

Internet safety

What are the concerns about access?

The North Vancouver School Board believes access and use of technology is an integral component of current learning and working environments. However, the potential for misuse of the Internet exists, even with due diligence. Sending or receiving inappropriate information (e.g. racist, slanderous, pornographic, threatening, sexist, confidential, etc.) or using chat rooms or polling booths for this purpose is possible.

Sophisticated search capabilities and easy access to web sites provide a wide range of information at your child's fingertips. Internet contact with students by strangers with questionable motives is also a major concern, particularly with chat rooms.

What is the North Vancouver School District doing to reduce the risk of inappropriate use of technology?

Internet access for all schools in B.C. is provided by the Provincial Learning Network (PLNet), a network supported from Victoria. PLNet provides virus protection service and limited blocking of inappropriate sites, such as pornography.

School district responsibilities

- To provide age appropriate instruction for students on responsible, appropriate use of the Internet.
- To make every reasonable attempt to ensure appropriate use of the Internet by students.
- To investigate suspected misuse and provide consequences for misuse of district resources.
- To encourage parents and students to complete a Technology Access and Use Agreement form as part of mandatory consent for student access to the Internet at school.

Student responsibilities

- To follow guidelines set out by the North Vancouver School District and his/her parents regarding Internet use.
- To make responsible decisions around his/her use of technology and the Internet.

Parent responsibilities

- Instruct your child to never give out identifying information - home address, school name, or telephone number - in a public message such as chat or bulletin boards and be sure you are dealing with someone you and your child know and trust before providing personal information via e-mail.
- To instruct your child regarding boundaries of what is considered acceptable use of the Internet by your family.
- To be aware of the risks in accessing the Internet.
- To emphasize to your child the importance of personal safety in Internet use and that people online may not be who they seem. Because you can't see or even hear the person, it would be easy for someone to misrepresent him or herself. Thus, someone indicating that "she" is a "12-year-old girl" could in reality be a 40 year-old man.
- To monitor and supervise your child's use of the Internet when not in a school setting.
- To be aware that children can access the Internet from almost any computer (home, friends, or school).

Suggestions for parents

- Place home computers in a high traffic area in the home, not your child's bedroom.
- Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use. Discuss and post them near the computer as a reminder.
- Make casual checks of your child's work while they are using the Internet.
- Monitor the sites visited by your children through logs and bookmarks on your computer.
- Consider 'filtering' software which can block access to objectionable sites, words or phrases.