

MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR FAMILIES

- 1. We use media to promote family life and good values. We don't allow media in our home that go against our values or undermine family life.**
- 2. No TV before school, before homework is done, or during dinner.**
- 3. You must ask permission to turn on the TV and may watch only approved programs.**
- 4. Watching television is a special event, not a regular routine. In general, it is also a family event, not a private pastime.**
- 5. Certain nights are "quiet nights"; the TV stays off so we can focus on family activities and doing others things we need to do. (Choose these nights together as a family).**
- 6. All video games must be previewed by a parent.**
- 7. Pornographic and hate web sites are off limits—and blocked by an Internet screen installed by the family.**
- 8. Internet rules: No use of the Internet—no e-mails, accessing web sites, chat rooms, or instant messaging— without a parent's prior approval and presence at home. You must have parental permission to download anything.**
- 9. No R-rated movies and no PG-13 or PG movies without parental permission (parents can check out the moral content of current films by consulting www.screenit.com)**

Schools should suggest that parents sit kids down for a family meeting to explain these policies: "The things you take into your minds can stay there for a very long time. Parents who care about their kids care enough to set limits on TV, the Internet, and other media."

Parents should also be encouraged to let networks and advertisers know when they are happy or unhappy with the content of particular programs. One way to do that is to join Parents Television Council (www.ParentsTV.org) and participate in their e-mail feedback to networks and sponsors.

Schools, I believe, should also strongly encourage parents to consider having no TV (just a VCR for playing good videos). Adults raised in families without TV almost always look back with gratitude. Among the benefits: They usually learned to love to read.