

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mrs. Stephanie Snyder, Superintendent & Supervisor of Special Services

908-995-2401

Mrs. Susan Wardell, Principal/Curriculum & 504 Coordinator

www.hollandschool.org

October 4, 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians:

With the start of every school year there seems to be another reason for me to address the use of cell phones and social media by our children. We know that the technology has become a necessity to learn however, we all need to be committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet, mobile phones and other types of technology. Due to the fact that our children, at times, are not cautious with their online presence, there is always concern about the inappropriate use of Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, SnapChat, and other texting sites. Many issues are brought to our attention yearly.

Mobile phones have become an indispensable part of our lives. They can help keep our children safe and most young people use them responsibly. Whilst there are risks attached to the use of cell phones these can be minimized. One way of doing this is by insisting that cell phones are not allowed in bedrooms at night-time. This ensures that children are not tempted to stay up late to chat with friends, play games or be disturbed by notifications. It allows the children to completely turn off, disengage and take time to recharge for the next day. This will not be a popular step, children will groan, fight and some may become belligerent, however, children's minds need this break for their mental health. As a parent taking the phone each night at a designated time and shutting it down is well worth the eminent battle that might ensue.

We understand that it is increasingly difficult to keep up with the ways that our children are using new and ever-changing technologies. Our children are immersed in a society that has become dependent on powerful computers, smart phones, iPads, interactive games and virtual communities.

Websites such as Instagram, SnapChat, Whats App, TicTock, to name but a few, offer fantastic opportunities for communication and social connections, however they are created with their audience in mind. When monitoring your son/daughter's internet use, please remind yourself of the concerns of social media:

- Many sites use "targeted" advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual or other inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated when they registered. They may have lied about their age to get an account, making them appear older than they are, increasing this risk.

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- Young people may accept friend requests from people they don't know in real life which could increase the risk of inappropriate contact or behavior. The general rule is, if they aren't friends in real life, they should not be "friends" online.
- Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on social media is NOT moderated.
- Photographs shared by users are NOT moderated and therefore young people could be exposed to inappropriate images or even post their own.
- Underage users might be less likely to keep their identities and location private
- Social media sites can be exploited by bullies and used for inappropriate contact
- Social media sites can not and do not verify the members, therefore, it is important to remember that if your son/daughter can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else.

Although we cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours which is a parental responsibility, we will take action if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety and wellbeing of any of our students.

Through lessons provided at school, we do our best to provide our children with the awareness and knowledge they need in order to recognize and avoid dangerous, destructive, or unlawful behavior and to respond appropriately; however, it is only through a collaborative effort between parent and teachers that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Snyder
Superintendent

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