

## **Key Considerations for Parents, Guardians and Caregivers**

### **Role of Parental Involvement – Adults as Allies**

Parents, guardians and caregivers can play a proactive role in helping their kids understand the appropriate use of personal mobile devices at school. Discussing school guidelines with youth, setting clear expectations, and modeling responsible phone use at home can reinforce positive behavior and help youth to manage their device use effectively.

When considering solutions for navigating PMDs, the following strategies may be helpful:

#### **1. Set Clear Expectations at Home**

**Solution:** Establish rules and guidelines for when and how your child can use their phone at school. Discuss the importance of focusing on academics during school hours and agree on specific times when phone use is appropriate, such as during lunch or breaks.

**Consideration:** Reinforce these rules consistently to help your child develop good habits. Use tools like parental control apps to monitor usage if necessary.

#### **2. Educate on Responsible Use**

**Solution:** Teach your child about responsible phone use, including understanding the potential risks of social media, Bullying With a Device (BWD), and exposure to inappropriate content. Encourage them to think critically about how they use their devices.

**Consideration:** Engage in regular conversations about their experiences online and provide guidance on how to navigate challenges like peer pressure and online interactions.

#### **3. Collaborate with Schools**

**Solution:** Work with your child's school to understand their personal mobile device policy and support its implementation. Attend meetings, provide feedback, and suggest improvements based on your experiences.

**Consideration:** Encourage schools to adopt policies that balance the need for connectivity with the importance of minimizing distractions. Propose the use of technology for educational purposes while restricting non-academic use during class.

#### **4. Promote Alternative Communication Plans**

**Solution:** Create a plan with your child for staying in touch during the school day without relying heavily on their cell phone. This might include memorizing important phone numbers, using school office phones in emergencies, and setting clear after-school pickup plans and setting specific check in times during breaks throughout the day.

**Consideration:** Emphasize that they can always reach you when needed, but also that independence and responsibility are important aspects of growing up.

5. Support the School's Management Efforts

**Solution:** Encourage your child to adhere to the school's cell phone policies and explain why these expectations are in place. Support the school by not texting or calling your child during school hours unless necessary.

**Consideration:** Explain the benefits of focusing on schoolwork without the distraction of a phone and remind them that these policies are designed to help them succeed.

6. Advocate for Digital Literacy Programs

**Solution:** Advocate for the inclusion of digital literacy and online safety programs in your child's school curriculum. These programs can teach students about the responsible use of technology, including how to protect themselves online.

**Consideration:** Such programs can empower students to make informed decisions about their phone use and to understand the long-term implications of their digital footprints.

By implementing these strategies, parents, guardians and caregivers can help their children navigate the challenges of personal mobile device use in schools while supporting a positive and productive learning environment.

Source: Trauma-Informed and Systems-Oriented Guidelines and Resources for Implementation (CTIP© 2024)