

News from Burr

Principal's Newsletter

January 2015

Dear Burr Community,

On, Wednesday, January 14, Detective Beth Irizarry conducted a workshop at Burr for both Burr and Dwight parents about electronic safety. She shared a lot of helpful tips about how to protect and monitor your child's interaction with electronic devices and content.

In terms of parental controls, she had a number of suggestions. They included having parents consult the website *wellresearchedreviews.com* to learn what computer monitoring software is most effective. Another program she recommended is *NetNanny* which helps you monitor internet access, block games or websites, set different criteria for age / maturity, and view instant messages. Additionally, Verizon and AT&T offer free content filters, the ability to block texts and picture messaging, and usage controls (which can be added for additional fees.) This will allow you to limit usage based on time of day and week and block numbers. Apple products such as IPODS, IPADS, etc. have parental controls that can be accessed through Apple or service providers. Google has safe search capability on its computer and mobile phones. YouTube has community guidelines, and Facebook and all social media sites have statements of rights and responsibilities. The minimum age for having a Facebook account is 13. Finally, Xbox has parental controls built into the interface. Detective Irizarry recommended consulting the book *Xbox for Dummies*.

Detective Irizarry had many additional resources for parents to help you set appropriate boundaries for your children. They include:

- *OnGuardOnline.gov* – This site contains practical tips for online usage.
- *CyberBully411.org* – This site contains resources for youth who have questions or have been targeted by online harassment.
- *ConnectSafely.org* – This site contains information for parents, teens, and educators.
- *NetSmartz.org* – This site contains interactive, educational safety from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. It includes good videos to show your children.
- *StaySafeOnline.org* – This site includes information about cyber security and safety awareness.

One other idea to consider (which many parents struggle with) is when to get your child a smartphone. While every household is different, Detective Irizarry encouraged all parents to think carefully about waiting.





On another note, we recently had a terrific parent discussion about the book *Mindset* by Carol Dweck. *Mindset* makes the case for the importance of a growth mindset over a fixed mindset in learning, work, and relationships. A growth mindset postulates that hard work as opposed to a fixed intelligence is what leads to success in life. Below are a few tips for cultivating a growth mindset at home. These suggestions are adapted from work shared by an elementary school in New Jersey with parents. They include:

- Help your child think about a time when they learned something new that was a stretch or challenging.
- Help your child see mistakes as new information or a step in the process of learning.
- “Help your child learn to hear their own fixed mindset voice.” (Ex. That guy is so smart. He doesn’t even have to try. Ex. This is hard. I’ll never get it.)
- “Help your child talk back to negative self-talk with a growth mindset.” (Ex. I know this will be hard, but I can do it.)
- “Model growth mindset at the breakfast/dinner table.” (Ex. Tell your child a time when you didn’t know how to answer a question. How did you learn the answer? Ex. Ask your children what opportunities do they have during the coming week for learning and growth.)
- “Avoid labels and give growth mindset praise.” (Ex. Avoid saying I’m a terrible cook, or I was never good at math.) “Praise and value effort, practice, self correction, and persistence. Don’t shelter your child from a failed task.”
- Ask questions about your child’s work through a growth mindset. (Ex. “How did you figure this out? What’s another way you could try this?”)

Trying this with my own children at home has proven to be very powerful and effective. As always, thank you for your continued support.

Warmly,

Jason