



Dr. Juliette Pennyman, Superintendent of Schools

June 26, 2024

Dear Hudson City School District Families,

As we enter the summer months, we hope everyone in our school community enjoys some much-needed rest, relaxation, and fun. With children having more free time at home during the next two months, it is likely that they will be spending more time online. While the internet offers a wealth of entertainment and information, it also contains potential risks that we all must be mindful of to ensure our children's safety.

Online interaction via social media or online gaming can begin as early as kindergarten. It is important to know what platforms your children are viewing content on, and what apps they are downloading and playing.

Below, you can find tips and guidelines to help manage online activity this summer. Be sure to check out [this video interview with an online safety expert from Safe Schools](#), who does a deep dive into what students are viewing online, concerning behavior seen nationwide, steps parents can take, and more.

- **Set Clear Rules and Boundaries**
 - All students in grades K-11 with a social media account should have it set to private.
 - Devices should be kept out of the bedroom, especially overnight. Research shows that children are exposed to the most dangerous activity when they are alone, at night, in their bedroom.
 - Define which websites, apps, and online activities are appropriate.
- **Have Open and Honest Conversations**
 - Engage your child and talk about what they are doing online.
 - Ask what they are posting, for who, and why?
 - Ask if they are friends with anyone online that they haven't met in-person.
- **Know About Hashtags on Social Media**
 - With summer comes bathing suit season, which highlights eating disorders. These hashtags have alternate meanings: Ana (Anorexia), Mia (Bulimia), Deb (Depression), Sue (Suicide).
 - If you come across anything that looks like it could be an acronym, search for it online.
- **Know the Platforms**
 - The latest social media and gaming platforms change often. Children actively engage with others on Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, WhatsApp, Roblox, Twitch, Minecraft, Fortnite, Animal Crossing, via text message, and more. Download



these apps yourself, get to know your way around them, and play the games with your child to get a feel for what they are doing online.

- **Use Parental Controls**

- Utilize parental controls to block inappropriate content and manage time online. Familiarize yourself with the built-in safety features on the personal devices and apps your child uses.

- **Promote Respectful Online Behavior**

- Encourage your child to be kind and respectful online. Discuss the consequences of cyberbullying, and be sure that they know how to report inappropriate behavior.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about this important topic. We wish you and your family a happy and safe summer break.

Sincerely,

Dr. Juliette Pennyman

Superintendent of Schools

Hudson City School District

#HudsonTogetherWeCan!