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Parental Control Tools

This is also a good opportunity to remind parents to obtain and use their child's password to their social networks if that child is age 16 or younger. Keep in mind that Gmail *DOES* automatically include the social network called "Buzz" and we finding it to be very popular with 5th and 6th graders. Nothing speaks louder than letting your children know your expectations for their online behavior AND having the power to check up on them.

GetParentalControls.org

[Summary Round-up of Parental Control Tools on the Internet](#) from

Issue: #46**February 2011****46th Edition of the Children Online Newsletter.**

This edition of our newsletter is specifically written to address the heated debate that is occurring within the halls of many of the nation's high schools, especially boarding schools... Should teachers, coaches or dorm staff "friend" their students in social networks?



By the way, if it seems that we pay an inordinate amount of time focused on Facebook and other social networks, it is because social networks have become the most active place for our children in grades seven through twelve and the most risky.

As always we welcome your comments and suggestions.
 Best wishes,
 Marje Monroe and Doug Fodeman

Contact Marje or Doug via email at marjem@childrenonline.org or dougf@childrenonline.org for information about our programs or consulting services.

To "Friend" or Not to "Friend"

In Schools across the country teachers and administrators are debating the question of whether to "friend" their students on Facebook. Some schools have taken a strong stand and banned "friending" students until graduation.

OnlineSocialSavvy.com [pdf;
updated Jan. 2011]

Related Resources:

[Should Teachers "Friend" Their Students on Facebook?](#) - Follow the discussion in CommonSenseMedia.org

[Should Students and Teachers Be Online Friends?](#) - An article from Education.com [not dated]

[Should Teachers and Students Be Facebook Friends?](#) - Article from ABCNews.com

[Massachusetts School Board Bans Teacher-Student Facebook Friending](#) - Article from Switched.com [Oct. 10, 2010]

[Virginia May Ban Teachers From Friending Students](#) - Article from Newser.com [Jan. 10, 2011]

[New Social Networking Policy Examined for Granite School District](#) - Article from ABC.com [April 7, 2010]

[Technology and Schools: Should We Add More Or Pull the Plug?](#) -An article by Laurie David and Susan Stiffelman [Feb. 7, 2011]

[Dumb as a Post: Parents Posting Pictures?](#) - A blog from Steve Taffee that focuses

Others have not created a policy but rely instead on the good intentions of their teachers. As we have worked with schools across the country this year, we have found ourselves in the middle of some interesting and varied debates on this subject in many schools.

Often the most serious and articulate arguments for friending occur within the halls of boarding schools where teachers act in loco parentis and strive to help their students grow into successful adults. Their presence, they insist, on their students' Facebook pages is essential to keeping track of the teens' social life and to help know when trouble may be brewing. Dorm parents and advisors sometimes feel it is a part of their job to Friend students. These are strong arguments and as a former Dean of Students and dorm parent myself, I agree they do make some sense.

However, we want to present some arguments for staying away from "Friending" students.

1. Teachers, like parents are not and should not be "friends" with their students. While they should certainly be friendly, supportive, caring and nurturing, they should also be careful to balance the line of role model and educator and not confuse being friendly with being "buddies". Facebook and the Internet have blurred the boundaries between adults and kids. Yet it is in the clear understanding of these boundaries that allow kids to grow best and it is at times in the blurring of those boundaries that kids can become confused and at risk.

2. "Friending" on Facebook may imply a special relationship that the teacher does not mean to convey. The question may arise: Why friend one

on the issues schools face when parents post pictures of other students on Facebook and elsewhere.

[Social Networking Guidelines for School Employees](#) - A blog from Steve Taffee including a sample guideline for schools.

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INTERNET SAFETY CURRICULUM

Safe Practices for Life Online

Children Online has a curriculum on Internet Safety that includes nearly 100 student exercises and lots of information on many topics including social networks, instant messaging, cyberbullying, online marketing, scams directed at kids, protecting privacy online, avoiding identity theft and impersonation, creating strong passwords and more.

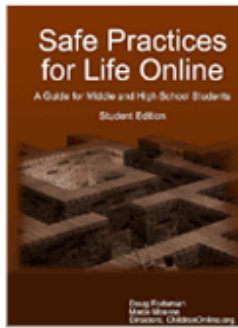


student and not the other? Is there a special relationship that exists for students who are "friended" and doesn't exist for those who are not? "Friended" students may feel they have special access to a teacher that non-friended students don't have.

3. An educator, dorm parent, parent or role model who are "Facebook Friends" with teens, may find themselves responsible for the content found on the teen's account. Often adults are faced with what to do when the student uses inappropriate language, discusses drinking, sexual behavior or bullying behavior. What exactly is the adult's responsibility as an observer? If the adult just simply observes without commenting the teen may assume the adult is sanctioning the behavior. In addition, words or images on Facebook may be changed rapidly leaving adults seeing only small portions of the teen's account and missing some negative behavior. Yet, the adult's presence on the site indicates sanctioning everything.

4. Keep in mind educators or adults who are "Friends" on a teen's account, the teens in reverse are "Friends" on the adult's account. The adult may have adult language or situations inappropriate for teens. The adult may have college friends, romantic relationships or other issues that should not be available to his or her students.

5. If a teacher initiates a friend request, the student may feel pressured to accept. Such a request may be uncomfortable for the student. Keep in mind that the relationship between teacher and student typically contains an element of power for the adult. Perceived or not, this



There is also a student edition which includes cartoons and "Did you know" sections of interesting facts for students.

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[Teacher's Edition at ISTE](#)

[Student Edition at Lulu.com](#)

power (over grades, recommendations, etc.) can make for an uncomfortable relationship when the boundaries between friend and teacher/student becomes blurred.

With the blurring of lines on the Internet, especially Facebook, it is hard today to know what is best in caring for students online. However, it is always best to keep the lines as clear as possible and let the teens know that kids are kids and adults are adults. We do not recommend "friending" students. Their healthy development may be counting on it.

About Children Online

Children Online offers innovative and comprehensive workshops on Internet safety and online education to students, parents, faculty and administrators. Our approach, unique in the field of Internet safety, combines a thorough understanding of Internet technologies, child development and counseling, to focus on the impact of the internet on the social, emotional and language development of young people.

Doug Fodeman and Marje Monroe, experts in technology, counseling and education, work together to provide invaluable research and tools for parents and schools with practical real-life solutions to the issues faced by young people online. Since 1997, Marje and Doug have spoken to thousands of students, teachers and parents. They have several publications in the area of Internet safety and offer a free online newsletter. More detailed information can be found at ChildrenOnline.org.

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