Lexington Public Schools

Students and Social Media

Translate Traducir Tradurre Traduire 翻訳する అనువదించు Çevirmek 翻译 翻譯 يترجم 번역하다 Переводить Traduzir अनुवाद לתרגם Tradui

As many families are probably well aware, social media has become a rapidly growing and changing platform over the past several years, with many different types of platforms. Additionally, the increased access to cell phones has brought about greater access to students as well.
It is always a family decision for students to be able to access social media, however, over time, we have found that in some cases, students have the ability to download apps and parents may not be aware that they have done so. While there are many positive benefits and outcomes from using various social media apps and platforms, there are times that without the proper guidance and supervision, those apps and platforms can cause issues that creep into the school setting.

As a district, our role is to educate students about being good digital citizens and our hope is that collaboratively, between school and home, we can help students make good decisions about using technology.
In the event that you did not know, most social media services have an age restriction of at least 13. The reason most social media services use an age limit of 13 or over is in part because of a law in the USA. The COPPA law or Children's Online Privacy Protection Act states that any organizations or people operating online services (including social media services) are not allowed to collect the personal information of anyone under the age of 13 without parental permission.

To avoid the necessity of obtaining parental permission for any user under the age of 13, most services have instead chosen to place an age restriction of 13 to their services. They write this rule into their Terms and Conditions – which users must agree to when they initially sign up and some services may ask users to declare their age during sign up.

In the event that you did not know, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik-Tok all have an age restriction of 13 years and older. Children under the age of 13 should not be using those social media services based on the companies' policies.

We strongly encourage and recommend that families regularly check their child's device(s) and that they make sure that passwords are shared with parents and caregivers to help ensure that students are using technology responsibly. Additionally, a great resource for parents and families is Common Sense Media. You can get to their website at http://www.commonsensemedia.org where you can find many reviews, information and recommendations about age appropriate movies, software, apps, etc.

As always, we understand that ultimately, families make the decision about the content and technology that their children use. Our hope is that children access these resources with clear instructions about responsible use and that school and home work collaboratively to harness the great opportunities that technology can provide our students.