



# RAISING *healthy* children

BY JM ROSE

Educators from Carolina Friends School in Durham explore the relationship between health and education

## a healthy relationship with technology: “be present in all you do”

**A**s a teacher at Carolina Friends School, I embrace the value of technology to enhance and enrich my students’ education. I also recognize that almost all kids are immersed in a sea of interactive digital technology, from iPad games to school research to social media. My fellow teachers and I often struggle to find balance between the Quaker values of our school—particularly the call to simplicity and the value of silence—and the often complex and cacophonous world in which we live. How do I as a teacher help them find the balance that even the adults in this community struggle to find?

As children move into their teens, their connections with each other become central to their lives. And as these interactions are amplified by social media, they become very powerful, sometimes overwhelmingly so. It seems each day we learn from the news about a terrible consequence of the power of this world. And it becomes all the more important to prepare our children, and ourselves, to be a force of good.

Some of my fellow teachers and I have developed a set of behaviors that characterize a positive digital life. The central theme is an invitation to “be present” in all you do. We invite children and parents to resist being formed by the world; instead be part of its formation. Each value has a set of questions to help family members together discuss how to become better digital citizens.

- *Be present in the moment. Be mindful about when you are using technology to connect with others and when technology gets in the way of connecting with others.*
- Do you have healthy boundaries for when, where, and how you use technology?
- *When you are with friends or family, is your focus on them or your device?*
- When you are working, are you focused on what you should be doing or are you distracted by social media and other websites?
- *Are you aware of how much time you spend in front of a screen? How does it make you feel when you have to stop?*
- Be aware of how you’re using digital technology. Be sure to take care of yourself. Think about your privacy. Draw boundaries for your use of technology.
- *Do you understand that “everything is forever and nothing is private?”*
- Do you carefully protect your passwords and personal information and use appropriate privacy settings when using social media? Do you think about others’ privacy too?



- *Do you consider what your on-line presence says about you? When people meet you on-line, who do they see?*
- Be kind to others when using technology. Think about how you would like to be treated and treat others the same way. Take care of the tools you use.
- *How do you act toward other people when you are on-line? Are you thoughtful about what you say and how you say it? If you see on-line bullying or other bad behavior, are you bold or a bystander?*
- Do you ask for permission before sharing information or photos of friends?
- *Be inspired as you explore the world through technology. Discover new interests and ideas. Connect with others who share your passions. Be creative!*
- Do you look for ways to connect with others on-line? Do you find others with common interests to build a community, and look for those who are different so you can grow and learn? Do you try to learn about other people, places, and ideas?
- *Do you look for ways to share what you know and what you create with others?*
- Be a leader and use technology to help you do good in the world.
- *Do you think about ways you can use technology to make others’ lives better?*
- Do you set a good example for others when interacting on-line?

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Jim Rose teaches science and social studies the Middle School at Carolina Friends School. Jim’s love of the outdoors goes back to his childhood on a farm, and his love of science to his fourth-grade experience with Mr. Rowe, a teacher in one of the Quaker schools Jim attended for 12 years. From those childhood explorations, through chemistry set experiments in his bedroom, to a college degree in geology with concentrations in biology and education, Jim’s life has been guided by a love of discovering the natural world. He has traveled with students to the Galapagos Islands, explored Iceland’s glaciers and geysers, and helped uncover the remains of a 70-million-year-old hadrosaur near Ekalaka, Montana. Jim’s two children attended Carolina Friends School, where he has taught since 2002.

Carolina Friends School is an independent Quaker school serving students aged 3-18. Contact the school at: 4809 Friends School Road, Durham, NC 27705; Telephone: 919-383-6602; [www.cfsnc.org](http://www.cfsnc.org).