

December 14, 2006

Dear Keeneyville School District Parents:

I would like to share with you some concerns about student use of MySpace, an Internet Web site. We have experienced conflicts among students that have started or been accelerated through the use of MySpace. These conflicts, often referred to as Internet bullying, disrupt the learning process and disturb our learning environment.

MySpace requires that users be at least 14 years of age and directs individuals not to give identifying information. Unfortunately many children do not adhere to these regulations. Or, some children have two accounts: one they share with their parents, the other they don't. MySpace, and other sites like it, are not censored. Last year the Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported that in 1,200 cases the Internet was used by adults to lure children. MySpace is the third most visited site on the Internet.

I offer three suggestions:

1. Talk to your child about the dangers of Internet sites such as MySpace. The dangers of these sites include:
  - a. having your identity stolen,
  - b. having your personal information exposed to all who use the Internet,
  - c. being exposed to pornographic material,
  - d. being exposed to predators,
  - e. spending an exorbitant amount of time on the Internet and ignoring other interests, and
  - f. having your messages interpreted by others as threats.
2. Monitor and ascertain what sites your child visits on the Internet. It is wise to have your Internet hook-up located in a "public" area of your home. A computer is fine for a child's bedroom but, not if the computer is hooked up to the Internet.
3. Speak to your child about what is appropriate for posting on the Internet.

The following sites may be of assistance to you in your efforts to keep your child safe while using the Internet:

- NetSmartz (<http://www.netsmartz.org/>) provides a wealth of information for anyone interested in keeping children safe online,
- MySpace ([www.myspace.com/Modules/Common/Pages/SafetyTips.aspx#](http://www.myspace.com/Modules/Common/Pages/SafetyTips.aspx#)) provides parent safety tips including detailing how to remove a teen's profile,
- WebWise Kids ([http://www.wiredwithwisdom.org/parent\\_resources.asp](http://www.wiredwithwisdom.org/parent_resources.asp)) provides some basic information on internet safety,
- BlogSafety (<http://www.blogsafety.com>) provides an interactive forum to discuss online safety,
- Safeteens.com (<http://www.safeteens.com/>) includes a link to a Spanish Language (En Español: Seguridad para los Jovenes En Autopista de la informacion).

Thank you for the attention you have afforded this issue.

Respectfully,

Dr. Carol J. Auer  
Superintendent