Tech Tips for Parents

Common Sense Media Agreements for Parents and Teens
The Common Sense Family Media Agreements are checklists that parents can use to guide conversations with their kids about media use. They are designed to help parents establish guidelines and expectations around media use and behavior that are right for their family. Some families are comfortable using them as signed agreements. Others prefer to use them simply as checklists to guide conversations. Either way, they are a great way to helps parents and kids get on the same page about media and technology use.
Family Media Agreements http://goo.gl/64M4yq
Device contract http://goo.gl/uaW7E6

Cyber Safety
Cyber safety is an important parent-child discussion to revisit frequently, from elementary school through high school. Experts warn that children are most vulnerable to online dangers while in their own home. The following suggestions are drawn from a wide variety of professional sources that may aid you in effectively guiding your child's use of the iPad and other technology devices.

In accordance with the District's Electronic Technologies Acceptable Use Policy (#524), outside of school, parents bear responsibility for the same guidance of Internet use as they exercise with information sources such as television, telephones, radio, movies and other possibly offensive media. Parents are responsible for monitoring their student's use of the District's educational technologies, including school-issued email accounts and the Internet if the student is accessing the District's electronic technologies from home or through other remote location(s).

Digital Citizenship
Kids and teens today are using the immense power of digital media to explore, connect, create, and learn in ways never before imagined. With this power, young people have extraordinary opportunities, and yet they face potential pitfalls, too. Meanwhile, schools are dealing with the associated ramifications — like cyberbullying, digital cheating, and safety and security concerns. These issues underscore the need for students to learn digital literacy and citizenship skills. Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools will be using Common Sense Media Digital Literacy and Citizenship Curriculum to empower students to think critically, behave safely, and participate responsibly in our digital world. These 21st-century skills are essential for students to harness the full potential of technology for learning. For more information on the Digital Citizenship course visit http://goo.gl/xpA552.

Set Expectations
Regularly share your expectations with your child about accessing only appropriate sites and content, as well as being a good person when online (even when parents aren't watching). Outside of school, it is likely that your child has already been confronted with multiple opportunities to access content that parents wouldn't approve, such as pornography, hate sites, celebrity gossip, reality TV personal blogs and more, all of which may influence your teen's beliefs, values and behavior. Understand that your teen's use of many technologies (such as iPods, video game systems, and cell phones) likely gives your teen the ability to connect to unfiltered public wireless networks (such as in a library or coffee shop, by picking up a neighbor's wireless signal, or connecting to the Internet through a cell service). Therefore, it is important to maintain regular, open dialog about Internet use and access. Discuss your expectation for appropriate use and behavior. Experts strongly suggest installing software to filter and block inappropriate content on your wireless home network.

Monitor & Limit Screen Time
Experts suggest having teens surf the Internet in a central place at home, such as the kitchen or family room, rather than away from adult supervision or behind a closed door. Know what your child is doing with technology and how his or her time is being spent. Technology can be a great tool and resource, but also has the potential to be a big distractor. Help your child learn to focus on completing tasks or assignments first before spending time on games, shopping and social networking. Teaching today's children how to manage multiple sources of information and potential distractions is a critical life skill, one best learned before heading off to college or the workplace.

Put the iPad to bed, but not in the bedroom
Parenting experts suggest parking all technology devices, from cell phones to iPads, in a common family room overnight to discourage late night, unmonitored use and sleep disruption. Don't allow your teen to sleep with the iPad, laptop or cell phone. Remember to model appropriate use and balance of technology in your own life, too!

Don't allow your teen to sleep with an iPad, computer or cell phone.