myspace.com a place for friends

Help | SignUp

The Web MySpace Search

and Xanga are popular with Clovis students

Blogs:

This profile is set to private. This user must add you as a friend to see his/her profile.

"On the other hand, it is kind of scary because sickos can copy the pictures on your MySpace page and put them on their page. A lot of girls put pictures of themselves half-naked and old nasty guys probably love MySpace for this."

FROM PAGE 8

in the world. The article quotes Clovis West Deputy Principal Todd Bennett as saying, "There were issues with students who had signed the Code of Ethics and had inappropriate pictures on their MySpaces earlier this year. After being found guilty of defying the Code of Ethics, these students were punished." In the next edition of *The Cougar's Growl*, the editorial entitled "Schools reach too far to punish students" stated, "The online realm must be kept private from school eyes when it is accessed from the security of a home. The authority of a school must be restrained from encroaching upon the right to privacy of students."

It is important for students and parents to know that administrators in Clovis Unified follow up on any in-person or online threat to student safety or infractions of the District co-curricular code of ethics. Clovis Unified Associate Superintendent Dan Kaiser reiterates, "If a student incident becomes a school disruption then the school will act. If a student is under the District's co-curricular code of ethics and does something unbecoming for the group in which they are involved, we can and do apply the code and its consequences."

In February, members of the Clovis Unified Governing Board were asking similar questions at the regularly scheduled Board Technology Subcommittee Meeting. At this meeting, the committee heard a report from the Clovis Police Department about Internet safety.

Board members asked District administrators to consult with district attorneys to understand how the school district may handle problems between students when comments or pictures have been posted on MySpace. Administrator for Technology Chuck Philips commented, "The board members' main concern about MySpace and other online blog areas is for the safety of students in Clovis Unified."

Teachers in Clovis Unified reflect on the changes that have occurred with the advent of the Internet and various developing blog technologies. Clovis West English teacher Karen Kyer shares, "MySpace, as with any other tool like Xanga or instant messaging or email or Ma Bell or US Postal Service, is a means of connecting. I like the opportunities provided. Each has advantages. Times have moved us and the world to faster and more cryptic writings via email, Instant Messaging and such. Sites that offer blogging encourage me to think that people will get back to writing out and exploring their thoughts; though I'd prefer that people would choose to share them with those they have chosen as 'friends.'"

She adds, "I blog for myself and to model the risks in writing people take. Hard to believe after students spend the day together, talk with each other on their cell phones, meet after school at a local fast food place or school sports event, that they then go online to talk, blog and comment some more. But, they are social beings who value their family and friends above all else and want to be connected. Sometimes I will write in my blog to respond to a situation in the day or an idea that came to my mind while at an event. Avoiding the negative aspects of blogs and MySpace comes down a choice. My advice to students is to make sites only open to friends - people they actually know, and to post only what they want to represent them."

The purpose of this article and the other articles about MySpace is to create a conversation among students, parents, teachers, District administrators, Governing Board members and community members to keep the students of Clovis Unified safe in the online world. We have set up a special e-mail account that anyone can email if they would have ideas or comments. The e-mail account is blogcomments@cusd.com (if you would like a response, include your name and your Clovis school connection).

There is also a section of the Clovis Unified Web site now devoted to online safety - specifically in regards to MySpace. It can be accessed at www.clovisusd.k12.ca.us and provides an anonymous way to share thoughts.

Photo special to CUSD *Today* by Ron Webb.

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Safety Tips for Internet (and MySpace.com) for students

Compiled by Rob Darrow, Online Learning Specialist

Special to CUSD *Today*

The Top 10 Tips for Students to be Safe on the Internet (and MySpace, too)!

(Collected from students in Clovis Unified and online safety Web sites)

1. Keep your identity private. If you're in any type of public forum or blog like MySpace or Xanga, avoid giving out your real name, your mailing address, your telephone number, the name of your school or any other information that could help someone determine your actual identity. The same applies for your family and friends.

2. Be anonymous. Avoid postings that could enable a stranger to locate you. That includes your last name, the name of your school, sports teams, the towns you live in, your family, friends and where you hang out.

3. Never get together with someone you just "meet" online. The biggest danger to your safety is if you get together with someone you "meet" online. Remember, you never know for certain if people you meet online are who they say they are. (If you do decide it is safe to meet someone in person, take an adult or parent along for the first meeting and meet in a public place like a mall.)

4. Avoid online people who make you uncomfortable. Never respond to email, chat comments, instant messages or other messages that are hostile, inappropriate or make you feel uncomfortable.

5. "Google" your name. Put your name in a search engine and see how other people can identify you (or check out Zabasearch.com, which is a national search for people). Delete the MySpace account or the files that have your name on it or request that your name be removed from the website where it appears.

6. Post positive comments only. Negative comments about other people always seem to get back to the other person.

7. Photos: Think before posting. What's uploaded to the Net can be downloaded by anyone and passed around or posted online pretty much forever.

8. Do not believe everything you read online. People you meet online can be anything or anyone.

9. Negative postings about you. Know when to act on a posting that someone else posts about you and when to ignore it.

10. Tell an adult about inappropriate online interactions. Parents, teachers and other adults can help to make sure these types of interactions don't happen again.

Safety guidelines for parents

(From Safeteen.com — www.safeteens.com/guidelines_parents.htm)

■ Put the family computer in a public place in your house such as the kitchen or family room.

■ Be open with your children and encourage them to talk with you about what they do on the Internet.

■ Talk with your children about what they can and cannot do online.

■ Be reasonable and set reasonable expectations.

■ Learn everything you can about the Internet. Enroll in a Clovis Adult School course about the use of the Internet.

■ Learn about blocking, filtering and ratings applications. There are online services that rate web sites for content as well as filtering programs and browsers that empower parents to block the types of sites they consider to be inappropriate.

"I use MySpace because it shows my personality. I can customize it with the layout I like, the songs I like and can write what I want. It's fun to share your favorite pictures with people without having to meet them in person."

Useful Internet Safety Web sites

Safe Kids/Safe Teens/Blog Safety - www.safekids.com and www.safeteens.com

SafeTeens.Com and the online safety project are operated by Larry Magid, a broadcaster and syndicated columnist and author of numerous articles about online safety.

NetSmartz - www.netsmartz.org

NetSmartz is an interactive, educational safety resource for students, parents and educators from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Wired Safety - www.wiredsafety.org

WiredSafety provides help, information and education to Internet users of all ages. Includes links to recent stories and other Internet safety advice.

Yahoo Safety Tips for Parents and Students - http://yahooligans.yahoo.com/parents

Includes information for safe websites for kids, blocking and filtering, family browsing and tips for kids and parents.

The FBI Parent Guide/Kid's Guide to Internet Safety - www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm / www.fbi.gov/fbikids.htm

Excellent information for parents and students from the FBI.

Would you like to add to this conversation in Clovis Unified? Send an email to: blogcomments@cusd.com or visit our website at www.clovisusd.k12.ca.us.

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