

PTSA and Calle Mayor Middle School Parent Support Sheet

Internet Safety: Teach your child to:

- Be as anonymous as possible, use privacy settings on social media
- Think before they post, remember social networking sites are public spaces and to avoid posting anything that could embarrass them later or expose them to danger
- Avoid in-person meetings, remember that people aren't always who they say they are
- Be honest about their age and check comments regularly
- Avoid inappropriate content and behavior, and, if encountered, report it to the social networking site
- Take a break from Social Media and the Internet.

Parents should search social networking sites their teens visit to see what information they are posting. Make sure you are added to your teen's "friend list" so you can view their information and verify that their profiles are set to private (as they should be!). If you're uncertain whether your child has a profile, do a simple online search by typing your child's name into a search engine like Google, or into the search option of the site in question.

Cyberbullying: What it is and isn't?

Even though it has been around for ages, experts still haven't completely agreed on a definition of "cyberbullying". It's not social drama, an argument, mean gossip, an impulsive expression of anger or a prank that's gone wrong but wasn't meant to. Any of these can be hurtful to students but most experts agree that bullying and cyberbullying are forms of serious aggression, usually targeted and repeated. By most definitions, both involve a real or perceived power imbalance that's physical, psychological and/or social.

What can you do to protect your child?

- Open up a dialogue with your child, communication is key to protecting your child.
- Teach them not to respond or retaliate since most aggressors are looking for a reaction. Save the evidence (screenshot it), visit ConnectSafely.org/cyberbullying for instructions on how to capture screens on phones/computers.
- Most social media apps and services allow you to block certain people from interacting with you. Tell the person to STOP.
- If your child is a witness encourage them to tell an adult.
- Parents should monitor your child's social media accounts and devices.

Things to Remember and Consider:

- young people are constantly growing their social literacy with others and both the socializing and the learning are happening in social media.
- Understand that there is a fluidity between online and offline (home and school), that peer groups and social scenes are a place where young people and friends gather.
- Banning social media can contribute to kids getting marginalized or left out, whether peers intentionally stop including them or because they're not "Around".

Vaping and E-cigarettes

E-cigarettes use a battery-powered device that heats a liquid to form vapors — or, more accurately, aerosol — that the user can inhale (thus “vaping”). These devices heat up various flavorings, nicotine, marijuana, or other potentially harmful substances. Vaping hasn't been around long enough for us to know how it affects the body over time. But health experts are reporting serious lung damage in people who vape, including some deaths. Vaping puts nicotine into the body. Nicotine is highly addictive and can slow brain development in teens and affect memory, concentration, learning, self-control, attention, and mood.

Some other things to understand and consider:

- The e-cigarette market has exploded in recent years. Worth 11.3 billion U.S. dollars in 2018, it's projected to grow to 18.2 billion by 2024.
- Today, Juul brand e-cigarettes dominate the market and resemble a flash drive.
- Bright colored vape pens are easily mistaken for writing utensils — hiding in plain sight. There are over 30,000 different flavors of “juice”.
- According to the Food and Drug Administration, 81% of kids who've used tobacco started with a flavored product. There were 4,415 calls to poison control centers involving exposure/use of e-cigarette devices and liquid nicotine use.
- These products are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a smoking cessation aid. Until very recently, manufacturers and distributors of e-cigarettes and other vaping devices were not bound by standards of safety set by the FDA for smoked tobacco products.

Think About Doing:

- Arrange a time for your child and his friends to socialize (bowling, the park, watch a movie, get a bite to eat or cook something) as a way to encourage social interaction.
- Set up a day of the week/time at your house to not use devices.
- Establish a bedtime and routine for your child's phone/device.



Teens & Technology Checklist

Set the example.

If you want your child to spend less time on a screen, monitor your time on your phone, computer, or TV. When you are "plugged in," be sure to be modeling appropriate communication skills.

Create clear and consistent expectations early for technology use.

Create boundaries for screen time with your child so they feel included in the process. Once boundaries are set, stick to them and inform them of the consequences before they get in trouble. If your teen does not go along with the expectation, re-assess expectations you had created together to see where the break down is occurring.

Know what social media they have and inform them of restrictions and surveillance.

Using parental controls, having their location settings enabled, and keeping their apps connected to the family iCloud are all reasonable boundaries. Inform your child what is in place and what that means (i.e. what you can see). This allows for transparent communication and if something comes up you are free to talk about what you saw.

Talk long-term goals and how their social media presence affects them.

Does your teen want to be a teacher, lawyer, therapist, doctor- really any public profession? What happens online STAYS online and is readily available to most anyone that is looking. Inform your kids of the long-term consequences and get them to think before they send, post, or comment.

Create unplugged time each day.

Studies have shown that teens today do not know how to interact with people face-to-face or read emotions with as much accuracy as generations past. They are flooded with images and constantly comparing their lives with the Highlight Reel. Create a time where the family is technology free and be in the moment (i.e. Family Dinners).

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