

October 6, 2021

Dear Great Oaks Community,

Over the past several weeks, there have been discussions centered on Social Media and the negative impacts it can have on students, communities, and schools. There have also been discussions around the true intentions of Social Media. What we know is that Social Media can be as positive or as negative as the user decides. We also know that there are verified reports of “challenges” intended to put children in positions to make poor choices.

As a community, we know that each action has a consequence; positive or negative. We also know that sometimes decisions are impulsive with students not thinking about the consequences in the process. We try to keep this in mind when incidents occur that impact our school community and attempt to handle them through restorative practices.

However, when students use social media negatively and video one another engaging in harmful actions and publicize them, the conversation changes to choices. There are multiple opportunities throughout the process for the individual(s) to stop and make better decisions before posting events.

The overwhelming majority of our students respect the privilege of having their phones in school and use them responsibly. When students do not respect this privilege and engage in the actions of social media challenges or use technology to commit negative actions that harm the school community, a more direct response from the school takes place. As a result, students engaging in these types of media-related events may be banned from having technology in school, may have access to accounts suspended, may receive suspensions, and may face removal from Great Oaks.

For many of our students, reconnecting with others in person is a challenge after being home due to the pandemic. We owe it to the community as a whole to set students up for success and to make our environment safe. We appreciate your support by speaking to your children about responsible technology use and how it can impact them in the future. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at 203-870-8188 or at Bridgeport@greatoakscharter.org.

Regards,

John Scalice, Executive Director
Great Oaks Charter School, Bridgeport