



HIGH SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY

CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

IS EVERY KID READY FOR TOTAL PRIVACY ONLINE JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL? Of course not—just like every 16-year-old isn't automatically mature enough for a driver's license. But at this age, expect your child to push back on the concept of shared passwords and shared social media accounts. If over the years they've earned your trust and are ready for more freedom, consider giving it to them. If they haven't, discuss what they can do to move toward that. In a few short years they're going to jump out into the world. Give them space to practice that freedom now in the safety of your home. We want to help by giving you some words to say and not to say.

WHAT TO SAY

- "What social media accounts are you using these days?"
- "Did you know you can disable the location feature on your phone? That's a great way to make sure that the people who you don't want to know your location don't have your location. The Find My Phone feature helps everyone in our family find each other, so we keep that one on."
- "Do you know that some colleges are now looking into applicant's social media platforms when reviewing applications or considering athletic scholarships?"
- "What are some things you think you should post so that potential colleges see the best picture of you?"
- "If you text a friend something, you should be prepared for them to text it to other people. If you have something personal to say to a friend, it's best to do it over coffee or on a phone call. That way nothing gets lost in translation either."
- "If someone looked at everything you post online and tweet—what would they learn about who you are?"
- "Now that you're in high school and gaining more freedom, it's time you begin sharing some of the financial responsibility of having a phone."
- "I know it's tempting to use your phone while driving. I'm tempted to do it too. Can you help keep me in check about not using my phone while driving? And, of course I'll do the same for you."
- "Hey, did you know your small group/our church is on Instagram? Do you follow them?"

WHAT NOT TO SAY

Nothing. The tendency at this phase is to disconnect and not say anything. Fight to be an informed and involved parent. Keep the conversation going.

Anything that assumes the worst—It's great to ask questions and be informed, but it's not okay to make assumptions about what they're doing. Just because some children use certain social media inappropriately doesn't mean that every child is using it the same way. If you're concerned, ask your son or daughter to show you their feed or their messages.

- "I read an article online about how dumb teenagers are on social media. You're not being an idiot are you?"

Your teenager is approaching adulthood. Freedom is on the horizon. The conversations you have today will help prepare them to make wise choices concerning technology for the rest of their lives. Stay informed. Stay involved. And keep the conversation going.