

February 22, 2024

Dear Parents, Grandparents, Custodians and Guardians of OCA Students;

Subj; Administration and Faculty Concerns Regarding Internet & Social Media Usage and Misuse

We are reaching out to you as those who exercise direct control and authority over school-age children in your charge. This year, more so than in years past we are being made aware of the misuse of internet applications (APPS) and social media conversations among our students / your children. As educators, we are hearing too much of students engaging in what can be categorized as **age-inappropriate** conversations, leud imaging, and in some isolated cases bullying. When these activities of the youth become topics among them for conversation in the school it is disruptive, destructive, and conflict with our Christian atmosphere for academic learning and the discerning of God's Word.

When students are openly discussing online contacts and conversations in the school we are compelled to stop it. However, we do not have any control over what students are doing online, nor are we going to police their social media activities. That is a parent/custodian/guardian responsibility. You provide the means for them to communicate electronically, internet access, and data rate plans for phones along with home computers, tablets, and web enabled gaming devices and smart televisions with browsers. We implore you to monitor and manage your child's online time and activities.

In those cases where we become aware of a student conversation in the school that is inappropriate, disruptive to the learning environment, or bullying of a student we will intervene by calling you to come to a meeting at the school with your child. The goal is to make certain you are aware and that you must impose some guidance and control. We will follow a process of documenting the meeting and ask that you establish a set of guidelines/constraints on your child's cyberspace activities. Subsequent behavior of inappropriate conversations or negative activity that invades the school culture will be followed by a path of detention, suspension, and ultimately expulsion. We have your children with us for only a third of the day and cellphones are not permitted during school. But the conversations and actions of students outside of school becomes fodder for gossip, slander, and intimidation that is disruptive to learning, unhealthy for their age group, and un-Christian.

We offer as a beginning of your foray into the negative side of unfettered internet access (in many cases in society – children far too young are online) which can lead youth to disregard Internet Service Provider rules and website guidelines, loss of privacy, loss of content control, and legal jeopardy with respect to age limits, and child exploitation via GPS allowed location in APPS. Minor children can also fall under the criminal laws related to bullying and verbal assault by way of electronic media. Delete does not mean "gone forever" in those cases when recipients save or screen capture content it can be reposted. Youth are also unaware as are adults of the fact the Internet is backed up incrementally everyday by network administrators and companies and stored on "way-back" servers; this information is always recoverable.

As parents, you are the “gatekeepers” with oversight responsibility of what your child does online. We do not want you to send us objectionable content for our action; but we will partner with you to keep children safe and preserve our learning environment when at all possible. Please bring issues of concern affecting your child’s school relationships and learning to their teacher . The school will evaluate the extent we may be able to intervene. In most cases, intervention is best first attempted by a Parent-to-Parent level of discourse to investigate early on and ensure corrective actions. If an issue becomes a source of distraction to learning and good order and discipline in the school, after discussing the matter with the teacher, the school can call a Parent Teacher Conference. This will begin an administrative process of ongoing monitoring of the school climate and offending child’s behavior. All the circumstances the school is made aware of will be documented in the student’s record and they will be placed on a period of probation. Should the student’s online activities continue to disrupt school operations a mechanism or detention, suspension, expulsion, or unfavorable review of any future application to attend the upcoming year. Please work with your children to keep this process corrective, not punitive such that responsible online activity may keep them free of legal jeopardy as well.

Selective References to Search

(Letter will be posted to ocapatriots.com under the Forms tab.)

[Be Internet Awesome Highlights.com \(Elementary\)](#)

[Teens and social media use: What's the impact? - Mayo Clinic](#)

[Internet terms and language: a guide for parents](#)

[Preventing your child from downloading and file sharing illegally](#)

[Social media, online gaming and keeping children safe online](#)

[Cyberbullying](#) [Common Sense Media](#)

The attached is a listing of scripture that speaks to the evil and repercussion with God regarding “Gossip” and “Slandering”. These can be supporting references to read and discuss with your child read.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey P. Cila

Reverend, UMC

Chairman, Board of Directors

Cc: OCA Board, Mrs. C. Poor, Mrs. D. Newhall, File

Wisdom Surrounding Gossip & Slander

New American Standard Bible

Gossip

Proverbs 20

- Verse 3; Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel.
- Verse 4; The sluggard does not plow after the autumn, so he begs during the harvest and has nothing.
- Verse 17; Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

II Corinthians 12

- Verse 20; For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there may be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances

Romans 1

- Verse 28-32; And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper. Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

I Timothy 5

- Verse 13; and at the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busy bodies, talking about things not proper to mention
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II Timothy 3

- Verse 1; But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good.
- Verse 12; And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Titus

- Verses 1 – 3; Remind them to be subject to rulers to authorities to the obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gently, showing every consideration

for all men. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Slandering

Leviticus 19

- Verse 5-16; You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the LORD

Proverbs 10

- Verse 12; Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins.
- Verse 17-18 He is on the path of life who heeds instruction, but he who forsakes reproof goes astray. He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who spreads slander is a fool.
- Verse 23 Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool; and so is wisdom to a man of understanding..

Proverbs 11

- Verse 3; The integrity of the upright shall guide them; but the falseness of the treacherous will destroy them.
- Verse 7; When a wicked man dies his expectation will perish, and the hope of strong men perishes.
- Verse 12; He who despises his neighbor lacks sense. But a man of understanding keeps silent.
- Verse 13; He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.

Matthew 15

- Verse 8-9; You hypocrites; rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.

I Corinthians 4

- Verse 11; To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

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Colossians 3

- Verse 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.