**Social Media Smarts**

Social Media is a wonderful way to keep in contact with friends and family both near and far. However, social media has also been a tool to hurt other people. The following articles offer information for parents and intermediate students as they navigate various social media apps.

Although most social media apps can be used safely, these articles highlight different apps kids are using and things parents should look out for.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/11-social-media-red-flags-parents-should-know-about>

<https://www.familyeducation.com/mobile-apps/a-complete-guide-to-potentially-dangerous-apps-all-parents-should-be-aware-of>

This article talks about group chats. While group chats can be a great way for students to connect with friends outside of school, they can be a place where drama and unkind behavior can thrive. The article highlights the importance of reminding your children group chats are not always private and can be made public at any time. For example, any of their friend’s parents may be able to see what they are saying, or others could be invited to join the group. It also points out many inappropriate chats happen later in the evening or at night. Many experts recommend limiting access to devices after a certain time or keeping electronics in a common place in the house to avoid inappropriate online behavior.

<https://www.familyeducation.com/mobile-apps/a-complete-guide-to-potentially-dangerous-apps-all-parents-should-be-aware-of>

**Tips for parents:**

* Check what apps your children are using, download them yourself so you understand the apps
* Take phones and devices away at night
* Have children use electronic devices in your presence
* Check in to see how they are using the apps, who they are connecting with
* Check out <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

**Tips for students to be responsible online users:**

* Only follow people I personally know
* Always show an adult any message that makes me feel uncomfortable or threatened
* Never share any personal information with someone online (where I live, age, address, phone number)
* Keep personal location private
* Never share passwords with anyone other than your parents
* Before posting think:
  + Is this how I want others to see me?
    - Is this something I’d want my parents, grandparents or teachers to see?
  + Could somebody use this to hurt me (would I be upset if they shared this with others?) What’s the worst thing that could happen if I shared this?
* If you receive something that could hurt someone, embarrass them, don’t pass it on