

Operational Services

Exhibit - Letter to Parents/Guardians About Disruptive Social Media Apps; Dangers

On Cooperative letterhead or via the Cooperative's electronic communications management system

Date

Re: Disruptive Social Media Apps; Dangers

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Staying on top of social media trends is important for parents/guardians. The Cooperative wants you to be aware that the following social media apps have the potential to disrupt the school environment by becoming a platform for bullying, unlawful behaviors, and other dangers.

- *Hyperlocal* social media apps, e.g., *YikYak*, present safety and security concerns for our students. Hyperlocal apps use GPS on cell phones to target groups in specific areas.
- *Temporary* social media apps, e.g., *ask.fm*, *Snapchat*, *Burn Note*, *Whisper*, and *Secret*, often present a false belief of anonymity. Temporary apps allow people to send messages and images that self-destruct after a set window of time.

Children need to understand that their online choices are important. Content never truly goes away and no one online is anonymous. Law enforcement agencies have the ability to pinpoint users and content creators, and they do investigate crimes involving the Internet and social media app usage.

The Cooperative encourages you to review the resources below and talk with your children. Let's partner together to help children understand how their digital footprints affect their and others' futures. As you discuss this topic with your child, please remind him or her how to report his or her concerns:

1. Tell your child to take a screen shot (if possible) or video (when screen shot not possible), of the content and show you or another trusted adult. Always encourage open conversations about what is happening online. When age-appropriate, discuss that possession and forwarding of sexted images violates federal and state child pornography laws.
2. Use the reporting mechanisms within the social media apps.
3. When a situation begins to disrupt your child's education, report it to your child's school.

Resources about Social Media Apps and Protecting Your Child Online

www.ParentingTodaysKids.com, educates parents/guardians to help them close the technology gap that may exist between themselves and their children.

www.common sense media.org/, discusses apps, movies, and more! Type in the app you want to learn more about, and this website will summarize it for you.

cell-phone-parental-control-software-review.toptenreviews.com/learning-center.html, reviews recent electronic device monitoring software (current as of May 2014).

Sincerely,

Executive Director

Added to Policy Manual: 5/2016