Today’s Parent Resource revolves around Vault or Hidden Apps that teens are known to have on their phones. What is a Vault or Hidden Apps you may ask? They are Apps that are made to look like regular, harmless Apps but are actually designed to hide information. They are able to store pictures, videos, text messages and more. The App often can be a calculator or a clock and once the right password is inputted you then gain access to the information you are hiding.

I wrote last year that both Colmer and the Pascagoula High School frequently have snapchat accounts that teens can post nude pictures of themselves or others on. It essentially collects inappropriate pictures that teens have sent to each other. Unfortunately this is happening all the time and these Hidden/Vault Apps are used to hide the pictures. Both teenage guys and girls are collecting these pictures and these Apps are the number one way teens are hiding it from the outside world.

Teenagers are smart and are often trying to stay one step ahead of their parents and this is a method they use to hide information when parents check their phones. The problem is, the Apps are designed to not be found, so it can be very difficult to know if your kids have downloaded them.

**How can you find out if your teenager has one of these Apps on their phone?**

First step can be looking for redundant Apps. If your kid has two calculator or clock apps, one may be a hidden App. (or they really like math)

Next, you can look at all the installed Apps in the App Store and see which ones are labeled as vault or hidden Apps. This takes a little bit of time to scroll through all the Apps, but is definitely the most effective way.

Once you find out if one of these hidden Apps is on your kids’ device, the only way to gain access is to be given the password.

The best way to prevent kids from ever using Apps like this would be to monitor what they are able to download. My recommendation is to have a parent password for downloading new Apps. This way they are not allowed to download any Apps without your prior permission.

Finally, I hope this can generate conversations with your kids. I encourage you to ask them about these types of Apps. Have they heard of others using them and for what purpose do kids their age have them.

If you need any help, please let me know. If you want to see exactly how these Apps work, I recently downloaded one to my phone and can show you how they work. Just let me know the next time you see me.