



UNIT 5 Middle School Counseling Newsletter

Spring Edition

2017-2018

What Teens Wish Their Parents Knew About Social Media

By Ana Homayoun in the Washington Post

When teens were asked, recently, if they believe their parents know “a little” or “nothing” about what they do or say online, or even what social-media apps and sites they use, more than a quarter of them agreed.

I’ve interviewed middle school and high school students about secrets they wish parents knew about their online use, but don’t necessarily want to tell them. These are three of the secrets students shared:

1. **“When you take away one device at night, you might not realize how many devices we still have with us.”** Encouraging kids to find effective ways to self-regulate is sometimes about getting their buy-in — that is, encouraging them to reflect on the impact their daily online habits are having on their personal, academic and extracurricular goals.
2. **“Many of us have a fake Instagram account.”** Having open-ended conversations rather than wielding authoritative control enables kids to build the critical thinking skills needed to make smarter decisions online and in-real-life.
3. **“If we are passionate or angry about something, we take it to social media.”** Young people want their opinions to be heard. Many tweens and teens find their online communities are engaging, interactive and responsive.

And here are several things they’d like their parents to do:

1. **“Talk with us about the apps we like to use and why. Most of you have no idea about our world.”** Many apps have geolocation features, and parents don’t realize the new level of potential pressure (and danger) these on-all-the-time experiences can bring.
2. **“Help us keep an eye on who is following us.”** In a world where likes, loves, comments and follower counts have become a barometer for popularity, teens might find it difficult to turn away potential followers, even when they should.
3. **“Accept that there are lots of good things on social media — it is not all bad stuff.”** Social media isn’t good or bad — it is a new form of communication and language that adults need to learn, because pretending it doesn’t exist generally isn’t a wise approach.
4. **“Talk with us about sexting and healthy relationships in a way that isn’t awkward.”** Tweens and teens who are socializing and navigating relationships online and in-real-life face challenges unheard of in previous generations. Some might mistakenly confuse the sending of explicit photos and messages with a level of intimacy that might not exist, and others might not fully understand the long-term social, emotional and legal consequences of sending, sharing and storing explicit photos

Important Dates

March

PARCC testing (all)

Final changes to High School course requests due (8th grade)

“Planning Beyond High School” night at Kingsley (8th grade parents)

April

Spring MAP testing (all)

“No matter how long the Winter, Spring is sure to follow.”

- Proverb

Go Chargers!

8th Grade Parents

Your child registered for their high school classes! Be looking for an email confirmation of their course selections by March 9th!

7th Grade Parents

Students recently chose electives for 8th grade. Please contact your child's counselor if you have any questions!

Suicide Prevention

As parents, you are sometimes faced with situations in your own home or with your child's friends where it may be useful for you to have more information about suicide prevention. First, it is important to know the warning signs of suicide. Here are a few website that list warning signs and risk factors:

[National Alliance of Mental Health](#)

[National Institute of Mental Health](#)

Some of the time, you may be brought into a situation where your child's friend is telling them they are thinking of harming themselves either in person or through text. In those situations, if you are unable to contact their parents to alert them of the situation, you have a few options.

- ⇒ If you know the phone number of the child or their parents but you can't seem to contact them, you can contact PATH's crisis team at 2-1-1 or 309-827-4005. They will have a crisis counselor call you back and get information about the situation. They will then try to contact the family and if they are in need of help, they will go out to the them and asses the situation.
- ⇒ If you don't know their phone number, but you know their address, you can contact the local police to do a "well check" on the individual. They will go out to the individual's home and alert the family of the situation and make sure that they are safe.
- ⇒ As a parent, if you are experiencing these issues with your own child, you are always able to contact the crisis team for help, but you can also take your child to an emergency room if you are afraid they are trying to harm themselves. At the ER, they will contact a crisis team member to assess them for danger to themselves or others.

Although we hope you don't need to use this information at any point in the future, it is beneficial to know your options in a crisis situation.

PARCC Testing

Students in 6th, 7th, & 8th grade will be PARCC testing on Tuesday, March 13th, Wednesday, March 14th and Friday, March 16th.

You can help your child do his/her best on their PARCC tests by:

- making sure, if possible, that your child attends school on the days of testing
- making sure your child gets a good night's sleep the night before testing
- providing breakfast on the mornings of testing
- reminding your child to ask the teacher questions if he/she does not understand the test directions
- letting your child know that you have confidence in his/her ability to do his/her best
- advising your child not to worry about the test—just do the best he/she can
- making sure your child has their computer and headphones for testing

For more information about PARCC testing visit the Parent Resources section: <https://parcc-assessment.org/parent-resources/>



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Educating each student to achieve personal excellence.