

Back-to-School DAYS

Parents Connecting With Social Media



There is a power outage, and your child's school is dismissing students early, requiring you to arrive quickly for pickup. Your kid will not be left waiting for you because you got this information immediately after a quick log-in to the social media site you use to connect with other parents. Some other parents may be delayed in receiving this important information because they rely on phone alerts.

Social media has changed the way people communicate. Whether through tweets or status updates, information shared through social media avenues is often instantaneous and can reach a large number of people, which is why many parents have turned to social media to learn about events at school.

According to a study by Nielsen McKinsey Company,

parents are more likely than adults without children to play games, engage in creative pursuits, and look for entertainment on Facebook, blogs and other social sites. The data collected from 2,000 adults (both parents and nonparents) who frequently use social media found 88 percent of users

rely on social networking sites for communicating with family and friends. The next most popular activity is connecting with new friends, followed by accessing product reviews and online entertainment. Reports show that adults devote a quarter of their time spent online to social media sites. Parents, in

particular, are finding new ways to put these sites to use.

Social media is helping parents in a variety of ways, even enabling them to keep an eye on their children when they go online. According to a survey from Laptop magazine, 55 percent of parents are using social media to watch their kids' online activities. Of that 55 percent, one-fifth indicated they only use social media to monitor their child's online activity.

However, social media has other handy purposes. Many parents use it as they would a bulletin board — posting all types of information. Some parents use social media to stay abreast of school happenings, asking questions about when fundraiser money is due or if anyone got the spelling words for the week. Others find it is a good way to meet parents or speak with the parents of their child's classmates. Some moms and dads

use it to set up parents' nights out, advertise things for sale or ask for recommendations on contractors.

Parents also use social media to invite people to special events, including birthday parties. Others can see who was invited and decide if they're going to come, too.

More parents are turning to social media sites for advice and information, to stay in touch or simply to share a good laugh.

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SCHOOL SAFETY

The best way to have a successful school year is to be safe in and outside of school. Start by following these important safety tips.

- Never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Don't walk anywhere alone. Always go with a buddy. Know your home address and phone number.
- Let your parents know if you go somewhere after school.
- Tell your parents or teachers if someone is bothering you.
- Don't run in the school hallways.
- Learn fire drill procedures at school and at home.
- Don't pet or bother unfamiliar animals.

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