

# WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear West Deptford Families,

In today's digital age, technology and social media have become an integral part of our lives, including the lives of our students. As we strive to ensure the safety and well-being of our students both online and offline, I would like to take a moment to discuss appropriate social media and computer usage.

The use of technology offers incredible opportunities for learning, communication, and self-expression. However, it also comes with its challenges and potential risks, particularly for our younger users. It is crucial that we work together as a community to guide our students in using these tools responsibly.

Here are a few key points to consider:

1. **Digital Citizenship:** Teach your child about the concept of digital citizenship – the responsible, respectful, and safe use of technology. Encourage them to be good online citizens by treating others with kindness, respecting privacy, and avoiding cyberbullying.
2. **Open Communication:** Maintain open and ongoing conversations with your child about their online activities. Encourage them to share their experiences, challenges, and questions. Let them know that they can always turn to you for guidance.
3. **Privacy Settings:** Help your child understand the importance of privacy settings on social media platforms and other online accounts. Empower them to make informed decisions about what they share and with whom.
4. **Screen Time Balance:** Discuss the importance of balancing screen time with other activities, such as physical exercise, hobbies, and spending time with friends and family. Set reasonable limits on screen time to ensure a healthy balance.
5. **Critical Thinking:** Encourage your child to think critically about the content they encounter online. Help them discern between reliable sources of information and potentially misleading or false information.

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6. **Online Etiquette:** Teach your child about proper online etiquette, including using appropriate language, refraining from sharing sensitive personal information, and respecting the feelings of others.
7. **Role Modeling:** As adults, we play a significant role in modeling responsible technology use. Demonstrate healthy habits by managing your own screen time and engaging in positive online interactions.
8. **Report and Seek Help:** Make sure your child knows how to report any inappropriate content, behavior, or online harassment. Educate them about seeking help from a trusted adult if they encounter any concerning situations online.

At West Deptford School District, we are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive digital environment for our students. We work diligently to provide them with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the online world with confidence and integrity.

Thank you for partnering with us in guiding our students to become responsible digital citizens. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please feel free to reach out to us.

Best regards,

Dr. Brian C. Gismondi, *Superintendent of Schools*