

Your Child and the Digital World

The Speed of Today

Our present reality is that we live in a world of increasing accelerations. The pace of life coupled with world events can produce anxiety leading to confusion, frustration and a sense of being overwhelmed. With all the different ways we are connected to the world, there is no escape from the daily infusion of information. While we are able to filter and compartmentalize this information, our students can't always do this.

The Impact of Social Media

Middle school children are incredibly social and one of the ways they connect to their friends and the world around them is electronically. In fact, many of the social/emotional issues we encounter in middle school are related to social media; Snap Chat and Instagram in particular. While some children recognize that they need to act online the way they would act in real life, others do not. In fact, the majority of children don't have the skills necessary to safely navigate this world on their own. As a result, they find themselves in situations they are ill-prepared to handle. Therefore, we need to partner with each other to help them learn.

How We Can Help Our Students

We need our children need to understand that their online life is no longer separate from their regular life. We need to help them transfer the same values they have in the real world to online. In school, we are always talking about what it means to be a good citizen, including their online behavior. We remind students to THINK before they post: Is what they want to say Thoughtful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind. Additionally, we build off the lessons from WEB; we need to be "upstanders" meaning we lift each other up both in person and electronically. Our essential skills work reinforces a few key principles as well such as acting with integrity online, managing the time we spend on social media, and being aware of what we say and how we say it on social media. The Webster CAREs reinforces this focus as well. We teach them what cooperation, accountability, respect, and excellence looks like online. Finally, we talk about balancing out our online time. You can do these same things at home. Working together, we help our children stay safe online, avoid drama associated with poor posting choices, and

How You Can Help Your Child

There are several things you can do at home to help your children navigate the combination of middle school and their online life.

Check their devices and monitor. This is the single most important thing you can do!
Common charging areas for all electronic devices. This will keep devices out of their rooms at night. Research shows that sleep is disrupted by using electronic devices close to bed time as well as during the night due to various alerts.

Ask them for their passwords to all social media accounts as well as their devices.

Talk with them about their online life.

Model what you would like them to do.

To Learn More

The Webster CSD Technology team has created a webpage with much more information and many resources. Click [here](#) to explore.