



Social Media Use by Schools

Many schools use social media to communicate with students, even though some are aware that social media harms student mental health. Many of these same schools are, in fact, suing social media companies for this very reason. Schools should consider restricting all social media use on campus, including during extra-curricular activities, on buses, and possibly at school events held off-campus.



Exacerbates Harm to Students' Mental Health

Schools' use of social media:

- Pushes students to join social media, undermining their ability to stay off.
- Requires students to frequently check social media, which is designed to be addictive.
- Provides implicit endorsement of social media by schools.
- Further enmeshes social media into student's lives, adding another dimension to their social media world.
- Undermines parents' authority and ability to keep their children off social media.



Links Between Social Media and the Youth Mental Health Crisis

- More than 200 school districts are suing social media companies, stating that rising mental health problems among their student body are largely driven by social media.

Citation

- The Surgeon General called for warning labels on social media. He says, "There are ample indicators that social media can also have a profound risk of harm to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents."
- Research by Jonathan Haidt and Jean Twenge highlights the sharp rise in youth mental health issues concurrent with the rise in smartphone use and demonstrates why other potential causes are unlikely to be responsible.



Resources

- Screen Time Action Network letter to Department of Education
- Jonathan Haidt's Social Media collaboration document
- Socialmediaharms.org
- 200+ schools suing social media companies
- Surgeon General Advisory

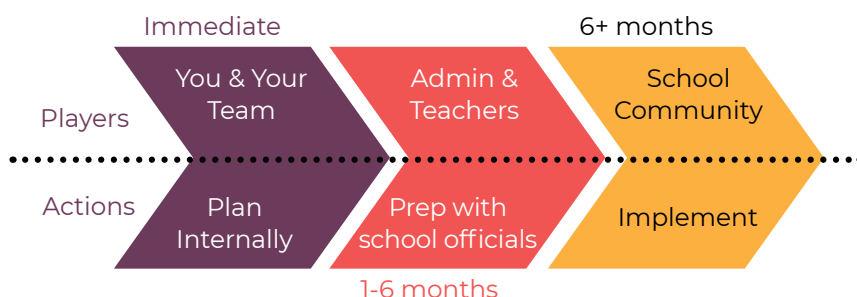


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What Can We Do to Limit Social-Media Use in School?

Creating an action plan for a healthy, social media-free environment is a process best achieved through teamwork. While you will likely be met with resistance by some, student wellbeing and academic success outcomes will be worth your efforts.

TIME FRAME TEMPLATE



PLAN WITH OTHER PARENTS

- Build your team. Seek out like-minded parents to work with. Look for champions who work for your school.
- Educate yourself and your team; be prepared with research and facts.
- Prepare for opposition. Listen respectfully to those who disagree and consider their ideas; look for opportunities to turn them into teammates.
- Identify communication alternatives to social media, e.g. using the student data management system.
- Identify alternate activities for students to replace time spent on social media.



WORK WITH SCHOOL OFFICIALS

- Develop and implement an education plan for all stakeholders.
 - Engage administrators and school counselors for best program delivery. Consider “train the trainer” or “peer support” models for efficiency.
 - Suggest hosting forums where stakeholders can share their opinions.
 - Highlight salient facts:
 - Schools’ use of social media encourages student use.
 - Surgeon General and schools recognize that social media harms student mental health.
 - Social media use creates conflict and behavioral problems at school.
- Host separate forums for parents, students and teachers. Share facts/research. Listen to opinions/concerns.
- Determine social media restriction specifics.
 - Which communication alternative will be used?
 - Consider a “phone-free school” model for students.
 - Decide action steps and timeframe.
 - Designate a responsible person for each action step plus follow-up protocols.