



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

As we approach the February winter break, we know many of our students are looking forward to some well-deserved downtime. For many, this includes more hours spent online through gaming, streaming, and connecting with friends.

While the internet offers incredible opportunities for creativity and learning, it also presents risks that can evolve quickly. To help ensure our students have a safe and positive break, we have compiled a few reminders and resources based on current digital safety trends.

1. Know the Risks in Popular Apps

Many apps that seem like simple games or messaging tools have features that can expose children to inappropriate content or contact from strangers.

- Gaming Platforms (Roblox, Fortnite, Twitch): These are often entry points for strangers to contact children through unmoderated voice and text chat.
- Disappearing Content (Snapchat): The temporary nature of these photos can give children a false sense of security. This often leads them to share images they might later regret.
- Live Streaming (TikTok, Twitch): Real-time interaction can quickly become unsafe because comments are often unmoderated and can include adult language or sexual content.

2. Practical Tips for Home

- The Living Room Rule: Encourage kids to use devices in common areas of the house rather than in bedrooms or behind closed doors.
- Check Privacy Settings: Take ten minutes this weekend to review privacy settings on your child's favorite apps. Ensure location sharing is turned off and accounts are set to private.
- Open the Dialogue: Instead of focusing on policing their devices, try asking them to show you their favorite game or who they are talking to. Keeping the lines of communication open makes them more likely to come to you if they see something that makes them uncomfortable.

3. Resources for You

We recommend looking at the "20 Apps Parents & Caregivers Need to Know" by [clicking here](#). This document provides a quick breakdown of popular platforms such as Discord, Kik, BeReal, and Telegram while highlighting specific safety concerns for each.

Our goal is to ensure that when students return to the classroom on Monday, February 23, they do so feeling refreshed and safe. We wish you all a wonderful, relaxing, and digitally safe winter break!

Best regards,
Dr. Angelina Maloney