

Operational ServicesExhibit - Letter to Parents/Guardians About Disruptive Social Media Apps; Dangers

On District letterhead

Date:

Re: Disruptive Social Media Apps; Dangers

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Staying on top of social media trends is important for parents/guardians. The District wants you to know that the following social media apps have the potential to disrupt the school environment by becoming a platform for bullying, unlawful behaviors, and other dangers.

- *Hyperlocal* social media apps, e.g., *YikYak*, present safety and security concerns for our students. Hyperlocal apps use GPS on cell phones to target groups in specific areas.
- *Temporary* social media apps, e.g., *ask.fm*, *Snapchat*, and *Whisper* often present a false belief of anonymity. Temporary apps allow people to send messages and images that self-destruct after a set window of time.

Children need to understand that their online choices are important. Content never truly goes away and no one online is anonymous. Law enforcement agencies have the ability to pinpoint users and content creators, and they do investigate crimes involving the Internet and social media app usage.

The District encourages you to review the resources below and talk with your children. Let's partner together to help children understand how their digital footprints affect their and others' futures. As you discuss this topic with your child, please remind him or her how to report his or her concerns:

1. Tell your child to take a screen shot (if possible) or video (when screen shot not possible) of the content and show you or another trusted adult. Always encourage open conversations about what is happening online. When age-appropriate, discuss that possession and forwarding of sexted images violates federal and state child pornography laws.
2. Use the reporting mechanisms within the social media apps.
3. When a situation begins to disrupt your child's education, report it to your child's school.

Resources about Social Media Apps and Protecting Your Child Online

www.common sense media.org, discusses apps, movies, and more! Type in the app you want to learn more about, and this website will summarize it for you.

www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/protecting-kids-online, contains resources for adults seeking to help children make safe and responsible online choices.

Sincerely, Building Principal

Adopted: May 20, 2019

Operational ServicesExhibit - Letter to Parents/Guardians About Preventing and Reducing Incidences of Sexting

On District letterhead

Date

Re: Preventing and Reducing Incidences of Sexting

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Sexting is generally defined as sending, sharing, viewing, receiving, or possessing *indecent visual depictions* of oneself or another person using a cell phone. A student will be disciplined for sexting at school.

Discussing sexting and its legal and social consequences with your children may prevent and reduce incidences of it at school and elsewhere. A recent survey revealed that about 20 percent of teen boys and girls have sent sext messages. It can cause enormous emotional pain for the students involved, often with legal implications. The following talking points from the American Academy of Pediatrics may help start the discussion:

- Talk to your children, even if the issue hasn't directly impacted your community. Ask "have you heard of sexting?" "Tell me what you think it is." Learn what your child's understanding is and add an age-appropriate explanation. For more information about starting age-appropriate discussions, see *Talking to Kids and Teens About Social Media and Sexting – Tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics* at: www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Pages/Talking-to-Kids-and-Teens-About-Social-Media-and-Sexting.aspx.
- Make sure children of all ages understand that the District's student behavior policy prohibits sexting, and that it is further punishable in Illinois through the Juvenile Court Act and the Criminal Code of 2012.
- Collect cell phones at gatherings of tweens and teens. Experts have noted that peer pressure can play a major role in sexting, with attendance at parties being a major contributing factor.
- Monitor the media for stories about sexting that illustrate the consequences for both senders and receivers of these images. Ask "Have you seen this story?" "What did you think about it?" "What would you do if you were this child?"
- Rehearse ways your child can respond if asked to participate in sexting.

For more information on sexting, how to talk to your children about it, and how to say no to sexting, please see the following links:

www.common sense media.org/blog/talking-about-sexting

www.education.com/magazine/article/child-sexting-parents/

www.athinline.org/facts/sexting

<https://planetnutshell.com/portfolio/say-no-to-sexting-grades-7-12/>

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-12-teen-girls-bombarded-sexting.html>

Sincerely, Superintendent

Adopted: May 20, 2019