



St Anthony de Padua Catholic School develops life-long learners who live their faith through stewardship and are committed to Catholic virtues and academic excellence.

March 7th, 2019

Dear St Anthony Families ,

Last year, Cathie Bledsoe, a youth educator with the Indiana Crimes Against Children (ICAC), spoke with students, teachers, and parents about internet safety, gossip, and bullying. As we begin a new school year, I would like to review some of what she covered as well as some of our own policies at St. Anthony de Padua school. As students continue to navigate music, movies, television, and social media that send messages counter to our virtues and values, students are often unaware of the harmful and lasting consequences a poor decision can have upon themselves and others. Please consider the following and have a conversation with your son or daughter appropriate to your individual circumstance.

Games and Apps

- Many games and apps have minimum age requirements. Many children are playing games and apps which are not appropriate to their age group. Individuals often do not pay attention to or heed the age requirements in the “terms of use”.
- Students should never share passwords or log-in credentials with friends.
- Children should not share personal information with online contacts. There are games and apps in which children can communicate with other players, many of which may be adults disguised as other children.. Ms. Bledsoe stressed the importance of not sharing information outside of the game. This includes seemingly innocuous information such grade level or weekend plans.

Pictures and Messaging

- Pictures posted, tagged, and shared can be traced to locations and other people. Strangers can use pictures to find other pictures and personal information about people in the photos.
- Once a picture or text is sent, you lose all control of what happens to it.
- Sending inappropriate pictures, even by children, is considered distribution of child pornography - a felony.
- If your child receives an inappropriate picture or text, you should immediately take a screenshot to share with school officials, or if necessary, law enforcement.



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School Involvement

- Activity outside of the school day, such as comments made in texts or on-line, that impacts the learning environment is considered a distraction to the learning environment. School officials are obligated to
- intervene when activity outside the school day impacts the learning and well being of the students in the school.
- School officials can search backpacks, desks, and lockers at anytime and for any reason.

Gossip

- Gossip and rumors, done in person or on-line, are damaging and have consequences.
- Again, when these impact the school community, school officials will intervene.
- Students that hear concerning rumors or gossip should immediately speak to a trusted adult.
- Students should not pass gossip or rumors along to peers.
- Parents and school officials must help children not spread gossip by offering words or statements to help shut it down, such as:
 - I don't want to talk about that.
 - That doesn't seem right.
 - We shouldn't get involved.
 - If you are concerned about that you should speak to them or an adult.

Bullying is defined by three characteristics:

- an action or statement intended to cause harm or embarrassment
- is repeated or there is a threat of future aggression
- an imbalance of power (either an imbalance in the number of individuals causing harm or in the physical or social stature of those involved)
- There are three parties involved: the bully, victim, and bystanders.
- It can be physical, verbal, non-verbal, emotional, social, gossip, and/or done electronically
- Bystanders have they most power to intervene by talking to an adult and/or standing up to the bully.

Harassment consists of:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when made by any student
- Racial slurs, innuendoes, or name calling when made by any student to another student



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- Repeated and/or unwelcome verbal or physical conduct made by any student to another student