

# Social Media

## Randolph Middle School

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### Know the facts:

- **Definition:** The U.S. Department of Education (2012) defines social media as “Forms of communication either Internet or text-based that support social interactions of individuals” (p. 5).
- **Nearly all youth and a majority of adults use social media.** In 2012, 90% of 13- to 17-year-olds reported using some form of social media. About 70% of adults use social media regularly, and about half use two or more social media platforms. It is expected this usage will increase.
  - There are **3.725 billion** active social media users
  - On average, people have **7.6 social media accounts**
  - The average daily time spent on social is **142 minutes a day**

### Potential Risks

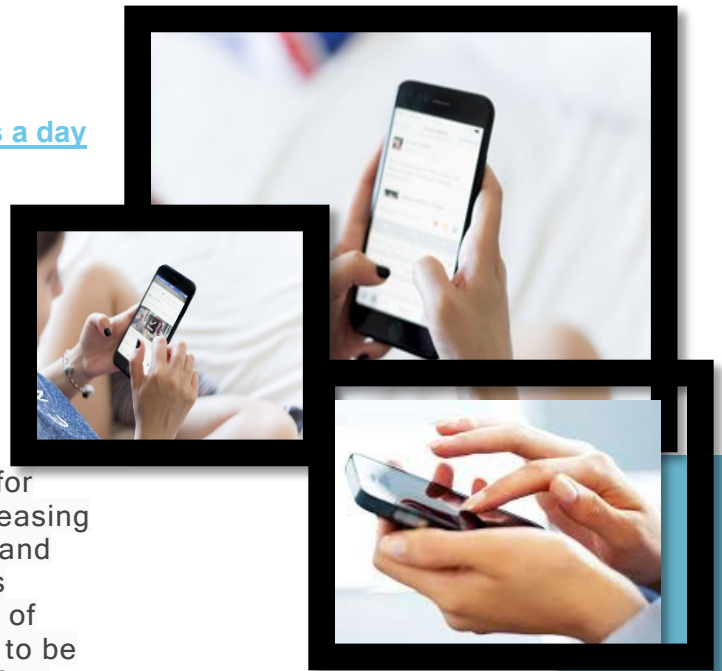
**Cyberbullying:** students and staff members may experience widespread and direct public ridicule

**False Information:** quick and widespread communication regarding crisis-related rumors and/or false information (i.e. inaccurate information about situations)

**Personal Ridicule:** quick and widespread communication of embarrassing or inappropriate information (e.g., personal photos or shameful information posted)

**Triggering:** Potential for triggering crises, increasing perceptions of threat and fear, or creating crisis contagion (e.g., 1-5% of suicides are believed to be due to a contagion effect where learning about crisis details leads to another crisis).

**Privacy:** kids and teens may not understand the risks associated with oversharing on social media (personal information, photos, etc.)

