

BLOOMINGDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS



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DU PAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 13

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are very excited about the many wonderful things that students are doing with their Chromebooks. The devices have opened up avenues for creating, problem solving and critical thinking. They have also opened up opportunities which have caused concerns for some parents.

District 13 believes that online safety is an important component of overall student safety. When Chromebooks are being used in the classrooms, students pursue online learning activities under the direct supervision of their teachers. Our recently updated Technology Scope and Sequence includes explicit lessons promoting Internet safety, online "netiquette," and Cyberbullying prevention for children in all grade levels.

A recent technology concern that has been brought to our attention is the trend of students using their Chromebooks in loosely supervised or unsupervised situations outside of school. While we want students to be inquisitive and creative when using technology, we also want to make sure that they are using online resources safely on their academic devices.

The Internet as a medium affords new avenues of communication and socialization. One of the tools that is available to our students is Google Hangouts. We have seen Google Hangouts used as a powerful academic tool. It allows absent students to participate in class work, students to collaborate on group projects, and teachers to connect with experts and educators around the world to enhance instructional opportunities. By making Google Hangouts available for students, we aim to teach students about safe and appropriate communication and online learning. Our current setting for Google Hangouts gives permission for students to communicate only with other users in the Bloomington School District 13 domain. They have the option to ignore requests to chat with other peers, if desired. We are hoping that through this closed environment, students can practice safe Social Media communication while working on academic assignments.

Our best advice for parents about how to help your child become a safe digital citizen is to speak to your child directly, make your behavioral expectations clear, be involved with his or her virtual life just as you are with other daily activities, make sure you have access to any sites your child frequents and can see all the published content, and actively supervise your child when he or she uses technology.

Working together, we can teach your child, both in school and at home, how to be a happy, healthy, safe, and appropriate user of modern communications technology. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We are here to help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jon Bartelt', is written over a large, stylized blue scribble that resembles a signature or initials.

Dr. Jon Bartelt, Superintendent
Bloomington School District #13