

St. Joseph Catholic School

Faith, Knowledge, Values ~ Weaving a Tapestry for Life

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December 1, 2009

Dear St. Joseph School Parents:

We are communicating with you regarding a very serious matter that has come to our attention. We have received numerous reports from concerned parents regarding the inappropriate use of FaceBook (or other social networking sites) by some of our students. These reports include inappropriate pictures, inappropriate language, bullying, harassment, and in some cases, sexual innuendos.

Parents and students are primarily and legally responsible for the appropriate and ethical use of technology in the home. However St. Joseph School reserves the right to impose consequences (Parent Student Handbook, pp. 17-18) for inappropriate behavior that takes place off-campus and outside school hours when that behavior involves our students and therefore affects the learning environment of the school (Handbook, pp. 18). To further clarify the school's policy we have amended the Handbook, effective immediately (see enclosure).

Please partner with us to safeguard all our students. The following are specific things that you can do to make this happen:


- Place your computer in a public area of your home where you can see what your student is doing.
- Limit computer use to only times when you are available to monitor that use.
- Check the history of your computer frequently.
- If your student has a Facebook account (legal age for an account is 13), insist that you be on their "Friend" list. You want to know what they are saying but also what other friends are saying to them.
- Warn them of the dangers of posting personal information.
- Please review the school's policy with your student.

While St. Joseph School staff will not be monitoring social network sites on a regular basis, the staff reserves the right to access and hold students accountable for information found on their site that is not in keeping with our school mission.

Our goal is the safety and well-being of all students and employees of the school. We appreciate your support in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,


Lesley Harrison
Principal


Fr. Gary Lazzeroni
Priest Administrator

Handbook Change

PLEASE NOTE:

- Any student whose behavior outside the school day detrimentally impacts the school, its program's reputation, its staff, or its students, will be subject to the discipline code of the school as shown above. (currently in handbook, pg. 19)

Amendment Being Added To Current Handbook on Pg. 19

- This behavior includes inappropriate use of technology (for example, on a home computer). "Inappropriate use" includes harassment, use of school name, offensive remarks directed to or about individual staff or students, and/or offensive language not in keeping with our Christian values reflected in the mission of St. Joseph School.
- Students and parents are primarily responsible for the appropriate and ethical use of technology, especially in the home. While St. Joseph School staff will not be monitoring social network sites on a regular basis, the staff reserves the right to access and hold students accountable for information found on their site not in keeping with our school mission.

Parent Resources For Further Information:

Generation MYPSPACE: Helping Your Teen Survive online Adolescence by Candice Kelsey (2007) Although the title refers to MYPSPACE the text focuses on any social networking site, including FaceBook. This is a very informative book and also very alarming as it looks into the world of adolescent internet users today.

<http://www.facebook.com/safety>

www.netsmartz.org

www.moralert.com