

Joint Statement to Parents and Guardians on Smartphones and Social Media June 2024

The publication this spring of [*The Anxious Generation*](#) by the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt has elevated public awareness of the significant increases in anxiety, depression, and associated concerns that have coincided with the rise of smartphone and social media use among children and adolescents since 2010. A growing body of research points to surges in childhood [loneliness](#), [social isolation](#), [attention deficit](#), and [sleep insufficiency](#) over this period.

Surveys of middle and high school students have long [revealed](#) a negative relationship between screen time and happiness, but the [intentionally addictive](#) properties of smartphones and social media applications continue to induce significant levels of use by young people. As of July 2023, the average American teenager was [spending](#) 4.3 hours every day on YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram alone, and 4.8 hours on social media overall.

In view of mounting evidence of the detrimental impacts of smartphone and social media use on the lives of children and adolescents, and the opposition of these impacts to our common values as school communities, we recommend that parents intentionally limit and monitor their children's use of these technologies and that they consider delaying their use as long as possible into adolescence. This recommendation is consistent with longstanding societal norms that restrict children's access to potentially addictive or harmful products or activities. It is also consistent with the [documented correlation](#) between the delay of smartphone use and the likelihood of mental wellbeing into adulthood. This letter acknowledges a shared and daunting challenge for families and school communities. It is a collective call to action to parents in affirmation of our mutual commitment to the healthy development of your children.

We respect that, unlike other decisions parents must make about the age-appropriateness of their children's activities, the choice to limit or delay smartphone and social media use can entail perceived social isolation for the child. It is our hope that, by taking a collective stand on behalf of children across all of our institutions, we will embolden individual families to act collectively in turn. To curtail smartphone and social media use among children is far more difficult for each of us to undertake alone than it is for [all of us to undertake together](#). We seek to support and partner with you as parents in this joint endeavor across our school communities. We hope you will join us.

We wish you and your families a restful and happy summer vacation, and we look forward to welcoming your children back to our campuses in the fall.

Academy of St. Louis
Affton School District
Andrews Academy, Creve Coeur
Andrews Academy, Lake Saint Louis
Chaminade College Preparatory School
Chesterfield Montessori School

Christ Community Lutheran School
City Academy
The College School
Community School
Crossroads College Preparatory School
DaySpring Arts and Education

De Smet Jesuit High School
Ferguson-Florissant School District
Forsyth School
The Fulton School
Immacolata School
Incarnate Word Academy
Jennings School District
John Burroughs School
Logos School
Loyola Academy of St. Louis
Lutheran North Middle and High School
Lutheran South High School
MAP St. Louis
Marian Middle School
Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day
School (MICDS)
Mary, Queen of Peace School
Miriam School and Learning Center
Montessori Lab School at Grand Center

New City School
Rohan Woods School
Rosati-Kain Academy
Rossman School
St. Clement of Rome School
St. John Vianney High School
St. Mary's South Side Catholic High School
The St. Michael School of Clayton
Saul Mirowitz Jewish Community School
South City Community School
Thomas Jefferson School
Villa di Maria Montessori
Villa Duchesne
Visitation Academy
The Waldorf School of St. Louis
Westminster Christian Academy
Whitfield School
The Wilson School

[Invitation to other Greater St. Louis schools and school districts to sign the Joint Statement](#)

Joint Statement signatory list is current as of October 29, 2024, 4:00 p.m. CDT.