



Dear Parents of Children in Grades K–8,

Student and faculty use of technology in the course of daily instruction has grown significantly in recent years. As of the 2020–21 academic year, students in Grades K–2 have their own assigned iPads. All Grade 3 and 4 students have a dedicated iPad for use within their classrooms and occasional take-home use. All students Grades 5–8 have dedicated iPads as part of the school's ePack 1:1 program. Students use dozens of software and online tools carefully curated by their teachers to promote, enhance and extend learning.

Many of these online tools and services require users, in our case students and teachers, to submit some personal information in order to establish accounts. This personal information generally consists of the student's first and last name and their school email address.

Federal law, specifically the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), requires that children under 13 years of age must have verifiable parental consent to use online services that collect personal information. COPPA also permits a school to gather consent from parents on behalf of its students, thus eliminating the need for parents to provide consent and establish accounts individually with each of the service providers.

Students will be expected to use online services — as chosen by their teachers — that offer compelling educational features. Our ever-changing list of online services is available via the Under Age 13 Services list and includes an overview of their curricular use, intended audience and links to each provider's *Privacy Policy* and *Terms of Use*.

Steps have been taken to address the issue of privacy when using these services, including our own internal approval system. While no vendor will offer an ironclad guarantee of complete and perpetual security, the *Terms of Service* and *Privacy Policy* statements for the vendors listed have been vetted closely — as are updates and changes to them — to verify that appropriate and customary security and privacy measures are in place to protect those using the service. For example, we will not approve services that require personal student information, such as a home address, phone number or other personal information not deemed appropriate to the service purpose.

When possible, the school works with third-party services on using branded or private label versions of these services to segregate the school user base from users at large. For example, the school uses a unique Google Apps for Education system that presents no advertisements and restricts students from using services not deemed age-appropriate. These branded or private label services offer the school a greater measure of control and choice about what levels of access we provide and to whom.

I believe it is in our collective best interest as a learning community to approach potentially sensitive matters like this one as openly and transparently as possible. As a veteran teacher, administrator and parent, I believe that access to these services truly supports good teaching by providing students with sophisticated tools that address individual learners. I also believe that learning, living and working in these times demands that students and teachers take advantage of electronic tools that support — among others — the school's Goal 2: "A deep respect for intellectual values," in particular, with faculty who "utilize a variety of teaching and learning strategies that recognizes the individual needs of the students."

If you have questions about particular vendors or are not comfortable giving your consent for one or more services, kindly contact me, Alexa Johnson or Kevin Brenner.

Thank you for your time and your thoughtful participation in the life of the school.

Howard Levin
Director of Educational Innovation