

CORNERSTONE
DAY SCHOOL

Parents Matter

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The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Social Media

Part 3 in a series on Social Media and Your Child

Peer Pressure and Social Media

Peer pressure is not a new phenomenon, but has been exacerbated by the increasing presence of social media in our lives. While peer pressure is not solely an issue facing our children it can be one of the most challenging aspects of growing up and parenting. Their developing brains are not always equipped to take in all the stimuli they are exposed to and consistently make the best decisions, particularly with regard to peer pressure (this is especially so with the middle school aged student). Children and adolescents are focused on feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance among their peer group. With the constant access of social media, young people are unable to escape what is being posted online.

Mary Tyler author of *Peer Pressure Can be Multiplied through Social Media* indicates recent studies “show people, especially teenagers, who frequently visit their social media accounts increase their likelihood of participating in poor habits, such as smoking, drinking and premarital sex when compared to teens who do not have an account or seldom visit it.” There are a number of ways social media can pressure your child. Netsanity.net list these as the pressure to be available all the time, pressure to live the best life, pressure to engage in certain behaviors and or pressure of cyberbullying.

Below are some main concerns relating to social media and its influence on peer pressure.

- Pressure to stay connected—due to the ability to post 24/7, there is incredible pressure for students to remain online. Young people may fear that if they disconnect then they may miss something important and subsequently, will be out of the loop with friends.
- Obstacle to focusing on homework and hobbies ----students who spend excessive time on line, may spend less time completing homework or engage in extra-curricular activities.
- Lack of adequate sleep—excessive use of social media interferes with a student getting sufficient sleep affecting his/her ability to properly function the next day.
- Popularity contest is constant—There is pressure to post interesting things online that will elicit a satisfactory number of “likes” and positive comments. Young people have a tendency to define their popularity by the number of likes or followers they accumulate. This pressure can translate into teens experiencing anxiety about what to post, who is “liking” them and who is commenting about the posting.

Some ways you can help your child navigate peer pressure connected to social media include:

- Be aware of what your child is doing on their social media accounts and their online activity. According to Netsanity, don't assume your child is always capable of managing their online interactions. You may want to consider software and or apps that can assist you with monitoring your child's activity on social media.
- Communicate with your child often and frequently. Talk to your child about the dangers of social media and the influence it can have on their behavior. The conversation should include the positive benefits as well as the negative impact social media use can have on them.
- Be an example to your child. Put down the technology devices, limit your time on social media devices, use the dinner table to talk with your child, you might be surprised how much your child will share with you.
- Keep yourself informed. Social media and technology are constantly changing.

There are many products available to you as parents to assist you with monitoring your child's social media use. Internetmatters.org offers a guide to monitoring apps and lists several options for you to consider.

Resources:

Hughes, A., *How Technology Is Changing the Concept of Peer Pressure*, Retrieved from <http://screentimelabs.com>, August, 2019.

Teen Peer Pressure and Social Media in the Digital Age, Retrieved from <https://netsanity.net>, August, 2019

Teens and the “Constant Pressure” of Social Media, Retrieved from <http://netsanity.net>, August, 2019

Tyler, M. (August, 2019), *Peer Pressure Can Be Multiplied Through the Social Media*. Retrieved from <http://scomedsean.com>



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Parents Matter is published regularly throughout the school year as a service to the parents of students enrolled at Cornerstone Day School. Each issue highlights an important topic for parents with practical suggestions for helping their child continue to grow and overcome their emotional challenges.