



Summary & Discussion Guide:

Module 7 – Electronic & Social Media Boundaries

Many educators use technology to communicate with students and their parents about assignments which is valuable and acceptable. The interactions should be limited to posts that are visible by other users, including parents and administrators and done using district electronic platforms, never through personal email or personal social media. (Source 1)

Electronic devices and social media are increasingly common tools for communicating in our current culture and a high percentage of children have their own devices, even in elementary school. Research has shown that: (Source 1, 2, 3)

- 18% of children have cell phones by grade 3
- 25% by grade 4
- 39% by grade 5 and
- 83% of children have cell phones by middle school

In addition: (Source 1, 2, 3)

- 64% of kids have access to the Internet via their own laptop or tablet
- 54% have access via a shared, family computer in a public space and
- 50% of kids have social media accounts by age 12

Child molesters seek to leverage student's access to electronic devices and common social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They may also encourage students to communicate with them via specialized apps that hide the trail of their interactions, including: (Source 1, 4)

- Text & Call Apps that don't show on their phone bill
- Temporary Apps where texts and photos disappear within seconds of viewing
- Live Streaming Video Apps which allow interactions without recording and
- Photo Vaults & Ghost Apps which mask private photo libraries, web browsers, and even contacts
- 70% of teens have hidden on-line activity from their parents

To mitigate access via personal devices, we recommend a policy that prohibits staff from: (Source 1, 5, 6)

- Calling or texting students and vice versa or sharing phone numbers
- Sharing email addresses or user names used for any social media app, including but not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, or Instagram and
- Connecting with students on social media apps regardless of who initiated the request
- Staff should not engage any students' post on a public social media thread (Source 1, 2)

Policies in and of themselves may not prevent the exploitation of students via phone or social media apps but they do provide a clear expectation that allows administrators to take action if any of these boundaries are violated.

Reflection Question:

1. How do your current electronic and social media policies compare to best practices and how should they be changed to better protect the students in your care?



Sources

1. Diane Cranley, *8 Ways to Create their Fate: Protecting the Sexual Innocence of Children in Youth-Serving Organizations* (Mustang: Tate Publishing & Enterprises, LLC), 213-223.
2. "Research Findings: MARC 2011 Survey Grades3-12," Research Gate, accessed March 9, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254566990_Research_Findings_MARC_2011_Survey_Grades_3-12.
3. "Kids & Tech: The Evolution of Today's Digital Natives," influence CENTRAL, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://influence-central.com/kids-tech-the-evolution-of-todays-digital-natives/>.
4. "70% of Teens Hide Their Online Behavior from Their Parents, McAfee Reveals What U.S. Teens are Really Doing Online, and How Little Their Parents Actually Know," Intel Security, accessed March 9, 2017, <https://www.mcafee.com/us/about/news/2012/q2/20120625-01.aspx>.
5. Robin Sax, *Predators and Child Molesters: What Every Parent Needs to Know to Keep Kids Safe: A Sex Crimes DA Answers 100 of the Most Asked Questions* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2009), 86.
6. Sandy K. Wurtele, "Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Minors in Youth-serving Organizations," *Children and Youth Services Review* (2012): 2447, 2449, doi:10.1016/childyouth.2012.09.009.

Reading Materials

Various news headlines

- <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/alaina-ferguson-police-texas-teacher-had-sex-with-student-after-snapchat-encounter/>
- <http://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/High-School-Teacher-Used-Facebook-to-Solicit-Sex-From-Students-Deputies-220850031.html>
- <http://www.abcactionnews.com/news/hillsborough-regional-news/i-team-teacher-student-relationships-begin-through-texts-and-social-media>
- <http://www.cbs5az.com/story/18202534/phoenix-teachers-aide-sentenced-on-sex-abuse-charges>

Fade to app logos

- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/kik/id357218860?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/snapchat/id447188370?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/facebook/id284882215?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/instagram/id389801252?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/whatsapp-messenger/id310633997?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/private-photos-calculator/id571206791?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/vault-hide-pictures-videos-cloud-backup/id513852898?mt=8>
- <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/live-ly-live-video-streaming/id1085024470?mt=8>