



"Together We Learn"

SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 23 (CENTRAL OKANAGAN)
1940 Underhill St., Kelowna, BC V1X 5X7
Tel. (250) 470-3256, Fax (250) 860-9799, www.sd23.bc.ca

January 23, 2014

Dear Parents,

Concerns re: Student Use of Social Media

Recently, some students who are users of a social media application named "KIK" have received unsolicited messages of a troubling nature from anonymous sources.

KIK is a free messaging application for smart phones and other devices (including tablets and iPods) which makes it easy to send and receive photos as well as traditional text messages free of charge. Since KIK can be accessed through Wi-Fi, users do not need phone service or a data plan to send and receive photos or traditional text messages. KIK carries a 17+ rating, but is becoming increasingly popular with students in our schools.

The RCMP were contacted on various occasions this week because several students received messages through their KIK user accounts that included graphic sexual messages and images from an unknown source. Within these messages, there are embedded links which redirect the user to websites containing pay-for-use games, pornography, or chat rooms with persons unknown.

A potential threat to safety exists when students share their private usernames, e-mail address, or personal information on public social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, Tumblr, etc.). Once that information is obtained, anyone has the ability to send them a message, using KIK, SnapChat, or even e-mail.

Please note we currently do not have the network technology to block this traffic on our guest wireless network.

Some tips from the RCMP regarding cyber-safety include:

Prevention: If your child uses social media...

- Have a family plan regarding internet and social media use.
- Know and monitor your child's social media use.
- Assist your child to select appropriate privacy/user settings.
- Ensure your child doesn't give out personal information.
- Use the security features of the website or application.

Intervention: If your child receives an inappropriate message, teach them...

- Don't respond, forward or show it to peers, but report it immediately to a trusted adult.
- Save/keep the message and provide to an adult or authority (screen shot, save, back-up).
- Block the person/number/username.
- If the problem occurs on a Social Media site with Terms of Service, then "REPORT" to that site (e.g., Facebook has a report abuse, spam, or policy violation).

Action: If you think the message is illegal, a viable threat of danger, or risk to personal safety then report it to your local RCMP.

For further research and resources on this topic, visit:

- Cybertip.ca
- www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca
- NeedHelpNow.ca

Sincerely,

Hugh Gloster
Superintendent of Schools