LION'S ROAR

A.E. ARNOLD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

September 2025

Dear Arnold Families,

In our digital world, staying connected means more than just being online—it means being present. Monitoring your child's social media isn't about snooping—it's about caring. By staying involved early, parents can guide kids toward safer, healthier habits and protect their well-being.

The Mental Health Connection

- **A sensitive period for development.** Studies show that adolescents—typically ages 10 to 19—are in a critical stage of forming identity and self-worth. Frequent social media use can disrupt emotional regulation and impulse control (Yale Medicine).

- **Risk of anxiety and depression.** Youth who spend more than three hours a day on social media face a higher risk of mental health challenges like anxiety and depression (Kids Mental Health Foundation).

- **Healthier habits start with structure.** When parents set clear boundaries—like limiting screen time—kids tend to show better mental health outcomes (Nature; ScienceDirect).

Why Early Action Wins

- **Proactive monitoring builds trust and resilience.** Active oversight—such as co-viewing content or discussing posts—is linked with fewer behavioral issues than overly restrictive strategies (PMC+1).

- **Strong bonds are protective.** Teens who feel close to their parents and experience loving guidance tend to show no negative mental effects from social media—even with higher usage (Institute for Family Studies; Reason Foundation).

- **Healthy boundaries, healthier kids.** Emerging evidence shows that screen time restrictions alongside parental monitoring support better mental health and reduce problematic use (Nature).

Tips for Positive Involvement

1. Set expectations together. Co-create a social media agreement with your child. Discuss what's okay to share, how many friends they add, and how they interact with others.

2. Keep communication open. Ask about their social media experiences—what excites them, worries them, or makes them uncomfortable. This encourages self-disclosure, which is linked to lower anxiety and better well-being.

3. Model healthy habits. Show by example—put down your phone during family time, keep mealtimes screen-free, and apply your own limits (Nature).

Mark Your Calendar!

Wednesday, September 17
PBIS Dress Up Day: Disney

Saturday, September 20
Nature Club Event: Bolsa Chica State Beach Clean Up

September 22-26
Parent Conference Week

Wednesday, September 24
Non-Student Day

Thursday, September 25
PTA Dine-out: Chuck E. Cheese

Monday, September 29
Early Release Day

Tuesday, September 30
Make Up Picture Day

Wednesday, October 1
Student of the Month Assembly

Tuesday, October 14
STAR Window Opens

Questions?

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4. Teach digital resilience. Talk about the pressure to look perfect online, "FOMO" (fear of missing out), and how to recognize manipulative content or harmful comparisons (Kids Mental Health Foundation).

5. Discuss privacy and boundaries. Not all parental control tools help—especially if they make vulnerable teens feel exposed (TIME). Instead, set boundaries while respecting privacy, especially for teens who rely on online communities for support.

6. Stay educated. New programs such as Snapchat's "The Keys: A Guide to Digital Safety" encourage completion together with a parent to spark meaningful conversations about risks like bullying and sextortion (Parents).

Being actively involved in your child's social media journey is more impactful than reacting after problems arise. By guiding conversations, setting boundaries, and modeling healthy digital habits, you help promote emotional safety, build trust, and set your child up for healthier digital interactions now and in the future.

Attendance Matters

Building good habits around attendance as early in school as possible is greatly beneficial for a child's overall success in school and life. This success not only benefits your child academically but also socially and behaviorally. When students attend school regularly and consistently, they feel better about school and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Eventually, good attendance will be a skill that will help them succeed in high school and college.

Some helpful habits can make all the difference in the world. Here are a few suggestions:

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and backpacks the night before.
- Only let your child stay home if he or she is truly sick – complaints of stomachaches or headaches may be a sign of anxiety. If so, talk with your child's teacher or school psychologist about ways to make your child feel more comfortable.
- Have a backup plan for getting to school if something unexpected comes up.
- Avoid scheduling medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

Chronic absence— missing 10 percent or more of school days due to absence for any reason—excused, unexcused absences and suspensions, can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing subjects and ninth-graders dropping out of high school. Absences can affect the whole classroom, especially when they occur frequently. Excessive tardiness may also lead to poor attendance and pose a significant disruption to the learning environment (Attendance Works).

Again, setting up some good habits around school attendance as early in school as possible makes a huge positive difference in your child's life for years to come!

Sincerely,

Vanessa DeSantis
Principal