

3907 Rosemead Blvd.
Rosemead, CA 91770
Phone: 626-312-2900
Fax: 626-312-2906



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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AMY ENOMOTO-PEREZ, Ed.D., Superintendent

August, 2017

Dear Rosemead SD Parents/Guardians:

The Rosemead School District hopes that you enjoyed a well-deserved summer break with family and friends to Sharpen the Saw.

Below are a couple important reminders:

Internet Safety and Use of Social Media

The Rosemead School District is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a growing concern, due to the heavy use of OoVoo, Skype, Instagram, Facebook, Whats App, SnapChat, Tumblr, Reddit, Down, Hot or Not, WeChat, Kik, Vine, Omegle, After School, House Party, Viber, Yik Yak and other texting/social media sites. These applications and social media sites are heavily used by children of all ages and adults alike. Below are key information pieces regarding each of the above:

- **Instagram** which is an online mobile photo sharing, video sharing and social networking service which enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms. You are required to be *at least 13 years old* before you can create an account.
- **Facebook** which is a social networking site. You are required to be *at least 13 years old* before you can create an account.
- **SnapChat** which is an online mobile application that allows users to capture videos and pictures that self-destruct after a few seconds. When a user sends a message they get to decide whether it will live for between 1 and 10 seconds. You are required to be *at least 13 years old* before you can create an account.
- **Twitter** which is an online mobile application that allows users to post a 140-character maximum text, photos, and video links. You are required to be *at least 13 years old* before you can create an account.
- **OoVoo** which is a video and messaging application (app), it allows video chats with up to 12 people at one time. You are required to be *at least 13 years old* before you can create an account.
- **Skype** which is a video and messaging app. You are required to be *at least 13 years old* before you can create an account.
- **Whats App** which is an instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to be *at least 16 years old* or older.

Children are often creating ‘groups’ to which others are joining. This means that all their information is shared with anyone who is in the group, so privacy is lost and in some cases strangers have been added to the group, giving them access to your child’s information which may include their location or phone number.

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, including smartphones, iPads, interactive online games and virtual communities.

Fax Numbers:

Human Resources: 626-307-6148 • Education Services, Special Education & Student Support Services: 626-312-2913
Child Development & Nutrition Services: 626-307-6178 • Business Service & Superintendent’s Office: 626-312-2906

Websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Skype, Whats App, Viber and OoVoo, to name a few, offer fantastic opportunities for communication and social connections; however, they are created with their audience in mind especially sites such as Facebook and Instagram which are specifically for those over 13 years old. When monitoring your child'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.
- 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 shouldn't be 'friends' online.
- Language, games, groups, and content posted or shared on social media is **NOT** moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for young people.
- 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 private and lying about their age can expose them to further risks regarding privacy settings and options.
- Social media sites can be exploited by bullies and for inappropriate contact.
- Social media sites cannot and do not verify its members, therefore, it is important to remember that if your child(ren) can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else.

The Rosemead School District prides itself on safety as a top priority, and has placed several layers of protection on all district-owned technology to ensure certain websites are "blocked." Primarily, we see that the occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, after-school hours or on personal smartphones when children have access to web sites that are blocked within the school system. With this in mind, and in response to concerned parents who have asked for advice regarding internet safety and social media applications, we feel that it is important to point out to parents the risks of unregulated use of such sites, so you can make informed decisions as to whether to allow your child to have a profile or not and when and how to monitor their use, particularly at night-time.

The District strongly advises a device free bedroom policy after bedtime to allow for uninterrupted sleep and rest.

Although we cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours which is parental responsibility, we will take action (such as reporting under age profiles) if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or well-being of any of our students, including reporting the use of inappropriate images of young people to the police, as this is a legal matter. This also refers to inappropriate text messages.

Should you decide to allow your child to have an online profile we strongly advise you the following:

- Visit CommonSense website (www.commonsense.org) for parenting and safe technology tips for children.
- Check their profile is set to private and that only their friends can see the information they post.
- Monitor your child's use and talk to them about safe and appropriate online behavior such as not sharing personal information and not posting or messaging offensive/inappropriate messages or photo's.
- Monitor your child's device by using a monitoring application on smartphones

- Monitor your child's use of language and how they communicate to other people, ensuring profanity is discouraged.
- Have a look at advice for parents on social media sites.
- Set up your own profiles so you understand how the site works and ask them to have you as their friend on their profile so you know what they are posting online.
- Make sure your child(ren) understand the following rules:
 - Always keep your profile private.
 - Never accept a friend request, if you don't know the person in real life.
 - Never post anything which could reveal your identity including photographs wearing school uniforms where possible.
 - **Never post anything you wouldn't want your parents or teachers to see.**
 - Never agree to meet anyone you only know online without telling a trusted adult.
 - Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you.

We recommend that all parents visit the Common Sense Media website at www.common sense media.org, CEOP Think U Know website at www.thinkuknow.co.uk, NSPCC NetAware website at www.net-aware.org.uk and Get Safe Online website at www.getsafeonline.org, for more information on keeping your child safe online.

As the Rosemead School District, we are firmly committed to teaching our children to use the internet safely and responsibly; for their own personal protection, this is of paramount importance. Through lessons and conversations provided at our schools (Encinita, Janson, Muscatel, Savannah, and Shuey), assemblies, and guest speakers; we do our best to provide our students 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 parents and teachers that we will succeed in creating responsible and safe cyber citizens.

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact your school Principal or Teacher during the new school year.

Respectfully,

Amy Enamoto-Perez, Ed.D.

Superintendent