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Vincent Cardile
Principal

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It is hard to believe the school year is more than one-third completed. Recently three concerns have been raised. The first two are the use of iPods and Cell Phones in school. The third concern is cyber bullying and Internet safety. This issue will focus on cyber-bulling information, tips for parents and kids, parent resources, and what is permitted and not permitted in reference to iPods and cell phones. Please review the enclosed information with your child.

Sincerely,
Vincent Cardile

iPods

Apparently the big gift for the holidays was iPods. Unfortunately, iPods will not be permitted in school. We have no control on what has been downloaded and what the students are listening to as well as preventing damage and/or loss. Students may use the iPods or disc players to and from school, but not in the building and during school hours. If used in school they will be taken and a parent call will follow in order for it to be returned.

Cell Phones

We realize that parents have made available cell phones for their children to use for safety and parent communications. We have no problem with that, however please enforce with them that they are not to be used during school hours and interrupt instruction. If used in school they will be taken and a parent phone call will follow in order for it to be returned.

Cyber Bullying

Recent national surveys show that 45% of fourth-to-eight grade students have been bullied. But it's not happening on the playground—it's in their home. Bullies harass and threaten others on line through the home computer. In most instances this occurs when the parents are working. In addition to bullying situations children are opening themselves up to at risk situations. The following are information and tips for parents and students as well as resources to address cyber bullying.

Tips for Parents

1. Keep the Computer in the family room or another location where you can see what your child is doing
2. Use Parental Controls to limit the sites your child can access.
3. Limit the amount of time your child is using the computer
4. Talk to your child about cyber safety and cyber bullying.
5. Remind children to **Never:**
 - ★ Give personal information such as name, birthday, address or phone number
 - ★ Download pictures or documents from strangers
 - ★ Use any personal information when creating a screen name or email account

Check Out These Websites as a Family:

www.staysafeonline.info/
National Cyber Security Alliance

<http://www.netsmartzkids.org/indexfl.htm>
On line activities for kids that teach about cybersafety, passwords, viruses and instant messaging

<http://www.isafe.org/>
Internet Safety Education

<http://disney.go.com/cybersafety/>
Disney On Line interactive activities about Cyber Safety

<http://ikeepSAFE.org/--index.php>
On line games for cyber safe kids

WHITMAN SCHOOL

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According to a 2003-04 survey of 19,000 children in grades 5 - 8 conducted by [I-SAFE AMERICA, Inc.](#)

- 34% of children say their parents have not established rules for Internet activity
- 40% do not discuss Internet safety with their parents
- 37% say their parents would disapprove if they knew what they did, where they went, or with whom they chatted on the Internet
- 23% say their parents have no idea how much time they spend on the Internet
- 55% have given their personal information (name, sex, age, etc.) over the Internet
- 52% prefer to be alone when online
- 10% have met someone face-to-face that they met online
- 58% admit someone has said mean or hurtful things to them online
- 53% admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online
- 58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online

[myspace.com](#)

If your child is using [myspace.com](#), please speak to them immediately. An account with [myspace.com](#) can only be created if you are 18 years old or older. If your child has created an account, they are not being truthful. This is a dangerous on line activity that gives strangers access to your child's personal information.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

February 3rd –Second Marking Period Ends
February 13th – Report Card Distribution
February 17th and 20th –President's Weekend
Schools Closed

Tips for Students

- ★ Never give personal information about yourself to anyone on line
- ★ Never agree to meet anyone in person, if someone wants to talk to you in person, talk to an adult about it
- ★ Don't respond to emails or instant messages from people you do not know, even if they seem like they know you
- ★ Don't bully people on line, never put anything on line that you do not want to see printed and brought to school
- ★ Never respond to messages that are scary
- ★ Don't believe everything you read on the Internet
- ★ If someone writes an email or instant message to you that is threatening or harmful, don't just delete it, print it out and show it to an adult.

Upcoming Events

- Home and School Meeting – January 23rd
- Band Festival at Commerce Center – January 25th
- Jump Rope for Heart – February 23rd
- Home and School Meeting – February 27th
- Strings Concert – March 6th
- Book Fair – March 6th thru 10th
- Band Concert – March 15th
- Home and School Meeting – March 20th
- Chorus and Bell Concert –March 28th