

From Your Ridgecrest Counselors

A new topic that has caught the attention of many is digital citizenship and media literacy and what ethical responsibilities these have for technological users. There is controversy in terms of what is considered appropriate and inappropriate use of the internet for teenagers. Students today are exposed to more inappropriate material at their fingertips than their parents were at their children's age. Teaching skills of online safety and communication are both an important and difficult task, but are also skills critical for today's youth and adults.

Today's generation is part of a constantly changing digital age and developing smart decision-making skills with regards to internet use will help students learn positive online behaviors. Our primary focus is to promote positive and healthy communication, both in person and digitally. Students enjoy their time spent on cell phones and computers; we aim to teach students digital citizenship and media literacy skills. Our goal is for students to understand the importance of positive online communication and the impact social media has on their current and future lives.

As parents/guardians, you do not need to be technologically savvy to start this conversation with their child(ren). We encourage you to keep an ongoing dialogue about how your child spends time on electronic devices and various apps, websites, and computer games, as well as the type of communication taking place online. Social power is something teenagers experience through the secrecy of their digital lives. By utilizing your technologically savvy student to gain a better understanding of social media, together your family can initiate a conversation about online content and establish appropriate boundaries. Online users have an ethical responsibility to themselves and others and it is important to consider the types of content appropriate to share on social networking sites. These conversations will help build social and media literacy skills for your developing digital user.

Please join us for our Quest Parent Education Night at Ridgecrest Intermediate on Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 7:00pm. Jesse Allen and Lisa Larson will be discussing Internet Safety. More information can be found [here](#).

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