



VERMILION CATHOLIC
a legacy of Mount Carmel

FAQ - Social Media Policy

1. How do I know if an app qualifies as “social media”?

The definition of social media published in John Haidt’s book *The Anxious Generation* is listed below. Any app that meets all of the following criteria will be considered social media for school purposes.

Definition of social media:

1. Individual user profiles
2. User generated content
3. Networking (can connect with others or groups)
4. Interactivity (can comment, like, direct message, share items)

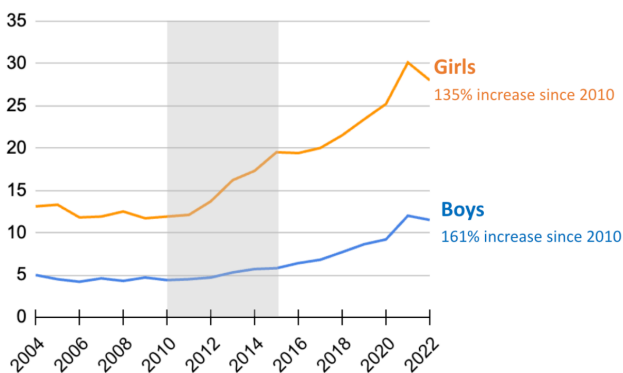
A running list of prohibited apps will be posted on the VC Website under “Social Media” in the parents tab. As this list is continually being updated as new apps are developed, we ask that parents play an active role in monitoring their child’s use of technology in this area.

2. What data supports making this change for our children?

Since the introduction of social media apps, there has been a significant amount of research detailing the impact that these platforms have on the mental health of individuals, and especially children. The first generation of Americans who went through puberty with smartphones in their hands (Generation Z) became more anxious, depressed, self-harming and suicidal. For this reason, putting guardrails on access to social media during sensitive developmental windows such as childhood and adolescence has been at the forefront of national and state level policy work.

Data supporting these claims can be found in a variety of places, including the following:

Major Depression Among Teens



SOURCE: U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health

Figure S1.1.1 Percent of U.S. teens (ages 12-17) who had at least one major depressive episode in the past year (by self-report based on a symptom checklist). Data from [U.S. National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#). This was Figure 7.1 in *The Coddling of the American Mind*, now updated with data beyond 2016. [[Zach's Spreadsheet](#)]. See more on U.S. mental health trends in [Adolescent Mood Disorders Since 2010: A Collaborative Review](#).

U.S. Suicide Rates (Ages 10-14)

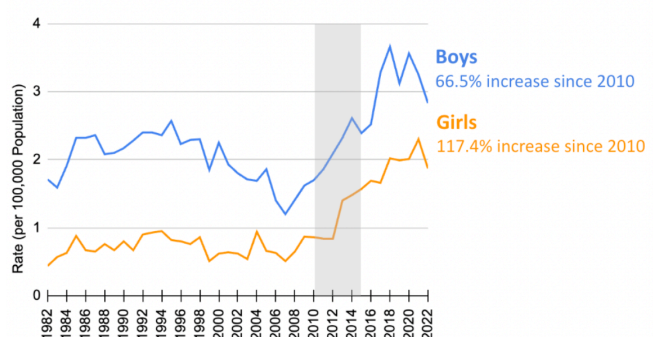


Figure S1.4.5 Suicide rates for younger U.S. adolescents (10-14), graphed from data from the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control](#). [[Zach's spreadsheet](#)]. See more on suicide rates in the Anglosphere in [Anglo Adolescent Suicide Rates Since 2010: A Collaborative Review](#).



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www.anxiousgeneration.com/research

www.afterbabel.com

3. Where can I find resources to help support my child with technology use at home?

We have posted handouts on the VC Website under “Social Media” in the parents tab for families to view. These resources include strategies for implementing appropriate screen time limits and step by step instructions on how to implement parental controls on devices including YouTube, Play Station, Snapchat and others.

We also encourage families to take on this digital discipleship challenge together. Parents are encouraged to read *The Anxious Generation* and monitor their own cell phone usage when in front of their children. We understand the challenges of this and will be providing ongoing resources to support families in these efforts during the upcoming school year.

4. Isn't technology “the way of the future”? Why are we limiting its use?

The goal is not to expect our children to live in a world of “no tech” but “slow tech.” Pope Leo XIV warns that “having a personal mobile device at too early an age and using it without adult supervision can exacerbate young people’s vulnerabilities, foster addiction and expose them to isolating, bullying and cyberbullying, as well as to pressures to share intimate images or sensitive information” (*Magnifica Humanitas* No. 142). The gradual introduction of technology in a developmentally appropriate way is essential to protecting children from becoming addicted to social media use before they are ready. It is our hope that by restricting social media use in our students, we will promote a healthier use of their time during childhood.

5. Why is the school implementing this policy?

As a Catholic school, our mission is to partner with parents in forming students academically, spiritually, and morally. The Church teaches that true freedom is found in the pursuit of what is good and true. While technology offers many benefits, unregulated social media use can hinder the development of virtue, distract from what is good, and expose students to influences that do not reflect human dignity.

Research also points to negative effects on adolescents’ mental health, attention, and relationships. We have seen multiple cases where the use of social media by even a few of our younger students directly and negatively impacts their peers who do not use it.

This policy reflects our commitment to supporting families and fostering an environment that promotes healthy habits, virtuous character, and meaningful in-person relationships.



