



City of Fredericksburg
Sheriff's Office

*Sheriff
Scott Foster*

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News Release

Regional Law Enforcement Officials Urge Parents to Be Aware of Teenager's Online Presence

A critical and timely message from Fredericksburg Police Chief Layton, King George County Sheriff Giles, Spotsylvania County Sheriff Harris, Stafford County Sheriff Decatur, and City of Fredericksburg Sheriff Foster.

Smartphones have forever changed how we communicate, and while there are many benefits to having a small computer in the palm of your hand, there are also many negatives, especially for teenagers.

Across the region, law enforcement agencies have seen how one social media post or video can quickly spiral out of control, resulting in violence, fights, and even homicide. The trajectory for our youth when they engage in this type of online behavior is detrimental and affects their family, friends, classmates, teams, etc.

All of us are committed to keeping our youth safe. Still, we need you, the parents and caregivers, to help us by being aware and monitoring your children's digital footprint and talking to them about the ramifications of a loaded social media post.

While you may not be able to monitor all of your child's activities, there are things you can do to prevent and protect your child from harmful digital behavior:

- Monitor their social media sites, apps, and browsing history
- Review or reset your child's phone location and privacy settings
- Follow or friend your teen on social media sites or have another trusted adult follow them
- Establish rules about appropriate digital behavior, content, and apps
- Know your child's user names and passwords for email and social media
- Install a digital monitoring app or software on your child's phone that restricts content, blocks domains, and allows you to view your child's online activity, including social media, without looking at your child's device every day
- Stay up-to-date on the latest apps, social media platforms, and digital slang used by children and teens

For more information on how to talk with your child about their online choices or information on the impacts of social media on youth, visit [StopBullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov)

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