

The Longhorn Way

Parent Edition No. 28

March 2, 2018

Food Allergies: Please remember our policy is to not share food. When you are bringing special treats for your student to school, please remember it can not be shared with other students.

Social Media: How do we navigate this ever changing world of technology and social media? Social media had really changed our world. Adults and students are constantly connected. We don't have to be in the same room with someone to communicate and be connected. Back in my day, you had to make a plan to connect with others and in middle school it involved your parents. Unless of course you could walk to a friend's house, but still you needed to let your parents know. Now kids can be connected constantly. This has advantages but it also has problems. Kids are becoming dependent on their devices to be connected and provide stimulation. Here are a few pointers to help with that constant need to be connected:

1. **Role model the behavior you want to see from your child.** Disconnect when you need to spend quality time with your family. Don't text and drive or even talk on the phone when driving.
2. **Create ground rules and boundaries.** When is it ok to be connected and when do they disconnect at night? Set limits on time being connected. Don't fall for "I am listening to music while I do my homework", because usually they are multitasking and connecting with friends. Homework or chores can take a lot longer.
3. By an old fashioned alarm clock. **Keep the phones out of the bedroom at night.** Believe it or not they are still connected once the lights go off.
4. **Follow your child on all social media.** By following your child you can monitor, discuss, and help them make good decisions. Remember if they could navigate this on their own they wouldn't still be living at home. Have discussions and guide them on how to use social media. Think of the analogy of when they learn to drive. We spend hours practicing and monitor their learning to ensure they are safe to travel on their own. Think of social media the same way.
5. **Knowledge is Power!** Know what social media they are using. Snapchat is the biggest one right now. This is an app where they create a story and it stays up for followers to see for 24 hours. They can also send a snap (or pic) to another person individually for only them to see and it disappears after 10 seconds (nothing really disappears). They tend to chronicle their whole life on this app. Even the negative aspects as they are unaware of the impact. The legal age to use Snapchat is 13 and many are using it.

Here are some additional resources for you to learn more about social media:

- [Parent Guide to Snapchat](#)
- [Snapchat Parent's Review](#)
- [3 Simple Ways to Establish Snapchat Parent Controls](#)
- [The Clueless Parent 's Guide to Understanding Snapchat](#)
- [A Parent's Guide to Social Media](#)

Thank you to all of our wonderful parent volunteers who helped make our Book Fair possible! Because of you we were able to purchase books for our library and classrooms. Thanks for supporting literacy at West Middle!

Thanks for sharing your children.

~Annie

Mark Your Calendar

March 5: Missouri Statewide Tornado Drill 10:00 a.m.

March 7: Late Start/West Time

West Area Band Concert @ West High 7:00 p.m.

March 8: Make-Up Missouri Statewide Tornado Drill 10:00 a.m.

March 9: Missouri School Read In Day

“Tomorrow is always fresh with no mistakes in it”

~Anne Shirley