



# Counselor's Corner

In recent years, technology and social media have become everyday outlets for many pre-adolescents, tweens, and teens. Without meaning to, kids can share more online than they should. Families and schools, alike, strive to teach youngsters how to navigate technology wisely, with parents often questioning, "What can I do?"

The key is to stay involved in a way that makes your kids understand that you respect them but want to ensure their safety and well-being. Parents can help keep kids grounded in the real world by putting limits on media use. Establish clear family usage guidelines or contracts, which are aligned with your family values. Have children agree to always protect their own privacy, consider their reputation, and not give out personal information. Likewise, discuss not using technology to hurt anyone else through gossip or bullying. Keep computers in public areas in the house, avoid laptops and smartphones in bedrooms, and set some rules on the use of technology (such as no devices at the dinner table).

When navigating the virtual world, remind your kids that it's important to: **Be nice.** Mean behavior is not OK. Make it clear that you expect your kids to treat others with respect, and to never post hurtful or embarrassing messages. Ask your children to always tell you about any inappropriate or hurtful content posted by others. In digital platforms, sarcasm and jokes are often confusing and may lead to hurt feelings, rather than laughter.

- **Think twice before hitting "enter."** Remind kids that nothing is truly "confidential" on the internet, and everything is retrievable. Any post can be used in unintended ways. Keep locations, phone numbers, and personally identifiable information off the web.
- **Follow the "WWGS?" (What Would Grandma Say?) rule.** Teach kids not to share anything on social media that they wouldn't want their teachers, college admissions officers, future bosses — and yes, grandma — to see. Remember, when it is put out there, you can never "undo" or get it back.
- **Use privacy settings.** Privacy settings are important. Go through them together to make sure your kids understand each one. Also, explain that passwords are there to protect them against things like identity theft and should never be shared with anyone, even a best friend.
- **Don't "friend" strangers.** "If you don't know them, don't "friend" them." This is a plain, simple — and safe — rule of thumb.

Always remember, setting a good example through your own virtual behavior can go a long way toward helping your kids use social media and other technology wisely!!

\*Adapted from [kidshealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)

For further details or information, please contact your child's guidance counselor:

**Mrs. Kelly B. Maire**

Angelo L. Tomaso School  
(908) 753-5300 x 5305  
kblessing-maire@warrentboe.org

**Ms. Alyssa Pech**

Central School  
(908) 753-5300 x 5205  
apech@warrentboe.org

**Dr. Kelly Stankiewicz**

Mount Horeb School  
(908) 753-5300 x 5405  
kellystankiewicz@warrentboe.org

**Ms. Alexandra Pranzo**

Woodland School  
(908) 7730-5300 x 5505  
apranzo@warrentboe.org

**Ms. Emily Zengel**

Middle School - 7<sup>th</sup> grade  
(908) 753-5300 x5009  
ezengel@warrentboe.org

**Ms. Helen Scully**

Middle School- 8<sup>th</sup> grade  
(908) 753-5300 x 5007  
hscully@warrentboe.org

**Mrs. Midge Johnson**

Middle School – 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
(908) 753-5300 x 5005  
mjohnson@warrentboe.org

**Mrs. Carol Brown**

Warren Middle School  
908-753-5300 x 5101  
cbrown@warrentboe.org