



# BOUNDARIES IN SOCIAL MEDIA

## Raising Digitally Wise & Spiritually Grounded Kids

### 1. The Reality We're Parenting In

Today's youth are growing up in a world where:

- Social media shapes identity, belonging, and self-worth
- Access to strangers is immediate and often unfiltered
- Predators no longer need physical proximity—only access

From a mental health perspective, adolescents are:

- Developmentally wired for connection and validation
- More vulnerable to peer influence and manipulation
- Still developing judgment, impulse control, and boundaries



### 2. Start with Relationship, Not Rules

Prioritize Connection Over Control

Children are more likely to share concerns when they feel safe, not judged.

- Build trust through calm, consistent conversations
- Make it clear: “You won’t get in trouble for telling me something uncomfortable”

**Mental Health Insight:** Connection reduces secrecy and vulnerability to outside influence

Have ongoing conversations as soon as screens start in your home, even computers at school. “If you see something online that makes you uncomfortable, stop, run and tell.”

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## 2. Set Clear, Protective Boundaries

Boundaries are not punishment—they are protection.

- No social media/smart phones before age 16
- No private accounts or secret conversations
- Parents own password and have all control over devices
- Devices in shared spaces; no overnight access
- Set limits on screen time for all screens (i.e. no screens during the school week, meal times, bedtime).
- Teach: “We don’t talk privately with strangers online”
- **If it is on the internet, it is permanent.** Privacy does not exist on the internet.

Mental Health Insight: External boundaries build internal self-control



## 3. Teach Kids to Recognize Red Flags

Equip them to identify grooming and manipulation.

Watch for:

- Flattery (“You’re so mature”)
- Secrecy (“Don’t tell your parents”)
- Moving platforms (to more private apps or secret chat rooms)
- Emotional pressure or guilt

Simple Rule:

If someone asks you to hide it, tell a parent immediately. “Stop, run and tell”

## 4. Build Identity Beyond Social Media

Kids who know who they are are less vulnerable to manipulation.

- Reinforce identity through faith, family, and purpose
- Encourage belonging offline, not just online

“Who is a friend you could talk to in real life right now?”

Mental Health Insight: Strong identity reduces need for external validation

