



CATHOLIC SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT

DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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May 7, 2009

Dear Parents—

I am writing today to ask for your help. We are becoming increasingly aware that the cell phones that help parents and students coordinate today's hectic schedules are also leading some students to use their phones in a highly inappropriate manner by sending sexually explicit or suggestive pictures and messages back and forth to their friends and others in a practice known as "sexting."

Talk to your student. Use this as a teachable moment to talk to them about cell phones and the Internet. Let them know using cell phones and the Internet isn't a right, it's a privilege, and that while you trust them, it's your job as a parent to supervise them on how to use these tools safely and properly.

Technology can be a wonderful thing. As educators, the power of the Internet to fuel students' imaginations and help them explore the world from their own home is both fascinating and humbling. The same is true with cell phones. Think of the convenience they've brought us, or the safety and security they afford us, as we drive along the freeway.

But technology is just a tool. How we use it and how our children use it makes all the difference in the world. In the wrong hands—or in untrained hands—the same Internet that brings us information at the speed of light can also bring unwanted intrusions into our homes, from predators who would exploit the innocence of children, to students, left unsupervised, who might be drawn to pornographic and other inappropriate websites.

This is a problem that the Catholic Schools Department takes very seriously. Students involved in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action, including expulsion from school. Families choose Catholic education because they want their children to learn about faith and values, not just academics. "Sexting" is not compatible with supporting and promoting that kind of environment and we simply will not tolerate such activities in our parish schools.

Creating a safe environment for students requires all of us—parents, teachers, staff and students—to work together. If you have questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact your school principal directly.

Thank you for your help.

In the peace of St. Francis and St. John Baptist de La Salle,

Dom Puglisi
Superintendent