

## **St. Mark's Lutheran School**

### *STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA / CELL PHONES*

We are a society that is reliant on our cell phones, the Internet, and the need to be in constant contact with our family and friends. Our students are no different. The vast majority of our upper grade students has a cell phone and belongs to one or more social media websites. It is our hope that our St. Mark's Family is using these avenues of communication in positive ways.

Because of these communication tools, a major issue across our country that our schools are dealing with is Cyber Bullying. It is defined as a student using the Internet, cell phone, or other technology to harass, embarrass, or threaten another student. We pray that this and other inappropriate texts/posts don't happen here at St. Mark's. But we want to let families and students know that we will address these incidents if they occur.

*"Let the words of my mouth (my text messages and Facebook posts) and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."* Psalm 19:14

Portions of that verse are not in the original translation! However, it is a reminder that what we say or do should always make the Good Lord smile. We are responsible for our words and actions no matter where we are even if we type those words instead of saying them aloud for people to hear.

The following guidelines apply to our St. Mark's Family and share how we will handle situations that are not acceptable in His sight.

#### CELL PHONES

- ✓ Cell phones will not be used during the school day unless teacher permission is obtained.
- ✓ If a teacher or supervising adult sees a student using their cell phone, they will take it and give it to the principal.
- ✓ The principal will go through confiscated cell phones to check the messages and phone logs to ensure it has not been used during the school day. Any inappropriate information will be shared with parents.
- ✓ Confiscated cell phones will only be returned to parents. If they want the principal to keep it... he gladly will!

## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Facebook and other social media sites are not to be accessed by students at anytime using computers owned by St. Mark's.
- Always keep in mind that you are representing yourself, your family, your school, and most importantly your Lord when you are posting messages online.
- No inappropriate comments should be made about teachers, parents, or other students of St. Mark's. You will be held accountable for your texts/posts.

## INAPPROPRIATE TEXTS / POSTS

- Inappropriate texts/posts are determined the same way we treat the words that come out of our mouths. At St. Mark's we use three simple questions – Is it True? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind? If you cannot say yes to all three, you've done something wrong.
- Texts/Posts referring to a teacher, parent, or student in our St. Mark's Family that are deemed inappropriate need to be shared with the principal.
- The principal will only address instances where there is documented proof of the text/post. It is simple; save it, and show him. He will not handle situations where there is no evidence of such a text/post.
- No matter when an inappropriate text/post is written about someone in our St. Mark's Family, the principal has the right to get involved and give consequences when necessary.

## A NOTE FOR PARENTS

Be noseey! Know what is going on in your child's life. Even if they cry and scream, students don't have a right to privacy when it comes to the parent/child relationship. You should know their Facebook password so you can monitor their account. Grab their cell phone once in awhile and check to see if you approve of their text messages. Cell phones and Facebook are a license to sin. It is incredibly easy to text or post something you know you would never say to someone face to face. For a twelve and thirteen year old, this is a temptation that is extremely difficult to overcome. They are going to mess-up. But it is our job as parents to use those incidents as teachable moments to talk about what it means to *live for Christ* and most importantly to be *forgiven by Christ*.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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