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# THE DALEY NEWS

## News and Facts from the Assistant Head of School's Office

Dear Parent(s)

Where are you going? How are you getting there? Who will you be with? What time do you need to be picked up? What time will you be arriving home? These are reasonable questions that we have all heard. Not long ago, these questions would be answered before leaving the house as texting did not exist.

We all know plans can quickly change. Today, your daughter(s) can be texting twenty-four seven if they are allowed. According to a Globe Editorial dated June 16, 2009, American teenagers exchange an average of 80 text messages a day. According to the Neilsen Company, American teenagers sent and received an average of 2,272 text messages per month in the fourth quarter of 2008. The texting time has been doubling each year.

Sherry Turkle, director of the MIT Initiative on Technology and Self, has spent the last three years researching texting habits of teens in the Boston area to determine how the practice affects their development. Her findings suggest that teenagers' texting habit is slowing their emotional growth. "Years ago, if I saw a kid who talked to his/her mother 20 times a day, I would say he/she has an attachment problem," notes Turkle. Now I interview hordes of college juniors and seniors who routinely text their moms while they're waiting at the bus." The lack of independence from parents means teens are not learning to make decisions on their own. The frequency of contact also plays into teen anxiety, she says. The insecurity of social questions – Who is there for me? Which clique am I in? – becomes constant.

Kate Hafner wrote in *The New York Times* in May 2009 that the phenomenon of texting is beginning to worry physicians and psychologists, who say it is leading to anxiety, distraction in school, failing grades, repetitive stress injury and sleep deprivation. Texting has also allowed girls to say something about another girl which they would never say in person face to face.

What can be done about this serious situation? Encourage your daughter(s) to bring home friends and not be dependent on texting. Prohibit cell phones in the kitchen or dining room during dinner; be sure that cell phone and texting do not take place at a restaurant. Phones do not need to be taken to bed. We all need peace and quiet to relax. Sleep is a great way to refresh one's body and mind and to be better prepared for the tasks of tomorrow. Ensure that your daughter(s) have somewhere to talk to you about important issues.

As you are aware Mount Alvernia strives to provide an environment that cultivates civilly assertive young women who feel they can become the person to decide who they want to be. Less texting and more effective communications is a step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Daley  
Assistant Head of School