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Sachem Central School District

Grundy Avenue Elementary School

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Dear Parents/Guardians;

As school safety is a priority at Grundy, it is a good time to remind you that online safety is also an important component of overall student safety. Over the years we have noticed that a larger percentage of elementary aged students have cell phones, I-Pads, Kindles or other devices that allow them to access the internet and communicate freely with each other. At times, these devices can cause a disruption to the learning environment if they are not used responsibly.

We bring this to your attention for two reasons. Our Code of Conduct prohibits cell phones in school, unless a note is received by the parents and then it is to be turned off and stored in the backpack for the duration of the school day. It may never be used to take a photo or video of other students. The second issue is a larger one that requires careful monitoring of your child's use of these devices to access social media.

A recent technology concern we wanted to bring to your attention is the simultaneous trend of younger and younger children using the internet in unsupervised situations outside of school. Some of our students have Instagram, Oovoo, Snapchat, and Tik Tok accounts. These sites, and others like them, were designed for teenagers and adults. They are restricted by age to children who are at least 13 years old. We have received reports of alleged cyberbullying, account hacking, and the creation of fake/anonymous profiles. It is natural for young children to want to emulate their older friends or siblings but in this case, they may not be ready for the responsibility and engaging in such behavior that may be deemed as hurtful or harmful to others may become a legal matter. Additionally, children of this age do not realize that it is difficult, once something is posted to take it back, because content can be printed, copied, saved and forwarded to others.

Our best advice for parents about how best to deal with these issues at home is to speak with your child directly, make your behavioral expectations clear, be involved with his/her virtual life, and make sure you have access to any site your child frequents and can see all the published content. We strongly encourage you to supervise and regularly monitor your child when he/she uses technology. Attached to this letter is a parent resource guide to assist you. Working together, we can teach your child, both in school and at home, how to feel happy, healthy, and safe and become an appropriate user of modern communications technology. As always, we thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,
Laura Amato, Principal

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