



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to you today in hopes of providing some information and education around some social media use we are currently seeing at our school.

Social media can be used as a very powerful tool of communication, with many benefits, and many risks. In my personal experience with youth at the middle school level, the top two sites our students visit are Instagram and Snapchat, although there are many more.

A quick summary: It is important to note that these sites are always evolving with new features, and although these two particular guides are a few years old, they provide a good synopsis of the potential risks involved.

- Instagram
 - https://www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/instagram_guide.pdf
- Snapchat
 - https://www.connectsafely.org/wp-content/uploads/snapchat_guide.pdf

It has been brought to our attention that we have a large number of our students who potentially own or who are following a few Instagram accounts that are used to: **rate our students, rate our students in a form of relationship with another individual (called ships), provide "roasts" about faculty, and are sharing photos of one another, sometimes taken without acknowledgement of the owner from public websites such as Instagram or Facebook.** These accounts often have a GMS reference in the account title. This type of social media use certainly opens the door to feelings of inferiority, online bullying, and can lead to a negative school culture where our students or staff do not feel safe and welcome.

Our Social Media Policy for SD23 can be found at

<http://www.sd23.bc.ca/Board/Policies/Section%204%20%20Students/486.pdf>

I would like to highlight the 6 student responsibilities in particular on page 2 in the policy in hopes of establishing a safe and caring environment for our students.

In light of all this information, I encourage open and honest conversations with your child about appropriate social media use and how we can encourage a positive, kind, and supportive online presence. We are aware of these current accounts and will be looking to remove them, as well as continue to provide education around safe digital citizenship. Thank you for your support. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Mr. Robbie Franklin
Vice Principal
Glenrosa Middle School