



Calgary Board of Education

**BALMORAL SCHOOL
TRADITIONAL LEARNING CENTRE 5-8**

220 16th Ave N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2M 0H4 Telephone: (403)777-7330 Fax: (403)777-7339
E-mail: <http://schools.cbe.ab.ca/b601/>

November 26, 2010

Dear Parents:

This letter is to inform you of our concerns about the use of FACEBOOK by our students at Balmoral. More and more students are using social networking sites to talk with their peers and, unfortunately, this can lead to students saying things that they often would not say in a face to face situation. It is often the less personal and removed situation that on-line discussions present that give students a false sense that they will not be held accountable for their actions. We have suspended students for inappropriate use of the internet, including Facebook or MSN messaging.

Harassment and/or cyber bullying is becoming more and more of a concern across Canada. Research tells us that 17% of school age students say that they use chat rooms to be mean to others and get away with it. Many children think that the internet is anonymous and that they won't get caught and so they feel that they can say anything they like to anyone.

34% of school aged children have been bullied

44% of grade 4 students have been bullied

27% of bullying incidents were done over the Internet

Children who are targeted on-line have no place of refuge because the harassment can happen constantly, even at home which used to be a safe zone, and can reach a greater number of students instantly. If they have to stop using technology in order to get away from such harassment then they become even more isolated from all peers.

Children need guidance from the adults in their lives to help them to process and filter what they encounter on the internet. Without supervision and regulation from parents, teachers, and other adults in their lives, they can make bad choices which can lead them to trouble. Please take this opportunity to discuss this matter and the concerns of inappropriate use of the internet with your child. I would highly recommend that you look at your child's Facebook account to see what they have posted. Also, should you choose to allow your child to continue to have a Facebook account, I recommend that you monitor it on a regular basis. It is very reasonable and appropriate for parents to have the log in and password for any social network site that their children are members of in order to watch over what is being shared and said. Nothing is more effective than adult involvement to help teach children good judgment and the critical thinking skills they need to make wise on-line decisions.

The following are some strategies that are recommended for parents to follow in order to keep their own and other children safe:

- **BE AWARE** of what your children are looking at, who they are talking to, what they are saying, etc. when they are on the computer. This will include knowing how to access any profiles that they have on such sites as Facebook and Myspace and knowing the passwords to check these profiles.

- Create rules about time spent on the computer and how that time can be allotted.
- Keep the computer in a common room where you can be monitoring how it is being used. Computers in children's bed rooms, or in rooms with the door closed is not a good idea.
- Talk to your children about what they are seeing and what they are reading and if things concern you, report them to the school and potentially to the police.

The website www.media-awareness.ca/english/parents/index.cfm is a very good place to find out more information about how to effectively monitor the risks and to be informed about the Internet.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hanna
Assistant Principal
jjhanna@cbe.ab.ca
777-7330 ex.2223

Elaine Knudtson
Principal
elknudtson@cbe.ab.ca
777-7330 ex. 2123