

## Social Media Tips for Parents

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With stay-at-home orders and school out of session, kids and teens are most likely spending more time in front of a screen to complete schoolwork and to stay connected with friends and classmates virtually. While having access to this technology allows people to continue working and stay in contact with others, for kids and teenagers it can open up a new realm of potential dangers and bullying. It is important to communicate with kids and teenagers and have conversations about online safety and privacy.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- As a parent, you should know what social media platforms your child is using, and employ parental controls whenever possible. You should also be able to access your child's account should the need arise. *Immerse yourself in what they're doing.*
- Inform your child of the consequences of inappropriate social media use. Just because they are behind a screen, doesn't mean there won't be real world consequences.
- Use a monitoring app that allows you to discreetly check and manage your child's internet use.
- Look out for apps that store hidden files, photos, and contacts known as "vault apps." Some of these are disguised as calculators or look like other tools that come with the phone.
- Make sure that all of the account privacy settings are turned on. Ensure that your child knows to only accept friend requests from people they know and follow or message only persons they have met in person.
- Create a contract with your child that outlines what will happen if they violate your rules about social media use. For examples, look up "social media contracts" online.
- Know what Apps are popular. Make your child's phone so that they need your permission to download an App; if you don't know what it is, look it up.
- Create an open dialogue with your child so they feel comfortable coming to you to discuss bullying or inappropriate activity they witness online. Encourage them by explaining that you are on their team, and that together you can tackle any challenge they may encounter online.
- Remember, it's not that you don't trust your kids, it's that you can't always trust the world around them – not everyone is looking out for their well-being, it's your job!
- In regards to social media – Know who's following your child (their "friends"). And, you should be one of them! Be aware, that most teens have two accounts: one for you & grandparents to see, and one for their friends to see. This also means that you too can have a fake account to "follow" your student.
- YOU are their parent. Your child will have plenty of friends, but only one set of parents!

The Irvine Police Department cares about you and your child's safety on the internet.  
For more resources and crime prevention tips, visit our website at  
<http://crimeprevention.irvinepd.org>

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