

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Families and Staff,

In our school community, we continue to observe the impact of high social media usage on both our students' ability to focus along with their overall emotional well-being. Although several recent news items discuss how we should sharply reduce technology use in our schools, something we do limit with our students in grades PreK - 5, several recent scientific studies have pointed out that the limited amount of school use is not the driving force behind the problem. That student use after school, at night, and on the weekends continues to be the main contributing factor to the problem that has been created and continues to harm our young people.

There is no question that our social media problem will take all of us to put our heads together and combine our efforts! To support you, we have synthesized the latest recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the U.S. Surgeon General. These resources provide both a developmental roadmap to help technology better serve as a tool for growth rather than a source of harm along with other resources which can assist us in developing guidelines to use with our young people whether they are 3 or 15 yrs old.

QUICK NAVIGATION BY AGE GROUP

[Infants/Toddlers \(0-2\)](#) | [Preschoolers \(3-5\)](#) | [Elementary \(6-10\)](#)

[Twins \(11-12\)](#) | [Teenagers \(13-18\)](#) | [Across All Ages: Core Principles](#)

Infants & Toddlers (0–2 years)

Goal: Support brain development through real-world interaction.

Avoid screens: Avoid social media and most screen use (except video chatting).

Face-to-Face: Prioritize language exposure, physical play, and direct eye contact.

Adult Modeling: Adults should avoid using phones during active caregiving routines.

Preschoolers (3–5 years)

Goal: Foster social-emotional development and self-regulation.

No independence: Absolutely no independent social media use.

Co-viewing: Use screens sparingly and only with adult participation and discussion.

Early Literacy: Choose high-quality, educational content and discuss online kindness.

Elementary School-Age (6–10 years)

Goal: Build digital literacy and maintain healthy balance.

Supervision: Use should be very limited and strictly supervised.

The Hierarchy of Needs: Ensure sleep, homework, and physical activity come before screens.
Controls: Utilize parental controls and maintain shared access to all passwords.

Tweens (11–12 years)

Goal: Lay a foundation for independent decision-making.

Assess Readiness: Carefully evaluate maturity before allowing initial accounts.

Family Media Plan: Create clear rules, check-ins, and "tech-free" zones.

Bedtime Boundaries: Devices must be off and stored outside the bedroom before sleep.

Teenagers (13–18 years)

Goal: Support autonomy while protecting mental health.

Mindful Use: Encourage purposeful engagement over passive, constant scrolling.

Algorithm Literacy: Discuss how "likes" and influencers impact emotions and behavior.

Open Channels: Avoid punitive monitoring; encourage honesty about online stress.

Across All Ages: Core Principles

Quality > Quantity: What they are doing online matters more than the minutes spent.

Communication is Key: Ongoing dialogue is more protective than rigid software blocks.

Lead by Example: Your own media habits are the strongest teacher for your children.

Thank you for your partnership in helping our students navigate the digital world safely and responsibly.

Very truly yours,



Christian M. Elkington
Superintendent of Schools

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2025). [Screen time guidelines](#).
- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2026). [A child friendly digital world: AAP releases new media recommendations](#).
- American Academy of Pediatrics. (n.d.). [Kids & screen time: How to use the 5 C's of media guidance](#)
- American Psychological Association. (2023). [Health advisory on social media use in adolescence](#).
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025). [Social media and youth mental health: Surgeon General's advisory](#)
 - For more on this see our Center resources
 - [Social networking and peer relationships](#)
 - [The Good and Bad of Social Networking use by Children and Adolescents](#)
 - [About Supporting Those Who Seem Depressed](#)
 - Also see:
 - Abrams, Z. (2023). [Why young brains are especially vulnerable to social media](#). American Psychological Association.