



NOTRE DAME SCHOOL

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Dear Families/Guardians,

The explosion of social media and student access to devices has had many effects on our students, with both positive and negative consequences. Notre Dame staff are the first to admit that we use many apps as tools for organization, work, and play. We have seen students accomplish great and creative things with research, design, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), and publishing online. In classes, we have discussed that no single app or platform is inherently 'bad' – it is all about how it's used.

Some concerns we have seen in the classroom and school community:

- Discussion of videos watched, imitating dances and physical humour, and repeating jokes has crept into class time when we should be working.
- Some of the viral dances, memes, and jokes have inappropriate language, actions, or titles.
- Some challenges and pranks can be mean-spirited or harmful.
- While many families are aware of and approve of their children being on social media, other children may be finding out about some of the content primarily when it is spoken about at school.
- Sometimes posts, videos, and pictures can be taken out of context based on how they are perceived by the viewer.

Some considerations:

- Many apps and platforms (i.e.: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, etc.) have minimum ages listed in the Terms of Use or Community Agreements. For many platforms, the minimum age is 13.
- Whatever the rules for Social Media in your house, consider what the rules might be for other families when visiting friends. Discussing your expectations with your child can help him/her understand what to do if someone else has different rules.

Our Notre Dame school plan:

- We are learning about our digital identity, how it is formed, and how it affects us now and in the future.
- We will only be speaking about specific apps/platforms or what we view there in an educational context.
- We will only discuss items that use respectful/appropriate language, actions, or ideas.

Navigating this topic involves lots of research and family discussions. Thank you for opening up a dialogue with your child to help us focus more on learning at school!



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For further information, Common Sense Media has resources and suggestions for parents on their website: commonsensemedia.org/social-media

The BC Ministry website: Online Safety has a resource for parents on: Raising Digitally Responsible Youth: A Parent Guide: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/online-safety>

Thank you for your support with this topic.

God Bless

Your Partner in Education,
Colleen Richard
Principal, Notre Dame School