

## **PARENT RESOURCE**

### **Monitoring Children’s Access to Objectionable Content on Social Media Platforms**

The latest of numerous shocking videos on social media is perhaps the most tragic. In August, a man live-streamed his apparent suicide on Facebook. Since then, the suicide video has gone viral on TikTok and other social media platforms.

While social media users encourage others not to watch this disturbing video, many students may have already viewed it. People who have not watched the video may be tempted to watch it, simply because they are being told not to do so. Too often it is common reaction to want to look at something when someone says, “Don’t look.” People are curious by nature and want to know why someone wants to keep us from seeing something they have already seen. The phenomenon known as **FOMO** — fear of missing out — that can dramatically impact children. They want to make sure that they do not miss out on the latest news, trends - FOMO drives many children to keep up with their friends’ conversations.

Social media platforms have measures in place to protect children from seeing things they should not see. However, these protections are not perfect, and young people may still be exposed to traumatic images.

Thoughtful interaction with social media should include understanding the technology and available filters while also regularly engaging children in conversation regularly about what they are viewing. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) provides a list of tools and resources to assist in utilizing a variety of Parental Controls. Understandably, these controls may be a better preventative measure for use with elementary aged students. While enhanced filters may not be foolproof, they do provide an initial layer of protection.

When children are watching live-streamed content, it is difficult to know what kind of inappropriate material that they could be exposed to. [All social media platforms have safeguards to prevent objectionable content.](#) Nevertheless, too often inappropriate content becomes available to vulnerable individuals. Parents should consider the following with respect to their children’s use of social media:

- Set limits
- Promote conversation
- Be aware of potential dangers and potential protections