Parent Guidelines for Social Media and Cell Phone Use

1. **Follow/Friend your child on ANY social media sites they use.**
   - Check these sites on a regular basis.
   - Be careful about what you comment on- parent comments are not always welcome
   - Be aware that kids may have two profiles- one for family, and then their "real" page

2. **Go over on a regular basis what information should NOT be shared online/over text.**
   - Never give out full name, phone number, address, or e-mail address
   - Pictures, posts and statuses can last forever online- even if "deleted"
   - Rule of thumb- if you wouldn't want grandma, future bosses or a college recruiter to see it, or you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't post or text it

3. **Know your child's passwords on all devices and all social media accounts** (don't forget that iPods, tablets, and gaming consoles can all be used to access the internet).
   - Help your child choose "safer" passwords
   - Teach them not to give their passwords out to anyone, even friends

4. **Monitor your child's mobile phone use and text messages on a regular basis.**
   - Do surprise text/social media checks- don't give them warning
   - You pay the phone bill, not your child
   - You are liable if something illegal occurs over phone, text, or on social media apps on a cell phone- i.e. inappropriate pictures, harassment, etc.

5. **Check the privacy, security and GPS settings on your child's phone and social media accounts.**
   - Posting pictures or "checking in" can be an invitation for a criminal to enter your home, and or a way for someone online to find out where your child lives or hangs out

6. **Talk to your child about who they friend on social media.**
   - "Online friends" are just as influential as real friends
   - Emphasize quality, not quantity- not everyone is a friend
   - Un-friending someone is ok to do- let your child know the person does not even know you did it

7. **Talk about what a negative or inappropriate comment, picture, or post is.**
   - Show your child how to delete these items
   - Discuss reporting inappropriate posts and teach them how to do it on each social media site they are on

8. **Explain to them that not everyone uses social media for fun.**
   - Anything that makes them feel uneasy, uncomfortable, that is inappropriate, or threatening to them or others MUST be reported
   - Social media can be the first place to catch signs of bullying, suicidal thoughts, violent acts, sexual predators, etc.
   - Explain to them that they should NEVER agree to meet with someone they met online