**SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ONLINE**

<<INSERT YOUR SCHOOL MOTTO HERE>>

Netsafe Schools is a nationally recognised programme supporting New Zealand schools to create a safer and more positive online environment. We are proud to be a part of the Netsafe Schools Programme, joining nearly 300 schools across New Zealand who have a shared goal to improve online safety, citizenship and wellbeing in their school community. This means that we have practices in place that show our commitment to planning for online safety, and that our practices are supported by New Zealand’s online safety organisation, Netsafe. Find out more about Netsafe Schools at: <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/the-kit/netsafe-schools/>



**Digital citizenship** is not about how much someone knows about technology and the internet. Digital citizenship is more about how people use the tools and platforms provided by them. It is what we do with these amazing and sometimes mind boggling technologies that counts - as digital citizens we must at all times treat others and ourselves with respect but all too often this does not happen. Often our words, actions and behaviours online can be misunderstood and we run the risk of victimising ourselves and others.

**Our Digital Citizen Responsible**

**Use Agreement states:**

<<Insert your school’s user agreement guidelines here>>

***Adults need to guide and help our young people*** navigate through the ‘digital minefield’. It’s important that conversations around technology are led by adults but owned and influenced by our young people. By and large they are the technology experts, however as they grow and mature into responsible adults they also need to learn about moderation, delayed gratification and how to be responsible citizens online - in essence they need and desire boundaries. It’s our big responsibility as adults to give these to the teenagers/young adults we bring up and interact with.

The information in this document is based on the following resources:

* <https://www.westartnow.org/>
* <https://psychcentral.com/blog/25-questions-for-discussing-tech-use-with-your-teen/>
* <https://www.noted.co.nz/currently/social-issues/youth-mental-health-nz-crisis-failing-to-keep-up/>

“Kids’ use of technology is not the problem. The problem is our kids’ extreme overuse of entertainment technologies that is displacing the experiences that are fundamental to a strong mind and a happy, successful life.”

**(Richard Freed, Wired Child)**

“*Technology saves us time, allows us to keep in touch, and for the most part can simplify busy and committed lives. So technology isn’t necessarily a bad thing, but the way we use it as human beings can be detrimental. When research is telling us that the average phone user checks their phone every 4-5 waking minutes……we have to wonder if we - and our kids - are using technology to our benefit. Increasingly families can feel overwhelmed by the challenge of knowing how to raise digitally healthy kids, however these are the conversations that we need to increasingly have”.*

<https://www.westartnow.org/>

<<Insert your school banner / logo / photo here>>

**What does the research say?**

* **LESS IS MORE:** Research has found teenagers who get smaller amounts of screen time ***are happier*** than ones who used screens for 20+ hours per week.The ***average child spends 7 hours a day*** in front of a screen, but only 4-7 minutes playing outdoors.
* **80% OF TEENS:** Use their phones when they are supposed to be sleeping – including many ***who stay up most of the night*** or wake for every notification.
* **PHUBBING:** The practice of snubbing others in favour of our mobile phones – has led to a decline in quality of relationships for kids, teens, and adults alike.
* **11 YEARS OLD:** is the average age of first pornography exposure, with 88% of scenes in ***mainstream pornography*** portraying a man being violent towards a woman.
* **PARENT ATTUNEMENT:** the rise of unpredictable parenting, governed by the beeps of smartphones, offers children a world where parents are present physically, yet ***missing emotional cues and opportunities to respond***, which are critical for human learning and character development.

Not sure where to go for support? Try <https://www.netsafe.org.nz/advice/parenting/>

***And most importantly - have a conversation with your <<son/daughter/family member>>!***

As parents, you are the most important people in your son’s journey of learning to navigate their experiences.

***Consider using some of these as a conversation starters:*** (*adapted from* [*https://psychcentral.com/blog/25-questions-for-discussing-tech-use-with-your-teen/*](https://psychcentral.com/blog/25-questions-for-discussing-tech-use-with-your-teen/))

1. Can you think of any technology that has made the world worse? How about a piece of technology that has made the world better?
2. Are my technology habits helping me to connect with others, including my parents and siblings? Or are they driving me away from others?
3. Is my online behaviour appropriate?
4. Am I being the “me” I want to be?
5. Is the content I’m looking at/paying attention to appropriate?
6. Does my use of technology support my passions and values?
7. Does my use of technology help me stay committed to my goals and life direction?
8. Does it connect me to other things I’d like to commit to? Or does it undermine my commitments?
9. How many social media platforms do I use? Are they open and/or hidden?
10. Am I using social media right now because I need approval?
11. Would it be more helpful to talk to someone offline about my feelings?
12. Am I relating to others in a healthy way e.g. being positive, kind and honest?
13. Am I too dependent on technology? Am I controlling it or is it controlling me?

<<Insert your school banner / logo / photo here>>

**Need help? Talk to one of our pastoral team:**

<<Insert your school’s pastoral team contact details and information here>>