

As your children get older you may be finding that they are discovering new and creative ways to spread their wings and show more independence. Some don't really want you to hold their hands anymore. They know where they are going and often want to run ahead. And you run behind trying to catch up. In the field of technology, our children will always be ahead of us. I watch you hand over your iPads and Smartphones to your littlest ones at programs to keep them occupied. They sure do know how to sweep those little fingers across that screen and get the device to do so many things. Nothing like my child rearing days of handing over my set of keys and letting them bang them on the grocery cart. But with the technology come a lot of challenges. And some of those challenges occur at Lafayette.

We have had our share of inappropriate texting and emailing. Nothing like what older kids are doing. More like passing around slightly off color messages or jokes. Things that we used to write down in notes and pass them around. *Harriet the Spy* was written in 1964 and tells the adventures of a young girl who keeps a notebook of observations on her friends. Not very nice observations. When her friends discover what Harriet has been writing they start to take their anger out on her. She is no longer their friend and they play some not very nice pranks on her. Eventually Harriet learns that there are consequences to what she has done and works hard to make amends. The problem is solved and Harriet turns to using her writing skills as editor of the student newspaper. Just what is happening today, but now our students use technology not a spiral notebook. And *Harriet the Spy* was written 50 years ago. We think children are different today. They're not.

Technology makes managing these incidents a lot harder. You can't trace something that was printed on an HP Photosmart to a specific machine. Typewritten letters used to be a great plot device in mystery novels. Printers not at all. Technology can move quickly from one place to another. And a screen can go black in a second. Our children are and always will be one step ahead of most of us. Schools can be involved in some ways, but I see most issues with technology as more family centered. We don't issue phones to students. Our chrome books are used in classrooms with teachers present. We can't even get on social media websites from school computers.

Last year the HSA sponsored a presentation on mobile and online experiences. The presentation was conducted by a representative from the Google internet safety office who led off with some scenarios about how technology is impacting just the process of getting a job or into college. HR offices routinely search social media for information about prospective hires. Most of interviews never take place after reviewing various sites. Students who lost scholarships after colleges discovered illegal activities posted on Facebook. And how nothing every really ever goes away once it gets on the Internet.

One of the resources she shared with us that night is www.iKeepSafe.org/GoogleParent. This website is filled with activities and videos on using the internet responsibly. A whole new section stars Faux Paw, the Websurfing Techno Cat who leads your children in adventures in understanding what the internet is. The BE a PRO link also has some great information. I encourage you to use this link if only to get a better understanding of all the mischief your child can get into while surfing away.

I know technology is here to stay. But I must tell you that over spring break I didn't look at my iPad or Blackberry and am still alive, the world continued to spin on its axis, and the sun rose and set each day.

Really didn't miss any of it at all. But I got 'wired' very late in life. That is not the same with young people today. I'm sure some would be willing to have you cut off their noses before they would give up their phones. But we need to be very clear with our children about what some of their choices mean and how it can affect more than just today. Notes used to be torn up and thrown in a trash can. Done. Emails can get forwarded over and over again, videos posted to float in the cloud forever. Children at Lafayette are just starting to see what all this wonderful stuff can do. Let's make sure we give it the same importance that we did when they reached for the hot stove or iron, ran too close to the edge of the pool, strapped them into car seats and bought bike helmets. Let's take the same care as they move into the world of technology. If we can keep up with the changes!!