



Lord Tennyson Elementary School

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September 21, 2018

Dear Grades 6 and 7 parents and guardians,

We have been working with all of our students (from K-7) on our school goals and code of conduct in practicing kindness, empathy, and overall social responsibility. A component of this, particularly with our intermediate students, includes online/digital responsibility. This refers to making appropriate choices when using the internet, social media, or other forms of digital communication with others. We know that this can become a challenge for students in schools, particularly with the fast nature in which communication can occur, and a medium that can seem “less personal” than face-to-face communication. As digital communication is becoming more prevalent, we want to ensure that it is incorporated into our students’ learning.

Our goal is to teach students how to use digital communication responsibly and safely, and know what is and is not okay to communicate online. Parents have a pivotal role in this area, and we appreciate your involvement. Here are a few of the things that we are doing learning-wise in this area:

- Our Vancouver Police Liaison Officer (Trevor Letourneau - Kitsilano Family of schools) has spoken with all of our students in Grade 6 and 7. He works with both elementary and secondary schools, and is trained in having conversations on these topics with children and youth. He brings a local community perspective, and regularly liaises with our school.
- Students in Grades 5-7 will be part of a digital responsibility presentation on Monday, Oct 1st, put on by the district recommended agency Safer Schools Together, in liaison with our PAC. Here is a description:

Student Presentation: Social Media Awareness, Digital Footprints, & Cyberbullying

The student presentation will focus on lessons and content that is most applicable to this particular age group. This presentation will cover all things digital, from digital citizenship and how to be a good digital citizen to the criminal consequences of cyberbullying. Some of the most prominent concerns currently surrounding student’s use of social networking sites and smartphones will be discussed. Topics covered will include: how to practice netiquette (online etiquette), how to recognize and respond to cyberbullying, the criminal and social consequences of cyberbullying behaviour and the possession and distribution of intimate images (sexting), self-peer exploitation, digital media habits and oversharing, digital addiction, piracy and plagiarism.

At this stage in their school career they hopefully should be very familiar with their digital footprint online and how this is a representation of their real and online selves. Everything they post online will be public, permanent, and searchable. This is now more important than ever and we know that university and college admissions staff as well as prospective employers are now researching applicants' online lives before they even consider a resume or transcript. Social media should be a platform for students to showcase their interests, skills, and accomplishments. Real world examples will be shown of the detrimental effect that social media and online behaviour has had Canadian youth moving forward with their lives. The illusion of anonymity online will be spoken to in cautioning students from misrepresenting themselves online and creating false profiles. Geo-locational settings will be covered as well the dangers of social media and cell phone misuse.

- Parents of all grade levels are invited to will be part of a digital responsibility presentation on Monday, Oct 1st, from 7-8:30 in our library, put on by the district- recommended agency Safer Schools Together, in liaison with our PAC. Here is a description:

Parent Presentation: Social Media Awareness, Digital Footprints, & Cyberbullying

The parent presentation will focus on all things digital. Your child has now entered into their digital media lives, where cell phone ownership doubles, video game use explodes and they dive into the world of social media and hypertexting. Your child is rapidly developing their personal identity with cell phone in hand and you need to be prepared. Family rules, parental controls and developing a family tech plan will be outlined as well as recommendations for monitoring your teen's digital life.

As a parent, you must lead the charge as a digital role model and help your child develop a strong digital citizenship foundation while reminding them that their digital footprint is a reflection of their real and online selves. At this age, they will encounter situations that will challenge their independence, including cyberbullying (and more commonly – cyberexclusion), the dangers of anonymity, privacy, sharing intimate images, and inappropriate websites, and you need to be there to provide support and guidance during this critical period.

Finally, to better equip you for your digital parenting strategy, a snapshot of the current trends and concerning apps will be provided.

- Students and parents will be asked to once again sign the intermediate student Acceptable Use Policy Agreement for Technology
- Teachers will have ongoing conversations with classes about both social- and digital-responsibility.

We thank you for your ongoing involvement in your child's learning experiences, and your support of our endeavours.

Sincerely,

M. Roch & Mme V
Tennyson Admin Team