

Tip On Monitoring Social Media

By

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Use Technology to Fight Technology

Go to these websites to download filters and tools that will help you monitor your student's use of social media. These tools will help you stop inappropriate messages/images from going out and from coming in. We will call the below "all in one" tools because they monitor your child's social media use for you and report to you through email alerts. You do not have to individually check your students Facebook, email, twitter, texting, etcetera, accounts. The below sites do it all for you (in varying degrees).

www.uknowkids.com – An all in one service that monitors just about every social media platform and reports to you via instant emails. Provides a dashboard that allows you to track nearly everything your child does online.

www.netnanny.com – Another all in one service that helps parents monitor online behaviors. One of the most powerful internet filters on the market.

www.trucare.com – Monitors social media and reports to you like the above sites, however, does not cover as many platforms.

www.avira.com – Monitors social media, not quite as extensive as the above three, however it has one huge advantage, it's free.

The above sites have some of the best reputations in the industry. There are many more. Simply Google "social media monitoring tools for parents"

The following sites do not monitor social media, however, they are some of the best sites for help if your child has been bullied, stalked, or harassed online.

www.haltabusektd.org – Works with kids and teens that are experiencing online bullying.

www.cyberangles.org – Volunteers that work to track down stalkers and bullies online

www.wiredsafety.com – Reports cyber abuse, If the situation involves any sort of physical/life threats parents must report to the local police before Wired Safety will get involved.

Parenting Strategies

Have "The Talk"...This one will be about the dangers of social media. It is important that your children understand they can do serious damage to their lives through the misuse of social media. If you do not tell them, who will? Here are the points you will make in this short but intense conversation:

1. What you send out there is *permanent*, you cannot get it back, and it will be out there forever. If you send an inappropriate image of yourself out there on twitter, you will have to deal with the image's existence for the rest of your life. If you make an inappropriate comment and send it out on social media, you will have to deal with the consequences for a long time.
2. Inappropriate social media behavior is *prosecutable*. You can be suspended from school and even charged with a crime. If prosecuted for cyberbullying, you will be charged with a misdemeanor that will be on your juvenile record until you are eighteen. Employers and colleges conduct background checks on their applicants. You may be unable to get a job because of something you posted on Instagram. You may be unable to get a college

scholarship because you tweeted a racial or threatening comment. Your future could be radically changed when you press send or post, please be careful.

3. You can cause a lot of pain with one hateful post. Do you want to be responsible for hurting another person?

Limit Platforms

If left to their own devices, students will want to be on every platform: twitter, texting, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, ask.fm, and etcetera. Unless using one of the more expensive social media monitoring tools, it would be very hard to monitor everything. And even if using the best monitoring tool out there, there is none that can monitor *everything* because new social media platforms are always coming out. What to do? Limit to two plus email. That's it, out of all that is out there, tell your child they can only join two social media sites and have one email address. You will have less to monitor and your child will be less exposed.

There is one platform that you must completely forbid your child from using: ask.fm. Ask.fm has been involved in many suicides that have occurred as a result of online bullying. They have NO monitoring options, allow for the creation of anonymous accounts and will not work with any of the social monitoring tools.

My daughter is on Instagram...that's it. I do not have to spend time monitoring everything because she is not on everything. She is not on everything because we limit her access. We limit her access because we are the parents. Remember, you bought the phone/tablet/computer for your student. You have the right to monitor it and take it away if the privilege is abused.

Sign a Contract With Your Child

It is important that your child understand that access to social media is a privilege and that you have the authority to take his/her phone or limit their access to platforms. Your child needs to understand what appropriate social media behavior is and is not. What he/she is allowed to do online needs to be defined. A great way to do this is through the use of a signed contract. Signing the contract also gives you another opportunity to discuss social media with your child. You can find a free social media contract at www.truecare.com.
