Meadow High School

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Dear Parents and Guardians

Re: INTERNET SAFETY

Meadow High School prides itself on providing a safe school for our students. We are, however, becoming increasingly concerned about the inappropriate use of the Internet by some of our students outside school. Inappropriate use has the potential to be harmful, and we ask your support in assisting us with this challenge.

Across the country, many schools have seen an increase in poor student behaviour as a result of messages written and then posted to popular social networking Web sites. Many sites allow users to post instant messages that allow students to chat with other students – this can lead to the posting of abusive or offensive comments that they would not say in a face-to-face conversation. These comments can cause problems which are the cause of arguments and disputes in school over the following days and weeks.

The popularity of these Web sites seems to be growing. Some students use the sites to take part in online bullying or to threaten harm to other students. The so-called "cyber bullies," mostly children between the ages of 9 and 14, use the Web to hurt others without witnessing the consequences. Students who are bullied online sometimes do not report these incidents for fear that they will be barred from using the Internet.

Outside of school, there have been cases of adults posing as young people and gaining access to student chat rooms. In some cases, these contacts have led to tragedy. Some unsuspecting students post enough personal information that these adults are able to locate students' home or school addresses, thereby becoming easy targets.

Meadow High School has blocked the use of these social networking Web sites from our school computers. We will continue to block inappropriate material as we deem appropriate.

Parents should be aware of what their children are writing on the Internet and what others are posting in reply. These Web sites are public sites, and anything posted there can be seen by anyone who has Internet access. Although most of what is written is not immoral, offensive, or illegal, some of it is. If you choose to do so, you may investigate a site by personally logging on to the site. The services are free, and users may register and join the site by using an e-mail address. Once you have registered, you can search by name and e-mail address to see if your child is registered. You can narrow the search results by entering the name of your town or city. You will be able to view the kinds of personal information, messages, diaries, and photographs that students post to this Web site.

Helpful Tips and Resources

We encourage you to talk with your son or daughter about the potential danger of the Internet. Ask if they have an account with Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Snapchat, Tumblr or similar Web sites. Many online games, popular with younger children also have the facility for 'live chat' – there are many, but the most popular include 'Habbo Hotel', 'Neopets', and 'Stardoll.' If your child is using such a site with your permission, you may want to review his or her profile to ensure that no personal and identifiable information has been posted.

We also encourage you to establish rules and guidelines to ensure the safety of your child while on the Internet at home. Some Web sites offer parental or family guidance for Internet safety. Meadow High School will continue to provide Internet security within the school. It is important that parents also monitor Internet use at home.

Thank you for your support and cooperation in keeping students safe. If you have questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact the school.
Yours sincerely,

Ms. J.E Richards
Assistant Head