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Dear CKS parents,

I hope you all had a restful, fun-filled, and safe Spring Break. We are happy to be back on campus with your students to finish out the school year strong! I wanted to reach out to share some information, recommendations, and resources around protecting your students online.

It is my recommendation that students' phones be monitored, especially their email, texts, and social media accounts. In particular, TikTok has become more and more popular with Middle and High School aged students. While this social media platform can be used positively, the danger of this app is that it is not regulated. I have linked an article with much more information and guidelines from Common Sense Media with best practices for using and monitoring students on Tik Tok.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-tiktok>

Generally speaking, here is what we know to be true based on research on how technology is affecting teens.

- Negative affect on the developing brain
- Increased social isolation
- Increased bullying
- Increased anxiety/depression and suicidality
- Increased students reporting low self esteem
- Decreased sleep
- Impulsive Emotional responses on the internet can limit future choices and options

It is not all bad, and technology is a huge part of our students learning and development. Here are some helpful tech tips for you to share with your student:

- Students should be encouraged to really THINK before they post, text, or email:
 - T-is it truthful?
 - H-is it helpful?
 - I-does it inspire?
 - N-is it necessary?
 - K-is it KIND?
- Students should be reminded to log off or sign out



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- Students should be reminded that their social media accounts are not fully private because anything can be screenshot and then shared.
- Students can be empowered that they are in charge of their social media feeds, they can hit that unfollow button.
- Students can be encouraged to highlight their best self on social media and use it as a source for good!
- Take a break from it; most things in extreme are unhealthy. Staying connected all the time can be detrimental to a developing brain, cognitively and emotionally.

Tech tips for parents:

-The research on teens and technology concludes that it is recommended parents do not provide personal cell phones to students prior to the age of 13 and that the phone should not be utilized in their bedrooms.

-I do recommend having students that have their own cell phone check their device in with their parents or in a communal charging station in the home by a certain time each night. This is for two main reasons, one for a break from the connection and also for sleep.

-I recommend parents engage in a protective software to provide boundaries for your student that they do not realize they need.

The article below provides several free options:

<https://www.techradar.com/best/parental-control>

-Some parents have found success with a technology contract, here is an idea for that linked here:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/when-kids-call-the-shots/201804/the-best-technology-screen-time-contract-kids>

Here is more information on guiding your students online based on the clinical research.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/artificial-maturity/201803/parent-s-guide-social-media-use-kids>

If you would like to dig deeper on this topic, I recommend the resources below:

I-Gen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy—and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood—and What That Means for the Rest of Us by Jean M. Twenge PhD

The clinical psychologist, Lisa Damour, has written a lot on this topic as well:

<https://www.drlisadamour.com/>.



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Please know, most importantly, that we are here to serve you and your students in the best way that we can. Our most important job is to keep them safe and that includes their safety online. The most effective way to do this is to partner with you all in setting healthy boundaries and guidelines for protecting our students.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any further questions or concerns.

Gratefully,

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