



August 28, 2019

## *Four Pronged Approach to Social Media*

Dear Middle School Parents:

There are a great many benefits and challenges associated with social media, which is, historically speaking, a new method of human interaction. I use the word interaction very deliberately because the rapid pace of technological advancement makes it much more than mere communication. Its instant ability to transmit and receive permanent correspondence, images, and video makes parenting more complex than anything parents have experienced for millennium. Combine this with the impulsivity of middle school students (ages 11-14), and the need for adolescents in the online world to be routinely reminded of acceptable behavior by parents and teachers can be even more challenging than in the real world. To assist you with this process, our school will continue to take a proactive approach to social media as it has in years past.



The return of students to campus following a summer of unfettered access to social media brings familiar challenges to us as educators. Moving students back to an educational environment from long periods of device-based social networking is now a part of the teaching profession; successfully accomplishing this task is a combination of child psychology, and carrot and stick approach. Because we recognize reoccurring patterns with this cycle, we have put together the following four-pronged approach we feel will be the most effective as we begin another school year. The rare, unique setting of our Christian school environment allows us to address this issue using a comprehensive, holistic method, which is another benefit that comes with your investment in a Christ centered education.

### **Four-Pronged Approach to Social Media**

(1) **Heart Training:** Middle School Chaplain Dr. Clark Daniel broached this subject last week with the middle school students in chapel, and tomorrow Mrs. Whitney Capps from Proverbs 31 Ministries will speak to all the middle school students in chapel. All parents are welcomed to attend tomorrow's student-focused presentation; we are moving the location from the middle school chapel to the worship center to accommodate additional visitors (parents should arrive at 10:00). Moving forward, students will break into grade and gender specific small discussion groups to unpack what Mrs. Capps shared with them. Social media will remain a regular topic of discussion among our faculty and staff. Parents and teachers alike are on a marathon run, not a sprint, when it comes to social media.

(2) **Encouragement and Accountability:** Cocurricular teachers and coaches in the arts and athletics will address (and in several cases, reinforce, since they have already hit this head-on) this issue using the same talking points students are hearing in chapel, in small discussion groups, and from Middle School Principal Owens.

(3) **Administrative Authority.** Principal Jesse Owens will continue to speak to students during assemblies and at lunchtime about the importance of appropriate online behavior. When necessary, he will impose, while working with students and their parents, administrative consequences for poor decision making.

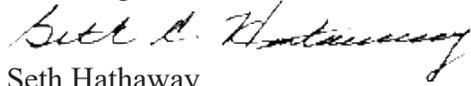
(4) **Parent Education.** In keeping with one goal in our strategic plan, [PACS 2023](#), to "Improve parent education by providing more opportunities to learn about social and emotional issues facing students today through parent presentations and written corre-

spondence,” we are finalizing a date for a parent (not student) focused presentation on social media. That presentation will take place within the next thirty days. Thank you for your continued partnership that surrounds your child with like-minded believers who realize a quality education is much more than preparing students for college. We are partnering with you to instill the tenants of our Christian faith, which transcends the achievement of temporal goals, to help prepare your child for life eternal.

Please direct any questions or comments you have to Middle School Principal Jesse Owens at [jowens@princeave.org](mailto:jowens@princeave.org) who is working the details of this four-pronged plan and the details of tomorrow’s chapel.

Reminder: Middle school chapel tomorrow is in the PABC worship center at 10:00 a.m.

Warm regards and in His service!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Seth D. Hathaway".

Seth Hathaway  
Head of School