



Dear Parent/ Guardian:

We recognize our students are facing increasing challenges and pressure from social media and the Internet. While we are aware there are many positives associated with these technologies, we also acknowledge that sometimes they may be used inappropriately. Great strides in educating our students about Internet and social media safety have been made in recent years, but we believe we can and should do even more.

With the goal of developing both an immediate and a long-term strategy to help our teachers better inform our students about the use of these technologies, an Internet and Social Media Safety (ISMS) Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador English School District personnel has been established.

The committee has recommended compulsory resources which have been divided into three categories each for Grade 1 to 3, Grade 4 to 6, and Grade 7 to 12. These categories are derived from the Department of Education *Safe and Caring Schools Policy, 2013* and the elements of 'Digital Citizenship.' The recommended resources will assist teachers in completing instruction on these topics. Further information on the resources and topics is contained in **Appendix A**. A permission slip will be required for the lesson covering "Sexting/Chat (Digital Health + Wellness/ Security)" for Grades 7 to 12. That permission slip and accompanying lesson information can be found in **Appendix B**.

We do recognize that the vast majority of schools are using an educational program and are having discussions on these topics. These efforts can be expected to continue. The District believes the more information we provide our students, the better prepared they are to face the challenges ahead. To ensure they are relevant to the latest in Internet and social media trends and issues, all lessons will be updated annually and new materials for each grade category will be provided to schools.

We encourage you to review the resources that will be used to educate yourself on matters of social media and Internet safety and to engage in discussions at home about how students can and do engage on the Internet.

Should you have any questions, concerns or suggestions on this matter please discuss them with your school's principal or classroom teacher.

Thank you for your continued efforts as we strive to prepare our students for the ever-evolving world of the Internet, and social media in particular.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lucy Warren'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Lucy Warren

Assistant Director of Education-Programs (Eastern Region)



APPENDIX A

Topics and Resources for Internet and Social Media Safety

Before the end of the 2014-15 school year, all schools must have covered three key focus areas.

For Kindergarten to Grade 3 the topics to be discussed are:

- ✓ Digital Etiquette
- ✓ Rights and Responsibilities
- ✓ Digital Communications

For Grade 4 to Grade 6 the topics to be discussed are:

- ✓ Digital Access
- ✓ Digital Commerce
- ✓ Digital Literacy

For Grade 7 to Grade 12 the topics to be discussed are:

- ✓ Digital Law
- ✓ Digital Health and Wellness
- ✓ Digital Security

* Specific recommended lesson plans arranged by grade levels are available as part of the Action Plan provided to teachers and administrators. For more information, please contact your school administration.

The three compulsory resources for schools are:

- www.mediasmarts.ca - A Canadian not-for-profit charitable organization for digital and media literacy. Their vision is that children and youth have the critical thinking skills to engage with media as active and informed digital citizens.
- www.youthprivacy.ca - A site available from the youth privacy section of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada website. Here you will find a variety of resources and tools that have been designed for Canadian educators and parents/guardians.
- www.common sense media.org - A resource dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice needed to thrive in a world of media and technology.

Further, schools and teachers are encouraged to discuss relevant lessons from any of the following resources:

- www.netsmart.org – A resource provided for parents/guardians, educators and youth from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
- www.cybertip.ca/app/en - A resource operated by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, the site's mandate is to protect children from online sexual exploitation.
- www.reallifeonline.ca - An Ontario resource with aims to educate children to be safe and healthy by applying real life behaviours to life online.
- www.kidsintheknow.ca – A safety program designed to empower children and reduce their risk of victimization with a focus on self-esteem and critical problem-solving skills.



APPENDIX B
Grades 7 to 12 Permission Slip
Lesson: Sexting/ Chat (Digital Health + Wellness/ Security)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Before the end of the 2014-15 school year, your child will be participating in classroom discussions on issues of the Internet and social media safety. As part of those discussions, under the theme of Digital Health and Wellness and associated Security, a lesson concerning sexting and Internet chat will be covered. These lessons will involve a national news program and cover real-life examples of the consequences and dangers of certain methods of communicating. The material and associated discussion may at times be very frank and cover matters of a sexual nature.

Sexting/ Chat (Digital Health + Wellness/ Security)

The Fifth Estate: "The Sextortion of Amanda Todd"

<http://www.cbc.ca/player/Shows/Shows/the+fifth+estate/Season+39/ID/2418638011/>

We encourage you to review the material to be presented and be prepared to have a household discussion either before and/or after the presentation in class.

In order to facilitate these discussions, we ask that you agree for your child to participate in this class.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you understand and approve that this material will be reviewed and presented in the presence of your child in a classroom setting in order to begin a discussion on the issues of sexting and Internet chat.

Please return the portion below to your child's teacher

I, _____, understand that my child (_____) will be participating in discussions on the issue of sexting, chat and Internet safety as part of Digital Health and Wellness/Security education. I have reviewed the information above and am comfortable with my child participating in this discussion.

Parental/ Guardian Signature

Date

