St. Thomas Aquinas Academy

AN INVITATION

Jonathan Haidt, author of The Anxious Generation, notes that childhood has been changed in many ways for the worse due a "collective action problem". The collective action problem is this: Parents don't desire to give their child a smartphone or allow social media accounts, but many end up doing so because they are concerned their child will be socially isolated— because "all the other kids" have smartphones and social media.

St. Thomas Aquinas Academy invites parents to come together to address this problem with a collective action solution: create a healthy childhood culture at STA by pledging to delay giving their child(ren) a personal internet capable device or allowing personal social media accounts until after 8th grade.

THE PLEDGE

Desiring a community culture that sets the stage for our children to:

- *Cultivate faith, wisdom, and virtue*
- *Explore and appreciate the beauty of creation*
- *Learn and grow in friendship with others through in-person relationships*
- *Enjoy high quality leisure time with family*
- *Develop interests and skills in the real world*
- *Maintain innocence appropriate to their age and stage of development, gradually growing in Christian maturity under the guidance of parents and teachers*

… and recognizing the way in which personal internet capable devices and social media negatively impact children, including to:

- *Steal time away from play, exploration, and discovery*
- *Shorten attention span*
- *Distort social relationships*
- *Increase anxiety and depression*
- *Reduce motivation to act in the real world*
- *Provide exposure to negative and inappropriate content*

I pledge my commitment to a childhood free of personal internet capable devices and social media accounts, for my child(ren) through 8th grade.

Academic Year 2026-2027