

Kids, Teens + Technology Highlights of Katie Greer's presentations to WMS on 11/6/13

Katie Greer polled the WMS student audiences and close to 100% of 6th, 7th and 8th graders have access to a smartphone or other device. The most widely used social networking site seemed to be Instagram. The top apps that may cause tweens and teens significant social problems or anxiety are *Ask.fm*, *SnapChat*, *Omegle*, and *Tinder*. These are her top 4 DO NOT USE apps, because of the rampant use of these for cyberbullying, inappropriate photo sending, or easy access to strangers ([see timely TODAY show segment re: ask.fm](#)).

She emphasized to all kids that cyberbullying can cause dire consequences (e.g., suicide), and that kids involved in cyberbullying can be arrested. She informed the older audiences that creation, possession or dissemination of child pornography (sexting) is a Federal offense, and gave examples of young people who have had to experience life-long consequences related to these decisions. She advised that anything that is posted can be retrieved or subpoenaed: nothing disappears. She underscored the importance of privacy settings so that strangers can not see their private information and to never engage in online discussions with people they do not know personally. Lastly she implored to all 3 grades: if you see something (cyberbullying), say something; you might be saving someone's life.

Some of Katie's top parent tips for safe social media use by kids are: (1) know all their passwords and check/review their accounts/phones often, (2) review with your child every friend in their online friend/follower list, whether on Instagram, Kik, Vine, Facebook, MySpace, etc., (3) make sure they know all their contacts *personally*, (4) discuss with kids strategies to talk to you about negative posts and comments they see online (5) keep the password for app downloading to create a discussion every time they wish to download an app, (6) store mobile devices in parent's bedroom at night (7) look at number of texts they send in a month vs. what your wireless bill says (e.g, 40 in their phone vs 700 in your bill) and if relevant ask them why they are deleting so many.

WMS staff (assistant principal, dept heads from guidance, fitness & health, psychology, special education, district wide technology as well as the youth resource police officer) stayed afterwards to host a panel discussion of WMS specific ideas and we express our deep appreciation for their time. Watching out for friends and acquaintances online is no different than in school - the key is to emphasize that WMS is their community whether they are physically in school or not (many kids don't really appreciate this) and the hope is to act as an ally by looking, listening and telling someone in guidance, a teacher, administrator or trusted adult. One key point discussed was the importance of connecting with other parents and keeping an eye out for situations on social media and call the

parent of the kid when necessary. Future meetings are planned to continue the discussion.