



Galvin Middle School Parent/Guardian Guide to Social Media Use

For most social media accounts, the minimum age requirement to sign up is 13. Allowing your child to have a social media account is a family decision, and we hope to continue to provide you with resources to help you make informed decisions regarding social media use and your child. As a school, we will continue to take opportunities to model positive social media use through our school's social media accounts.

Common reasons why adolescents struggle with social media:

Developmentally - Adolescents by nature are impulsive and not often thinking of long term consequences. This may lead them to react emotionally to peer conflict using social media without thinking through repercussions. We are working on encouraging students to handle their strong feelings in different and more private ways. We are always willing to help facilitate student conflict meetings at school if needed.

Peer Conflicts - Adolescents often mismanage emotions and feelings around peer relationships and conflicts as they learn to navigate the social landscape particularly as they advance through middle school (for example, feelings of exclusion or being left out, changes in peer relationships and friend circles).

Accessibility - Students have constant easy access to social media and the internet in the palm of their hands with the capability of smartphones. This in combination with where they are developmentally can sometimes lead to misuse and poor decision-making

Lack of Structure - As with everything else in their lives, middle schoolers thrive on structure, routine, and clear expectations. Without clear limits and rules, middle schoolers will not know how to manage and behave on social media.

Some ideas for working with your child on responsible/appropriate social media use:

Contracts-Agree on a set of expectations for using social media, and create a contract outlining these expectations and what your response will be if misuse occurs. Please feel free to reach out to us for some examples of student-parent contracts and agreements for using social media.

Time Limitations-Establish a “cut off” time from technology.

Supervision-Allow student(s) to use their device in supervised areas of the home, and create a central location for charging overnight. Make sure you have all of your child’s passwords for their social media accounts.

Spot Checks-Let your child know you will be periodically checking their social media accounts. Screenshot anything that seems inappropriate or makes you feel uneasy.

Knowledge-Stay in the know about current applications your child is using, and how they function. Be aware that students may create “fake” social media accounts (for example “Finstas” on Instagram).

Resources

Sample Social Media Contract:

<http://www.imom.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/imom-social-media-contract-for-kids-color.pdf>

A Parent’s Guide to Snapchat: http://www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/snapchat_guide.pdf

A Parent’s Guide to Instagram: http://www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/instagram_guide.pdf

Bullying and Cyberbullying Resources: <http://www.safekids.com/bullying-cyberbullying-resources/>