



February 2018

Dear Eagle Ridge Parents,

Ensuring the online safety of children is becoming increasingly important in our digitally connected society. Children naturally share with each other what they learn, and favourite online apps spread quickly among student communities. It's important that teachers and parents work together to keep our students informed, confident, and safe when online.

Each year we see Eagle Ridge student at-home use of "social" apps/websites creep down into lower and lower age groups – occasionally (and disturbingly) as low as grade 2 and grade 1. It is important to help develop appropriate online behaviours within our children.

Did You Know?

Used at home by many Eagle Ridge students...

Games/apps :

Fortnite, Minecraft, Roblox, Movie Star Planet, Animal Jam, Clash Royale, Clash of Clans, .io Games (agar.io, slither.io ...)

Social networking sites/apps:

Facebook, Tik Tok, Snapchat, Instagram, KIK, Twitter, Skype, WhatsApp, WeChat ...

Video viewing sites/apps:

Youtube, Vimeo ...

Also...

13 Years – the minimum age requirement in the Terms of Service for most social networking sites/apps. We advise parents to follow these terms, which are in place for good reason.

I advise that ALL of the above services are NOT appropriate for unsupervised access by K-5 students. Read below for more information, specifically re: Minecraft.

Following is some information and parent resources to help develop strong digital citizenship habits and help keep children safer when online.

If you allow your child to use social apps/sites/games (where they can communicate with other people), please consider the following approach:

- sit down with your child and set up the app/site access together
- learn the privacy settings of each app/site
- always have access to your child's username and password for each app/site
- talk to your child frequently in a safe and open manner, including discussions about the positives and dangers of each app/site

Please also consider the following when allowing your child to choose games/sites/apps on the Internet:

- **Violence** - does the activity have simulated violence? FPS (first person shooter) games and games with gory graphics are increasingly available on many games sites. We recommend you guide your child away from any such activity.
- **Advertising** - does the activity have inappropriate advertising for K-5 aged children? On certain game sites, inappropriate advertising is frequent and disturbing. It's best to check carefully the



sites your child is using. It is usually worth the cost of buying an app, to ensure a quality, safer, ad-free experience.

- **Chat, Screen Names, Social Interaction** – within many online activities there is a “chat” component and an ability to choose a screen name. Along with this comes potential for inappropriate communications and onscreen vulgarity. Check your child’s activities carefully to make sure they see things appropriate for their age. Frequently monitor who your child is playing games with or speaking to when they are online.
- **Multiplayer Online Platforms** - including world-creating games such as **Roblox** and **Minecraft**. For K-5 aged children, I discourage unsupervised multi-player online activities that allow interaction with anonymous users. Alternatively, you could closely supervise, or investigate single-player models, at-home servers, and parental controls. Please be aware that many of these measures are not fool-proof and nothing can replace a parent’s active participation or observation of their child’s activities.
- **Youtube, Netflix & Vimeo** – the good news – you can find a video about nearly anything you want these days. The danger – Youtube and Vimeo are full of content that’s not appropriate for K-5 aged children. Access to these tools should be supervised and guided – we recommend no unsupervised “surfing” in these apps/sites. Please consider **Youtube Kids** instead.

We hope all Eagle Ridge parents will regularly take a few minutes to talk to their child about their online activities. Make sure to ask about the websites they visit, the apps they use (iOS or Android), and any online accounts they might have. Take time to read the **Terms of Use** on the app/website for appropriate age of use. Also, make sure you record the username/email account/passwords used for logging in for each app and website, to ensure access for monitoring.

Citizenship, as we know, is important both online and offline. Keeping informed and having open and honest communication with your child about their online activities is the best way to keep your child safe and develop strong digital citizenship habits.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards,

Mr. Rick Botero
Eagle Ridge Digital Literacy
rbotero@sd43.bc.ca

Parent Resources – Online Safety and Digital Citizenship:

School District 43	http://www.sd43.bc.ca/Resources/DigitalCitizenship/Pages/ParentResources.aspx
Media Smarts	http://mediasmarts.ca/parents
Common Sense Media	http://www.common sense media.org/parent-concerns
UK Safer Internet	http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers
Kids In The Know	http://www.kidsintheknow.ca/app/en/parents-educational tools
Cyberwise.org	http://www.cyberwise.org
Sue Scheff blog (Parent Advocate)	http://suescheff.com