classroom shout out- drop us a line at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - we'll be back again tomorrow with the Kid vs Adults Weekly News S'Quiz

In the meantime ... get out there and have a most excellent day ... over and out.