FREMONT COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Internet Safety: A Message for Parents & Families

Dear Fremont Parents and Families,

As our children spend more time online for school, entertainment, socializing, and especially gaming, it is important that we take an active role in helping them navigate the digital world safely. The internet can be a wonderful resource for learning, creativity, and connection, but children may also encounter people, conversations, content, and situations they are not prepared to handle on their own.

We encourage every Fremont parent to have regular conversations with their children about internet safety.

Talk About Who They Meet Online

Children may play games and communicate with people they have never met in person. Remind them that someone online may not always be who they claim to be.

- Never share their full name, address, school, phone number, passwords, or other personal information.
- Avoid sharing photographs or videos with strangers.
- Never agree to meet someone they met online without talking to a parent or trusted adult.
- Tell you if someone online makes them uncomfortable, asks them to keep secrets, or requests personal information.

Understand Online Gaming

Many games include voice chat, messaging, friend requests, and interaction with strangers. Parents should consider:

- Knowing which games their children are playing and checking age ratings and privacy settings.
- Learning how voice and text chat work within the game.
- Setting reasonable limits on screen time and when gaming is allowed.
- Reinforcing that bullying, inappropriate language, threats, and harassment are not acceptable - even behind a screen.
- Discussing in-game purchases so children understand that virtual items can cost real money.

Encourage Children to Come to You

Perhaps the most important safety rule is making sure your child knows they can always come to you. Children may hesitate to tell an adult because they fear losing a device or getting in trouble. Let them know their safety comes first.

If something online makes them uncomfortable, frightened, embarrassed, or confused, encourage them to stop the conversation, block the person when appropriate, save evidence if necessary, and tell a trusted adult.

Parents, Be Involved

Internet safety works best as an ongoing conversation rather than a one-time warning. Take time to learn about the games, apps, websites, and social platforms your child enjoys. Helpful questions include:

- "Who do you play with?"
- "Do you use voice or text chat?"
- "Has anyone ever said something that made you uncomfortable?"
- "What would you do if someone asked you to keep a secret?"

Knowing what our children are doing online is not about invading their privacy. It is about helping them develop the judgment and confidence they need to make safe decisions.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with your children, set appropriate boundaries, and stay involved in their online lives. Together, we can help make Fremont a safe and supportive community for all of our children - both online and offline.

Sincerely,

Dr. William Stitt
Superintendent - Fremont Community Schools