

Internet Safety

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Students in middle school have an increased interest in spending time online for entertainment, socializing and exploring new interests. The internet can offer incredible possibilities for kids as long as children and parents are aware of the risks. Unfortunately, students find themselves in very difficult situations every year because they are not using their technology in a safe or responsible way.

Every year we deal with students who experience the dangers of the online world. Cyberbullying, inappropriate use of social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and gaming addiction are just a few of the problems that students face every year. Parents and guardians should be aware that both Instagram and Facebook have deemed it inappropriate for individuals under the age 13 to use their social media platforms. Anyone under the age of 13 are prohibited in having Instagram or Facebook accounts and these companies will terminate any account if they find out that their policy is being broken.

At Cummer Valley Middle School, we will continue to work with students in educating them about the risks/dangers associated with social media, internet use, and gaming. In addition to this, your children need your support. Here are some recommendations regarding what you as parents/guardians can do to teach proper internet/social media/technology use at home.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child, please contact us to discuss.

Recommendations regarding the proper use of the Internet/Social Media/Technology

Place/dock cellphones, iPads, tablets and computers at night in a common space to recharge (i.e. kitchen, living room) to ensure your child has no distractions when he/she is trying to sleep. Further, it is advisable that electronics are not kept in the bedroom at any time.

Talk to your child about what she/he likes to do online. It's important to keep the lines of communication open and stay involved with her/his online activity. It is important you provide ongoing guidance as she/he becomes interested in new areas.

Learn how to adjust/increase privacy settings. Most online journals, blogs, and social networking sites have privacy settings that determine who can and can't view a user's profile and information. Learn how to use and increase privacy settings.

Monitor your child's instant messaging (IM) logs (e.g., Skype, Facebook chat, Google Talk, Windows Live Messenger, Instagram). Learn how to do this by consulting "thedoorthatsnotlocked.ca", "protectchildren.ca", and "mobility.protectchildren.ca" websites.

Ensure that your child's IM program and social networking sites are set up so that no one can interact with her/him without permission. Find out how to do so on IM programs and social networking sites by visiting the services' websites.

Check your child's files in "My Pictures" to see what images are being sent, received, and saved by your child.

Know your child's login information and email addresses. Assist your child in the creation of online profiles when she/he joins social networking sites or gaming sites.

Use filtering software and monitor your child's online activities.

Stay engaged with how your child is using her/his cell phone. Discuss with your child what she/he must first consider before sending text messages, updating social networking profiles, sending photos/videos, or downloading online content.

Be aware that some smart phones have settings available for parents to restrict the downloading of apps on their child's phones (e.g., Password enabled).

It is recommended that no electronics (TV, laptop, desktop, tablets, or cell phones) be kept or used in a student's bedroom. It is recommended that students use the computer, cell phones, etc. in an open area such as the kitchen or family room. Time limits spent in front of electronic devices should also be discussed.