

CORNERSTONE  
DAY SCHOOL

# Parents Matter

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## The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Social Media

### Part 1 in a series on Social Media and Your Child

As parents of middle and high school students, you worry about everything regarding your child: what they are eating, how they are performing in school, how they are functioning socially and so on. Along with these daily concerns, you also have to worry about your child and their understanding and use of social media and its content. Social media has opened the doors to everything, the good, the bad and the ugly, for our children. While social media provides access to information that can enhance your child's life in a way you never imagined, social media can also pose a threat to your child's safety and well-being in a way you never imagined. With so much available to your child, you may not be fully aware of how dangerous social media can be. Middle and high school students can often find themselves accidentally or purposefully on media sites meant for adults, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, TicToc, Bumble, Tinder/Grindr, What's App and Snapchat. Even YouTube can have questionable content. Your child's access to online content can encourage them to engage in risky behaviors that can be harmful and lead them into something that they are ill equipped to manage. It exposes your child to a number of dangers, such as cyberbullying, pornography/inappropriate material, theft of personal information, online scams and can make your child a target for predators who wish to do them harm. Hank Pellissier author of "Your child's brain on technology: social media" shared a May 2014 study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* revealed the experts warn "Exposure to risky online content [have] a direct impact on adolescents' risk behaviors."

So how can you support your teen's access to social media so it is a positive life enriching experience and not one that can cause harm? As parents you can:

- Establish rules for using devices right from the start. If you have not done this, it is never too late to start.
- Educate yourself on how to use the devices and the social media sites your child is using.

- Check your child's device on a routine basis; monitor content. You need to know what they are doing on social media.
- Require your child to add you as a friend so you can monitor their activity.
- Most importantly, speak to your child about the dangers of social media and explain that extensive use can have a negative impact on their social-emotional welfare.

It's important for your child to enjoy and use social media as it is an amazing tool that can expand your child's learning. It is more important for you to supervise your child's access and use of social media. Listen to the experts; it is important for you to set limits and guidelines with regard to technology and social media use. This can only improve your quality of life and will, more importantly, keep your child safe.

#### Resources:

*Kids Health – Teaching Kids to Be Smart About Social Media.*  
Retrieved from <https://kidshealth.org>

*Neves, Lara (2017, June). Social Media Rules for Teens – Teach Your Kids to be Smart Online.* Retrieved from <https://www.overstuffedlife.com>

*Pellissier, Hank (2019, April 2). You Child's Brain on Technology: Social Media.* Retrieved from <https://www.greatschools.org>

*Spzyie – Top Five Dangers of Using the Internet.* Retrieved from <https://www.spzyie.com>

*Stevens, Lauren B (2015, June 25). 5 Dangers of Social Media to Discuss With Your Kids.* Retrieved from <https://www.care.com/c/stories/4275/5-dangers-of-social-media-to-discuss-with-you/>

*Tekkie Help. Top 5 Dangers Kids Face Online and How to Prevent Them.* Retrieved from <http://tekkiehelp.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.*