Mr. Hildner’s NEWSLETTER: January 2013

1. “Friend” your children
2. Talk to them about using Facebook
3. Keep control over internet use:
   1. Where it’s used
   2. When it’s used
   3. Privacy settings
   4. Parent controls
4. Talk to other parents about how they work with their kids around internet use
5. Don’t “spy” on your kids – let them know that you want to be aware because it can be dangerous to them and to others. Let them know when you will be checking posts / texts.

Adapted from healthychildren.org (AAP)

Talking to Kids and ‘Tweens About Social Media and Sexting

Part 1: Social Media

Each year, I see more and more engagement of students in social media, such as Facebook. Some reports suggest that Facebook has surpassed email as the preferred method of communication in ALL age groups. Technologically literate though they may be, K-12 students lack the maturity and life experience to stay out of trouble with these social venues. This month, I’m giving some tips to keep your kids safe with social media (Facebook). Next month, I’ll have tips about texting / sexting.

It is urgent that parents talk with children of ALL ages about social media, and that they monitor their child’s online use of Facebook and other sites. Parents have a responsibility to be aware of their kids’ habits. Here are some tips to help you talk to your kids:

* There is no better way to be aware of what they are up to than by being their “friend”. It should be a condition of having an account (“Not ‘friends’? No account”).
* Let them know that their use of technology is something you want and need to know about. Get them to talk about it with these starters:
  + Daily: “Have you used the computer and the Internet today?”
  + Ask regularly: “What did you write on Facebook today?” “Any new chats recently?” “Anyone text you today?”
  + Share a bit about your own Facebook / text use as a way to facilitate daily conversation about your kids’ online habits.
* Keep the computer in a public part of your home, such as the family room or kitchen, so that you can see what your kids are doing online and how much time they are spending there. They will also be more thoughtful about what they are doing if someone might be watching.
* Talk with other parents about what their kids of similar ages are using for Facebook. Ask your kids about those technologies as a starting point for discussion. If they are in the same peer group, there is a good chance they are all using the same platforms together. For example:
  + For teens: “Mrs. Smith told me Jennifer uses Facebook. Is that something you’ve thought of doing? Do you already have a profile? If so, I’d like to see it.”
  + For tweens and older elementary school kids: “Are you planning on meeting up with kids on Club Penguin today? I’d love to see how that works.” Or, “Let’s look at your text log today together. I’d like to see who’s been texting you.”

Check Peninsula’s website for Ms. Gapp’s tech safety tips! Next month: **Texting**