

January 23, 2024

## **Dear RESA Families,**

We hope this letter finds you well. Our commitment to the safety and well-being of our students is unwavering, and we believe it is essential to address a matter of great concern – the impact of social media on our school community.

In the age of technology and digital communication, we acknowledge the benefits these tools bring, but we cannot ignore the negative consequences that have surfaced within our school. It is our duty as educators to keep you informed about the challenges we are facing and work collaboratively to ensure the safety of our students.

### **Identified Dangers:**

- Students engaging in disruptive, destructive, and dangerous trends and challenges on social media, are often recorded and shared online.
- Instances of cyberbullying include the creation of fake accounts to post insulting comments and pictures about fellow students.
- Verbal conflicts and threats within chat groups where not all participants are known to each other.
- Inappropriate sharing of pictures or videos online.
- Students potentially communicate with dangerous individuals or predators online.
- Risks associated with "sextortion," where offenders coerce minors into creating explicit content and extort victims for money.

### **Observed Negative Effects:**

The detrimental impact of social media, particularly on the middle school age group, has been significant. We have noticed an increase in physical altercations, heightened levels of depression leading to suicidal thoughts, a decrease in self-esteem and emotional regulation, and a lack of empathy and compassion for others.

### **School Response:**

We encourage students to report harassment, threats, intimidation, and bullying to the administration. Offenders will be thoroughly investigated and held accountable following the RPS Student Code of Conduct.

### **Parental Involvement:**

We believe collaboration between the school and parents/guardians is crucial in addressing these issues. Here are some ways you can help monitor and guide your child's social media usage at home:

- Monitor app downloads, particularly those popular among students such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Discord, TikTok, and Instagram.
- Implement parental controls on phones and gaming consoles.
- Regularly review your child's messages on various platforms.
- Set clear and consistent expectations regarding device usage.

- Encourage open communication and ensure your child feels comfortable discussing their online activities with you.
- Report any illegal or dangerous social media interactions to the appropriate authorities.

Working together, we can create a safer digital environment for our students. Your involvement and support are integral to achieving this goal. If you have any concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ben Stover- Building Principal

