

RIDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

DISTRICT 234
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RE: Disruptive Social Media Apps and Digital Safety

Dear RHS Parents and Guardians:

Staying on top of social media trends is essential for parents/guardians. We want to alert you to how certain social media applications can disrupt the school environment by serving as platforms for cyberbullying, harassment, and other digital dangers.

- **Algorithmic & Trend-Driven Apps (e.g., TikTok):** These platforms present unique safety concerns. National trends, such as property damage or risk-taking challenges, can spread rapidly, encouraging students to engage in illegal activities that disrupt the school ecosystem.
- **Temporary & Ephemeral Apps (e.g., Snapchat, Whisper):** These platforms often create a false sense of anonymity by allowing messages and images to self-destruct after a set window of time.
- **Direct Messaging & Community Platforms (e.g., Instagram, Discord):** These apps allow students to communicate privately or join unmonitored global servers, increasing the potential for harmful, inappropriate, or dangerous conversations.

Students must understand that their online choices matter; content never truly disappears, and online actions are traceable. Under the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/27-23.7) and Board Policy 7:180, cyberbullying that occurs off-campus but creates a substantial disruption to the school environment is strictly prohibited and subject to school disciplinary action.

Partnering for Student Safety: We encourage you to regularly review your student's device alongside them, discuss digital citizenship, and utilize parental monitoring software to oversee their communications. In accordance with the *Illinois Right to Privacy in the School Setting Act*, please note that school officials cannot require or request that you provide student account passwords.

Please remind your student how to document and report digital concerns:

1. **Preserve Evidence:** Take a screenshot or video of the concerning content.
2. **Report Internally:** Use the built-in reporting tools in the respective social media apps.
3. **Notify the School:** If an online situation impacts your child's well-being or education, report it to the Assistant Principal of Student Affairs or submit an anonymous report via the [RHS Safety Concern/Bullying Report portal](#).

When age-appropriate, please discuss with your student that the possession or forwarding of explicit or sexually explicit images violates state and federal laws.

Digital Resources for Families:

- www.commonssensemedia.org: Provides comprehensive breakdowns of app features and age ratings.
- [U.S. Department of Education](http://www.ed.gov): Offers guides for families to support safe online choices.

Thank you for your partnership in maintaining a positive digital footprint. Please contact my office if you have questions.

Sincerely,



Ryan Goldflies

Assistant Principal of Student Affairs

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