



Minnetonka Public Schools
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Dear Parents:

As a national leader in using technology to expand learning opportunities for students, the Minnetonka School District is proud to partner with Google Apps for Education (<http://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/edu/k12.html>). Google Apps for Education is used by thousands of schools and universities worldwide to make available collaboration tools for students, which include email. Google Apps collaboration tools will make it possible for students to work together virtually on documents, presentations and projects via the web. Google Apps provide an online storage space for files, eliminating most needs for flash drives between home and school, and also integrating directly into Schoology allowing students to electronically submit assignments. Email accounts are required by many web-based educational tools, and also allow students and teachers to communicate and collaborate in a safe and structured manner with their class. Web-based learning tools provide free access to storytelling, concept mapping, video editing and visual presentation tools.

Student Google Apps Accounts

Beginning in fifth grade all Minnetonka students are issued a school Google Apps account for educational use. District staff and the School Board have carefully considered students' online safety in setting up the procedures and rules for student accounts. To ensure equal access for all students and comply with online safety laws protecting children 13 and under, the District will provide accounts to students in grades 5 – 9. Grades 10-12 students are encouraged to use personal email accounts and enter them in Skyward, but may request a district account if desired.

Acceptable Use

Before students receive accounts, the Media Center Specialist at your child's school will teach students how to access their account, who can see email messages, and how accounts may be used in compliance with our Acceptable Use Policy (<http://www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/policies/524.pdf>). Parents are also encouraged to talk with their child about online manners and safety. Throughout the year, your child may have assignments that are completed using tools like Google Docs and Google Sites and will receive instruction from teachers about the Google tool at that time.

Students should consider their school email as an extension of the classroom, subject to the same rules of respect and courtesy that we expect in school.

As you talk to your child about the acceptable use of email, you might use an analogy of adults' work and personal emails. Most employers ask that work email only be used for work, and employers have access to view and limit use of email to make sure it is used appropriately. The same will be true of school email accounts. All school emails are archived and retrievable for three years.

Restrictions for Student Google Apps accounts

All student Google App accounts will begin with each student's ID number followed by @student.mtka.org (e.g. 000012@student.mtka.org). Students can only receive emails from other Minnetonka teachers and students or approved domains (e.g. .gov, .edu and other district-approved educational sites). Students will have the ability to send emails to anyone (parents, grandparents, authors, etc.), but cannot receive replies; they will be blocked by our filters. We are taking this precaution to protect students from SPAM and from receiving emails from strangers.

Filtering of emails

School email accounts must comply with the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Student emails will be filtered, just as Internet access at school is filtered, to ensure student safety online. Every email sent and received from a school email account (whether from any home, school or public computer or mobile device) goes through filtering software that scans for language and images. Student email addresses will have restrictions on what can be received. Minnetonka uses very powerful filtering tools and makes every effort to block inappropriate content; however, technology is ever-evolving. If a student receives any inappropriate emails, they should be reported to an adult and forwarded to family.helpdesk@minnetonka.k12.mn.us

Opting-out of Google Apps Accounts

If you have concerns about your child having a Google Apps account, please contact your child's principal to discuss alternatives to web-based instructional and collaborative tools. If your child does not have access to a computer and/or Internet at home, please contact your school principal to discuss qualifications for assistance.

Please talk to your kids about online manners (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec04.pdf> pg 22)

- Politeness counts. We teach our kids to be polite offline; talk to them about being courteous online as well. Texting may seem fast and impersonal, yet courtesies like "pls" and "ty" (for please and thank you) are common text terms.
- Tone it down. Using all caps, long rows of exclamation points, or large bolded fonts is the online equivalent of yelling. Most people don't appreciate a rant.
- Cc: and Reply all: with care. Suggest that your kids resist the temptation to send a message to everyone on their contact list.
- Avoid chain letters. Most chain letters or emails are nuisances at best, and scams at worst. Many carry viruses or spyware. Ask your kids not to open or forward them.

For more cyber-safety tips, please visit our website:

<http://www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/administration/technology/internetsafety/Pages/default.aspx>.

Thank you for your support as we work to leverage collaboration tools for 21st century teaching and learning.

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