

The Counseling Connection

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"It's never too late to begin again!"

Dear DRMS Parents & Guardians,

Welcome back! There is always something so refreshing about January. Starting the new year with a clean slate and reflecting on the previous year always seems to bring a sense

of peace. The counselors at DRMS have a lot of big plans for second semester now that we can officially welcome Mrs. Chandler to



the DRMS family! We are so excited and blessed to have her here with us!

What's New?

As stated before, we warmly welcome Mrs. Chandler to the counseling staff and she has brought so many innovative ideas for second semester. We spent last week brainstorming all kind of ide-

as and here is what you can expect:

- ◇ Monthly Themes
- ◇ Schoolwide Activities
- ◇ More Class Lessons

- ◇ SOL Pep Rally
- ◇ Door Decorating Contests
- ◇ And much, much more!

Social Media & Phone Safety

We live in a technological era and while that has MANY benefits, it does come with some risks as well. Students these days have access to so many wonderful and helpful apps and it truly is incredible what we can do with technology now. However, this also means students have access to some pretty awful things and

parents have to be equipped with the knowledge to keep their children safe. Unhealthy trends, cyberbullying, TikTok challenges: all of these things put your child at risk and if you aren't adequately prepared your child can fall



victim to all of these.
Knowledge is power!

Pros & Cons of Social Media

Pros

- ◇ stay connected with friends and family
- ◇ enhance and showcase one's creativity
- ◇ meet and interact with others who share similar interests
- ◇ communicate with educators and students

Cons

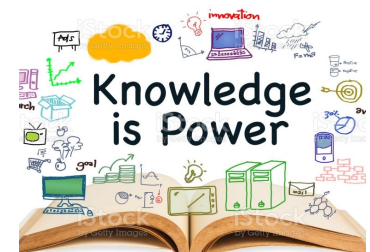
- ◇ online predators/people not being who they say they are
- ◇ access to inappropriate material and images
- ◇ susceptible to online bullying
- ◇ sharing inappropriate pictures

"Nothing ever goes away once it is posted online."

Long Term Effects— the B I G Picture

Students are too immature at this age to fully understand the repercussions of their actions. Once they send or post that inappropriate picture it is out there forever. Even if they think it is deleted, it is never fully removed. This may not seem like a big deal to them now, but fast forward 5-10 years when they are applying for a job or try-

ing to get into college and the future employer or school completes a background check and they are turned away because of a poor choice made years ago. Students also don't realize the things they send over text threatening to fight or harassing another student can be reported by a parent and investigated by a police officer.



What can YOU do?

As the parent it is your job to protect and educate your child on the responsibility of owning a phone and being on social media. Social media and technology are great tools for students when used appropriately. They are teenagers, though, and they are going to push the boundaries. They have to realize the

severity of not handling social media correctly. It is a privilege that they have access to internet. Spiderman puts it perfectly, “With great power comes great responsibility.” It is not our suggestion to prevent your child from having this access, but instead informing your child of phone etiquette and expect-

tations.



The Gift of Gab

I know I say it in just about every issue, but talking to your children is the key to everything. Discuss with your child all that can go wrong having social media access and phone privileges. Set clear expectations with time limits and restrictions for the phone. Set a bedtime for your child’s phone and keep it in your room at night to assure they are not on them all hours of the night. Tell them the

risks they are taking sharing personal information with strangers or the long term effects of sending an inappropriate picture to a classmate. Ask your teen about what they know about sexting. It is happening even as early as 6th grade and it is dangerous. Talk to them about cyberbullying and being

nice online. Use the acronym WWGS. ‘What Would Grandma Say’ if she saw the things they posted? Would they still post it?



Privacy Settings

If your child owns his/her own phone go ahead and have safety precautions in place. In the phone’s settings you can prohibit certain websites to be visited and certain apps from being used. You

can also put parental controls on the phone to where your child can’t download an app without a code that only you know. Research parent apps that you can connect to their phone. There are plenty out

there allow your child to maintain their privacy, but also allow you as the parent to keep them safe. For example, there is an app created that will alert you if they send an inappropriate image.



Questions?

Please reach out if you have any questions or would like more information about the support we offer here at Dan River Middle School to ensure success for all students.

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Middle School Parenting Tip #6

There are plenty of parental control apps available to help you keep track of your student's phone usage. Here are a few that come highly recommended that allows you to set time limits for certain apps and monitor what they are sending. These apps do not strip students of their privacy, but instead allow parents to keep their children safe.

1. Qustodio
2. Norton Family
3. Kid Logger
4. Family Keeper

