

Parents/Guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss with you the importance of implementing policies that focus on limiting and monitoring technology and internet use at home. While advancements with technology certainly benefit the lives of adults and students alike, there must be a healthy balance between accessing technology and promoting social relationships. A common concern with educators is the decreasing ability for adolescent students to establish and maintain a true human connection with their teachers, peers, and families. Students are overwhelmed with stimulation from screen time which can have negative consequences on their mental, emotional, and physical health. It is unrealistic to ask you to remove technology from the lives of my students completely, and I certainly do not think there is benefit in that rationale. However, by establishing certain limitations and ensuring all devices are used safely and correctly inside and outside of school, I believe my students will gain much more than they lose.

Similar to the policies created for my own classroom, I would encourage you to talk to your children about your expectations and any limitations regarding internet use or screen time. This may include smartphones, laptops, iPads, smartwatches, video games, television, etc. If we think about the many ways teens access technology, obviously there are numerous opportunities for them to participate in electronic stimulation rather than personal connections or extracurricular activities. There are also many ways that students can hide or disguise their internet searches, private messages, and the apps installed on their devices. Along with setting limits, it is imperative to be proactive in knowing what your children are doing online and with whom they are doing it. There are many great apps available to parents that make monitoring multiple devices quite simple. If you have not already taken these steps at home, I have included a guideline to help give you a starting point when implementing things that are important to you.

I understand this can be an overwhelming task. I am always available to you for help or guidance, as I am not only a teacher but also a parent of teenagers who would keep their heads buried in their phones or video games if allowed.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Puckett  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Teacher