**An App Guide for Parents: AHS Recommendations**

As more and more students carry mobile devices and smartphones, we believe that parents and schools should work together to identify and monitor student use of these devices and the apps that can be downloaded. The incidents of cyberbullying and sexting among teenagers is cause for great concern, and we want to help parents stay informed on the latest social media and app trends.

Below is a recommendation guide for parents regarding apps that can be downloaded to your students’ phones or mobile devices for free. As with all technology and teenagers, monitoring is essential. Hopefully these recommendations will help you and your child make decisions regarding their download and use of apps. We will update these recommendations as we become aware of more technology trends.

*(Credit to Battle Creek Lakeview High School’s Spartan Connections Newsletter for much of the following information)*

-**Little Concern When Used Responsibly**: These apps have little or no concern, but can be used improperly without monitoring.

**-Moderate Concern**: These apps have the potential to be inappropriate. Discuss these with your child and determine if this is acceptable for them, and regularly monitor their use.

**-Not Recommended**: These apps have little value, and could be potentially dangerous due to the anonymous nature and/or content.

**1. Twitter  Rating: Little Concern When Used Responsibly**

Twitter can be useful, entertaining, and even educational, but it can also be an avenue for “drama” and cyberbullying. Make sure students use a Twitter Handle (ID) that identifies them with their real name.

**2. Instagram**  **Rating: Moderate Concern**

Instagram, a picture and video sharing app, lacks some of the potential educational value of Twitter or Facebook. Because of the picture and video sharing, this app requires heightened monitoring. Students should use a username that identifies them with their real name.

**3. Yik Yak  Rating: Not Recommended**

Yik Yak is an app for posting anonymous comments and uses the phone’s location to show those posts to anyone on the app in a 1.5 mile radius. Cyberbullying is common.

**4. Ask.fm   Rating: Not Recommended**

Ask.fm is a question and answer app and website, where users have the option to be completely anonymous. It has been linked to many instances of cyberbullying.

**5. Snapchat  Rating: Not Recommended**

Snapchat allows users to send pictures or videos that “disappear” after a set amount of seconds. It is possible to “screenshot” or capture those pictures without the knowledge of the sender.

**6. Tumblr   Rating: Moderate Concern**

Tumblr has the potential to be educational and entertaining, but in reality, the content is often questionable. Students should have a username that identifies them with their real names.

**7. Google+  Rating: Little Concern When Used Responsibly**

Similar to Facebook, it can be useful. Students should have a username that identifies them with their real names.

**8. Kik Messenger   Rating: Moderate Concern**

Kik is a text messaging app that has a few more features than a mobile device’s messaging app.

**9. Oovoo   Rating: Moderate Concern**

Oovoo offers live video chat, and group video chat. Students should have a username that identifies them with their real names.

**10. Omegle  Rating: Not Recommended**

Omegle’s tagline is “Talk to strangers!” The anonymity and the content is not appropriate for students.

**11. Yo  Rating: Little Concern When Used Responsibly**

Yo is a very simple app, and not a lot of negative to it. Students should have a username that identifies them with their real name.

**12. Whisper   Rating: Not Recommended**

Whisper’s tagline is “Your secrets public.” This anonymous app has content that is not appropriate for students.

**13. Vine   Rating: Moderate Concern**

Much of this app is for entertainment purposes only, and student misuse of this app in school has led to discipline. Students should have a username that identifies them with their real name.

**14. Wanelo   Rating: Little Concern When Used Responsibly**

Wanelo is a social media shopping app. There is little concern here.

**15. After School  Rating: Not Recommended**

After School is an anonymous app that was deleted from Apple’s App Store after complaints of bullying incidents. It is not appropriate and the anonymous nature of the site makes it very dangerous.

**16. Mylol.net  Rating: Not Recommended**

Mylol is a teen dating site, but ripe with potential predators. They now have an app available as well. This site has no educational value, and users can create anonymous profiles.

**Fake Location Apps**

There are a number of apps that allow students to lie about their location by generating an IP address or GPS this is different from their actual location. These apps allow students to do things on their devices without repercussion. Below is a sample of some of these apps. We highly recommend that you do not allow these apps on your child’s device. When in doubt—question every app.

**Fake GPS Location**  **Location Spoofer **

**Fake GPS**  **Location MockUp **

**Fake-a-Location  Fake Location **

**Concealer Apps**

There are also “concealer apps” which hide content such as pictures, text messages, or other apps. Sometimes they are disguised as a clock or calculator and require an additional password to enter the app. Below are just a few examples of these types of apps—there are hundreds of them. Once again, please question everything on your child’s device.

**Keep Safe  Private Photo Vault **

**Lock Photo+Video Vault Secret Photos KYMS **

**Hide Calculator  Secret Folder Icon **