



January 2018

Dear parents and community members,

I would like to take the time to reach out regarding some current trends on social media and shared some helpful tips and resources available to help keep you informed and students safe. In the world of increasingly digitized communication, there are some trends or fad that come and go. Some are positive and help raise awareness, while others are negative, crude and potentially dangerous. It is increasingly difficult as parents of the 21st century student to be on top of latest tech and trends without additional information and support. Unfortunately, there is a current social media trend that is proving to be both dangers and viral, it is called the Tide Pod Challenge. Like many social media trends, it is important as educators and parents to learn more on how to talk to our students regarding these digital influences and develop their digital citizenship skills. Below is a quick outline (retrieved from www.socialmedia.com, 2018) of this newer social media trend and some supports you can use to talk to your child and/or work together with others to help prevent any participation in this (or similar) potentially harmful social media trends.

What is the Tide Pod Challenge?

- The “Tide Pod Challenge” is where students attempt to consume a plastic laundry detergent pod.
- At first the challenge started as a joke, but now poison control centers are warning parents about this dangerous activity.
- The risks of this viral dare include: choking on the liquid by inhaling it, vomiting, change in blood pressure/heart rate, having seizures, or losing consciousness.
- Ingredients in the detergent can burn the mouth, digestive system, and stomach.
- When students partake in the challenge, they upload videos of themselves eating laundry detergent capsules and post them to social media for validation.

Tide Pod Challenge in the news

“The so-called ‘Tide Pod challenge,’ which reportedly began as a joke, has become enough of a thing that it has garnered responses from a government watchdog, poison control centers, and Tide’s parent company, Procter & Gamble. Now YouTube is weighing in too.” –Fast Company

“Children who have been exposed to the [Tide Pod] capsules have been hospitalized with vomiting, breathing difficulties and loss of consciousness..” –Washington Post

“Thirty-nine reports of teenagers intentionally misusing laundry pods came in during the first 15 days of 2018 alone.” –Time



Why should parents care?

- **The Tide Pod Challenge is incredibly dangerous. It's essentially ingesting poison.**
- **Even if a student doesn't eat the entire laundry detergent pod, just ingesting a tiny bit can lead to serious health repercussions.**
- **If detergent makes its way into the bloodstream and organs, the effects could be fatal.**
- **With so many teens posting videos of this dangerous challenge, YouTube has issued a statement that it will remove any videos that show students partaking in this challenge.**
- **YouTube is also taking further steps to completely terminate channels that have any videos of people eating laundry detergent capsules.**

What can parents do?

- **If your student has eaten a laundry detergent pod, call 911, or contact the poison control center 1-800-222-1222 or a doctor immediately**
- **Consider reading *Tide's* safety protocol to learn how you can protect your family and home.**
- **Talk to your children about the "Tide Pod Challenge" and explain the serious health repercussions associated with it.**
- **Monitor your student's digital footprint to see if they are watching, liking, or creating posts about the "Tide Pod Challenge."**
- **Consider contacting your teen's school. If your child has engaged with anything like the "Tide Pod Challenge," other students might be engaging with it, too.**
- **Urge your child to report any misbehavior they encounter online and on social media.**

Please feel free to use resources like the bullet points above from Josh Ochs' (leading social media expert; author and creator of *Parent University*) website www.smartsocial.com where you will find helpful links and resources like we have shared here today. I will be sharing some of this information at our next "Family Tech Talk Night" here at the High School Auditorium starting at 4:30 pm on Thursday February 8, 2018. This event is open to all students, parents and community members.

Thank you for your time and please feel free to call any of your school counselors if you have question or concerns regarding this trend or other social media trends.

Sincerely,

**Topher Montville
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