



## ***Ideas and Tips on Parenting and Media***

### Screens and Teens: What Parents Need To Know About Teen Social Media

#### **Our Commitment as Parents:**

I will take an active role in censoring obscene media from my student's life.

I will seek to understand the good, the bad, the positive and the negative aspects of media.

I will use media as a way to understand, relate to, and parent my student.

I will spend regular, quality time with my student and really listen to him/her.

I will not be passive, but will take an active role in the parenting and mentoring of my student.

#### **Tips and Ideas for the Whole Family:**

- Utilize the "Restrictions" easily installed on most cell phones, tablets and computers. This will help block adult, obscene content and pornography from Google and Safari. It will also allow parents to decide which apps are downloaded. Uncensored apps with anonymity are absolutely not allowed under age 18. (Twitter, Yik Yak, SnapChat, AskFm, Tumblr, Pinterest, WatPad, Whisper – and whatever app is coming next!)
- Separate all media, games and cell phones from meals. Do not eat in front of the TV. Turn the TV off and enjoy each other. Consider other places to limit media like the car, on Saturday mornings, etc.
- Print-out "House Rules" and/or a "Screen Contract" and follow through with the consequences if rules are broken.
- Restrict media while doing homework.
- All kids must hand in phones before bedtime.
- Is your student addicted to their phone? Don't be passive; give them a limit.
- For younger children, give them little or no weekday screen time.
- Keep TVs and computers in common spaces, such as the family room.
- Make sure visitors are aware of your family's media rules. For example, teen guests and the babysitter should know how your children can use media.
- If they haven't exercised yet, students should find an activity that exercises their brain and body each day prior to media allowance. Ride a bike, play outside, play a game with a sibling; ol' skool stuff!
- When your family sees an advertisement or a show that is depicting obscene or risky behavior, have a short, light, conversation (or monologue) about whom the media is targeting, whether it is realistic, what makes it appealing, and what concerns you have over it.
- You decide what are age appropriate games and shows! Don't let your children, the networks, the government or other parents decide for you.
- Purchase and install an adult filter and pornography blocker on PCs and laptops (ex: Safe Eyes).
- Block SnapChat, or consider installing mSpy, an app for monitoring it.
- Get rid of cable TV (advertising, violence, MTV, etc) and move to Netflix, Amazon Prime or Hulu Plus, where you can see what censored programs were watched.
- Monitor iTunes and all torrents (online downloads of movies, music, porn).
- Consider blocking uncensored websites, apps and TV channels.
- Remove all teen beauty magazines, shows, music and websites that portray a distorted view of beauty or objectify women.

#### **Ask Great Questions!**

How does it make you feel when someone "likes" your post? Who is your favorite celebrity to follow? When you feel stressed, what app do you use? What is the most inappropriate app that teens are using these days? How do you feel when you don't have your phone? I need a good laugh; can you show me some new YouTubes? How does it make you feel when you see your friends doing/posting that? How do you think that TV show portrayed drugs? How does that photo-shopped add make you feel? Can I tell you how it makes me feel? What behavior is that song promoting? How often do you feel tempted to drink? Use pot? Pills? Have sex? What is the hardest part about being you? When was the last time you saw someone drunk? Got drunk? Have you ever had oral sex? What qualities in a person are you attracted to? What makes you feel sad, lonely or stressed? Have you ever been bullied or cyber-bullied? Which parent do you connect with and why? How many classmates have sexted? Have you ever been asked to sext? How did you handle it? What is your greatest fear? Do you have any role models? How do you dance at school dances? I want to be a better parent; what changes can I make to be a better parent to you?