

Social Networks Warning

Social networks (sites/forums) can occupy a lot of a person's time in today's technological world. To use social networks appropriately requires an extremely strong ability to self-monitor one's behaviors and thoughts. Healthy interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships require an ongoing developing skillset, which stems from personal growth, as well as a social understanding of appropriate social interaction skills. These skills are more often than not learned through personal experience and face-to-face interaction with peers and adults. Many factors are considered, as this process occurs, which tend to guide an individual's learning. Body language, facial expressions, voice inflection and social atmosphere are just a few cues that enable individuals to grasp an understanding of what is right or wrong in a group setting or on a personal level.

Without appropriate self-monitoring skills and an appropriate social knowledge base, social networks can become a very complicated environment for a middle school student. Middle school students are typically experiencing a maturation process physically, emotionally and socially. With all of these changes filling the developing minds of these children, the atmosphere of social networks can be misleading, overwhelming and can cloud judgment.

This is why it is our duty to **strongly discourage** middle school students from using social networks. However, if it is the wish of the parents to allow their child the privilege of interacting on a social network site please consider and review the following with your children. This privilege, if afforded to your child, needs to be closely monitored at all times by their guardian.

Points to review with your child if you are going to allow them to visit social networks.

1. Be respectful to others and yourself and never post things that are rude, threatening or offensive.
2. Do not post or send pictures or other content that could embarrass you or get you in trouble.
3. Respect other's privacy and be courteous when posting or forwarding pictures or information about others.
4. Do not let the time you spend on the web, phone and other devices interfere with sleep or school work.
5. Do not steal, hack or break into anyone else's account or use other's content without permission.
6. Protect your passwords and your personal information such as phone number, home and school locations and parent's credit card information.
7. If someone makes you feel uncomfortable or threatened, do not respond. Save the evidence, tell a trusted adult and report it to the authorities.
8. Ask a parent's permission before meeting online friends in person. Have a parent accompany you and meet in a public space.
9. Do not post or send sexual messages or inappropriate pictures or videos that could put you at risk, embarrass you or damage your future.
10. Remember that nothing on the Internet or social networks is ever private and can live online forever.