

From the Counselor's Office:
Internet Safety in Our Ever-Increasing Online World

Dear St. John Families,

As we start the year remotely, our students are online and interacting with the virtual world likely more than ever before. While being able to seamlessly continue accessing education is an incredible blessing for this generation, unfortunately, as you are undoubtedly aware, it does not mean that everything online is good.

This week a graphic video has been circulating on the widely used social media platform, TikTok, showing a man dying by suicide. This video was originally live-streamed on Facebook on August 31st and is now moving through TikTok. As of today, the video has unfortunately not been completely taken down from TikTok.

While I realize that by no means are all of our students on TikTok, or even social media for that matter, I wanted to share this with families as a reminder that it is more important than ever to monitor your child's Internet consumption—regardless of their age. Promote positive mental health by ensuring your children take frequent media breaks each day. It is also vital that we talk with children regularly about Internet safety. If you're unsure where to start, I have curated a list of resources linked below to help you with this endeavor.

Let's work to be extra vigilant and caring right now. I continue to be available to meet with parents and students as needed. Do not hesitate to reach out to me, Ms. O'Leary, or Mr. Kelley if you need additional support.

Warmly,
Ms. Shaw

Internet Safety Resources for Families:

- Use this [Online Safety Checklist](#) to teach your children how to stay safe online. A good rule to teach is if anything looks scary, strange, or makes you feel uncomfortable, trust your gut, stop, and tell an adult right away.
- To help talk about Internet safety and create some family ground rules, Common Sense Media created the following Family Media Agreements: a [general agreement](#), one designed for [K-5th grade students](#), one designed for [6-8th grade students](#), and a more customizable [Device Contract](#). All of these are excellent and a great first step in ensuring children engage with the virtual world in safe and healthy ways.
- For more general Internet safety resources, check out Common Sense Media's [website](#). They have an abundance of helpful resources for parents.