

PARENT INFORMATION

RUTLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

TEXT MESSAGING- A NEW FORUM FOR BULLYING

Text Messaging certainly has its advantages:

- allows constant contact with family & friends
- can be cheaper than calling
- people can't hear and don't know what is being said
- offers privacy
- can be done anywhere
- faster & easier than other forms of communication

Whatever did we do before this capability?

Text messaging also creates real concerns:

- removes social cues that help guide behaviour
- reduces inhibitions to cross social boundaries
- is so quick and immediate, responses are often sent out without thinking
- hurtful and harassing texts are becoming more common place
- students often use someone else's phone for inappropriate texting, diverting the blame
- texts and photos easily become "public" when they are forwarded from "friend" to friend

As technology becomes more advanced and accessible, schools find themselves dealing with an increasing number of student issues around inappropriate texting. Advanced cell phones now have far more programs and abilities than what is considered appropriate for school (e.g. Facebook, texting, unlimited access to the internet). Many young students are not ready socially, emotionally, and even neurologically for all the adult tools ready at hand.



Children of all ages now own a personal phone.

LATEST STATISTICS

- 1 in 3 children 10-19 own a cell phone
- 1 in 4 children age 9-14 have experienced net bullying or have participated in it themselves
- 1 in 5 children age 10-17 have received an inappropriate solicitation on-line
- 1 in 3 children age 10-17 have been contacted inappropriately by a stranger

DID YOU KNOW?

- * 95% of parents don't recognize the lingo kids use to let people know their parents are watching
- * 81% of parents of online youth say their kids aren't careful about giving out personal information online
- * 75% of youth who received an online threat or sexual solicitation did not tell their parents
- * 65% of parents believe kids do things online that they wouldn't want their parents to know about

BULLYING AND THE BRAIN

We have long known that preadolescence can be a very challenging time, both socially and emotionally—a time when sensitive feelings are easily hurt. But have you considered the effects of underdeveloped brains at this age? The wiring in preadolescent brains is not yet

completely connected, making it very difficult for children and teens to successfully plan ahead, weigh risks and rewards, and fully comprehend long-term consequences. Early adolescence is also a time when the brain's sensation-seeking chemicals are at their peak. This,

along with an inability to fully control impulses, makes children at this age very vulnerable to making foolish and hurtful mistakes that may have long-term effects. This is all the more reason why parents need to be cautious of their children's use of technology.

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Grade 4-6 parents are asked to sign their student's agenda indicating that they have received this letter and read the RLE electronics Policy noted on the bottom of this page.

Thank you for your support!



Over 122 million text messages are sent daily in Canada

Does your child really need a text option on their phone?



Incidents of "Text Bullying" are increasing daily.

Things to Consider about Cyber-Bullying ...

- Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- No place, not even a bedroom, provides sanctuary from the intrusion of a threatening text message or an abusive e-mail
- Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe
- Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can often seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages (POS—Parents Over Shoulder, TUL-Tell You Later) make it difficult for adults to recognize potential threats

More Parent Information can be found at....

textEd.ca netbullies.com thinkquest.org antibullying.net cybertip.ca

netlingo.com protectchildren.ca mobility.protectchildren.ca

Did You Know 65% of our communication is in our tone of voice and body language, therefore written words alone (i.e. texting) are often misinterpreted

RLE ELECTRONICS & CELL PHONE POLICY

We have a growing number of students who bring cell phones to school—often hidden in pockets and backpacks, then brought out secretly in the classroom, washrooms and on the playground. Unfortunately, we have had to deal with an increasing number of "bullying" issues resulting from hurtful texting. Although these incidents often occur outside of school, the issues that result are brought to school and influence negative student behaviour.

Students should NOT bring electronic devices, games, iPods, iPhones to school—they are known to be the cause of great distraction, and there is always the concern that such costly items may go missing. Due to privacy concerns, these items should never be used to take pictures at school. The school cannot take responsibility for the safety of these items.

Students are asked to leave them at home.

Cell phones should only be at school if there is a family emergency. In these cases, a note should come to school informing us of the need. The phone will be the responsibility of the family, and must be turned off and stay in a backpack throughout the day. If a student is found inappropriately using a cell phone at school, it will be taken and stored at the office, and will only be returned to a parent.

A student phone is available at the school with teacher permission. Please make your scheduling and playdate arrangements at home in the morning so that students do not feel the need to contact you during the school day.