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6. How does this policy reflect Catholic teaching?

Pope Leo XIV writes in *Magnifica Humanitas* that “schools are not called to follow the pace of the digital world, but to offer that which the digital sphere cannot provide, namely a shared time for learning and developing trustworthy relationships” (No. 147). Citing the most recent psychological research, he teaches that “it is essential to form an alliance among policy-makers, educational institutions, and families that is capable of concretely supporting adults” in the task of protecting children from exposure at “too early an age” to social media which can “negatively impact sleep, attention span, control of emotions and relationships... at times with tragic consequences” (Nos. 142-143).

Catholic tradition emphasizes the formation of virtue, including prudence, temperance, and fortitude. Social media platforms are intentionally designed to capture attention, override their still-developing capacity for self-control, and encourage constant engagement. This can make the development of virtue significantly more difficult. As addiction can rob a person of freedom, the addictive designs of these media can rob our children of some of their freedom.

By limiting access during these formative years, we aim to create the “alliance” called for by the Pope in order to provide the conditions in which students can grow in self-mastery, deepen real relationships, and remain attentive to what is true, good, and beautiful so they are better equipped to use media virtuously as they mature.

7. Is the school saying all social media is harmful and morally wrong?

No. The Church does not teach that social media is inherently wrong; like many tools, it can be used well or poorly. Catholic teaching also recognizes, however, that certain environments can become obstacles to virtue or near occasions of sin—especially for young people.

At the same time, research shows that early and consistent exposure to social media carries risks that are difficult to mitigate at the middle school level, including increased comparison, distraction, and exposure to content that may not reflect Christian values.

This policy is a prudential response, intended to delay that exposure while students are still developing the judgment and self-regulation needed to engage such platforms responsibly.

8. Why not focus on teaching responsible use instead of prohibiting it?

We do both. Vermilion Catholic, a legacy of Mount Carmel remains committed to teaching responsible and ethical use of technology. Current evidence suggests, however, that education alone is often not sufficient to counteract the highly engaging and influential nature of social media platforms at this age. Catholic education also recognizes that virtue is developed gradually and often requires appropriate boundaries.



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Just as we guide students in other areas of life by setting limits appropriate to their age, this policy provides a structure that supports the development of good habits before full independence is expected.

9. Does this policy apply outside of school hours?

Yes. Because formation in virtue extends beyond the classroom, this policy applies at all times—including evenings, weekends, holidays, and summer months.

This consistency reflects the reality that social media's effects reach into students' academic, social, emotional, and spiritual lives, and supports a unified approach between school and home in guiding students toward what is good.

10. How does this respect the role of parents?

We respect that parents are the primary educators of their children, as affirmed by the Catholic Church. Vermilion Catholic, a legacy of Mount Carmel exists to support—not replace—that role.

Just as we expect certain standards of behavior (like abiding by the law) even outside of school hours, so we consider this policy to be an extension of the environment and formational community Vermilion Catholic wishes to provide. By enacting this policy at a communal level and throughout the entire year, we are attempting to provide parents something they cannot provide by themselves - a *communal* set of boundaries. This aids parents by cutting down on negative peer pressure for their children and reinforcing a shared vision of communal life.

Enrollment at Vermilion Catholic, a legacy of Mount Carmel therefore includes adherence to policies like this one which support this environment.

11. What if my child uses social media responsibly?

We understand that individual students may demonstrate maturity and responsibility. This policy, however, is based on what best supports the student body as a whole.

A consistent standard helps eliminate ambiguity, reduces peer pressure, and supports families who are seeking to establish similar boundaries.

12. How will the policy be enforced?

Enforcement will rely on a combination of school awareness, student accountability, and parent partnership. While no policy can guarantee full compliance, clear expectations provide a strong foundation for guidance and correction when necessary.

We encourage open communication between parents, students, and school administration.



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13. What virtues is the school hoping to foster through this policy?

This policy is intended to support the growth of:

- Prudence – making wise and thoughtful decisions
- Temperance – practicing moderation and self-control
- Fortitude – developing strength to resist unhealthy pressures
- Charity – engaging in authentic, respectful relationships
- Justice – treating others with dignity and respect

By limiting distractions and pressures associated with social media, students have greater opportunity to grow in these virtues.

14. Why are the violation consequences structured this way?

The consequences are designed to be clear, consistent, and progressive. They closely mirror our already existing cell phone policy. The intent is not punishment for its own sake, but to emphasize the seriousness of the policy and to encourage adherence before patterns develop. The structure of consequences is meant to encourage reflection, responsibility, and a return to right action.

Our goal is prevention, not punishment.

15. Will this policy isolate students socially?

On the contrary, our intention is to strengthen authentic human relationships. Catholic teaching emphasizes the importance of community, personal encounter, and genuine friendship.

By establishing a shared expectation and reducing reliance on digital interaction, we aim to lessen social pressures tied to online platforms and encourage deeper, face-to-face connections among students, fostering a healthier and more inclusive community.

16. What support is available for parents?

We will continue to offer parent presentations, resources, and opportunities for dialogue rooted in both research and Catholic teaching. These efforts are intended to support families in navigating the challenges of raising children in today's digital culture.

We recognize this policy is a significant shift, developed through thoughtful consultation and grounded in our commitment to student well-being. We are grateful for your partnership as we work together to form students who are rooted in virtue, practice self-mastery, and grow in responsibility and healthy habits.

Enter to Learn Christ, Leave to Serve Christ