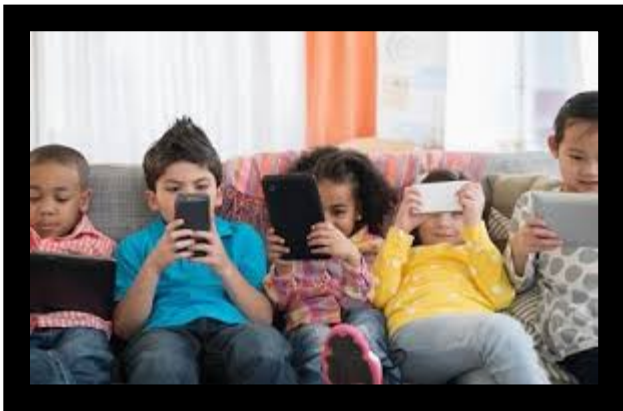


## Potential Benefits: Times of Crisis

- **Crisis Prevention:**
  - Helping to create an extended sense of community or culture (i.e. posting of positive messages, achievements, opportunity for diversity, celebrating success, mental health awareness, etc.)
  - Encourage positive behavior, responsibility, and healthy relationships in school, home, and the community.
  - Online surveillance/warnings (i.e. monitoring crisis threats or warning signs, spreading awareness about reporting mechanisms and helplines, etc.)
- **Crisis Intervention:**
  - Quickly communicating accurate information following a crisis.
  - Rapidly dispelling rumors or other false information.
  - Quickly disseminating crisis prevention resources.
  - Evaluating or triaging individuals who may be affected by a crisis (e.g., monitoring student use of social media for trauma warning signs).
  - Quickly disseminating information about how others can access mental health resources following a crisis.
  - Quickly coordinating crisis response efforts (e.g. caregiver access to a school's posting of a reunification plan).
- **Postvention:**
  - Disseminating accurate crisis situation updates in real time from any location to a wide audience.
  - Disseminate information about public services or planned memorials.

*The potential risks of social media are often publicized, disturbing, and at the forefront of community attention. While such challenges are concerning, it needs to be acknowledged that social media is a reality that is here to stay. Educators are encouraged to understand how social media can help prevent and respond to crisis risks.*

## Questions to Ask Kids to address Social Media Safety



1. Which apps/games are you using at the moment?
2. What websites do you enjoy and why?
3. How does this game/app work? Can I play?
4. Do you have any online friends?
5. Do you know where to go for help?
6. Do you know what your personal information is?
7. Do you know your limits?

# What you need to know about these apps:

## 1. Snapchat

- The “Snap Map” can share an individual’s exact location in real time
- Snapchat’s gimmick: All photos, videos and text disappear eventually - however, users still have the capability to screenshot or record anything which has been sent to them. Users may sometimes forget that screenshotting is possible and send a compromising image or message to somebody who they think they trust. They may also accidentally send an image or message to somebody who they do not trust. Simply by pressing and holding a message, the user can save a message they have received, which can be screenshotted or used against them at a later date.
- Be aware of sexting: Due to Snaps disappearing, (users can even send a one-second photo or video), Snapchat has become the chosen platform for children and young people to send sexually explicit images or selfies.
- Lens explorer, filters, and Snap originals: Some features presented in these areas of snapchat are inappropriate and hit on the topic of mental health (i.e. suicide, self-harm, depression etc.) and sexually explicit material.

## 2. TikTok

- Inappropriate Song Lyrics: TikTok allows users to lip sync to songs and produce their own music videos. Many of the popular songs chosen by teens and children contain sexual themes and curse words.
- Being Influenced: A major danger of TikTok is that many teens and children develop unrealistic expectations of how they should look and/or behave. Individuals are also becoming increasingly obsessed with becoming the next “star” or influencer. These pressures may be accompanied by feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and too much stake in people’s opinions about them.
- Inappropriate/Concerning Content: Some of the outfits and dance moves in videos can be overtly sexual and provocative. There have also been reports of some users sharing concerning content, such as videos that promote anorexia, porn, self-harm and violence.
- Dangerous Trends: Trending challenges and hashtags can expose individuals to risky behavior (i.e. the choking game, suicide challenges, etc.)
- Stranger Danger and Privacy: Strangers can follow any user if the profile is public. Individuals can comment and post, exposing children and teens to increased “stranger danger” and limited privacy on social media

## 3. Instagram

- Damage to Confidence, Body Image, and Mental Health: When influencers, celebrities or peers use filters on their photos or videos on Instagram, it can set unrealistic expectations of their own appearance and create feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem. Additionally, many videos and photos posted by users are edited. Images shown on Instagram are not always accurate portrayals and tend to glamorize difficult situations and neglect to include the challenges of everyday life. Teens and children may try to strive for a comparable number of likes on their own photo to an image or video that has been edited heavily.
- Photo/Video Sharing: Posting photos and videos is Instagram’s biggest selling point, but with sharing images comes risks. A photo which includes landmarks in the area, their school uniform, street name, house and even tagging in the location of the photo uploaded to Instagram can expose the child’s location making it easy to locate them. If their account is not set to private, anyone can access their account and see their images.
- Hashtags: One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag with one thing in mind and before you know it, hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that children and teens shouldn’t be exposed to.
- Location Tags: Location tags can be added to photos which expose a child/teen’s location, posing a risk if it is added during real time.