



W. C. CUNNINGHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Justin May
Principal

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Dear Parents or Guardians:

Recently, our area has encountered a new and disturbing trend with students' use of social media. There have been numerous reports of students misusing websites for the sole intention to insult, demean, embarrass and harass fellow classmates. This has been primarily done by sharing inappropriate pictures and/or messages on various social media outlets.

Galena Park ISD, Harris County Precinct 2 Constables and Cunningham Middle School are working in conjunction to combat this new trend. We realize the importance of partnering with parents to keep all children safe. We are asking parents to become familiar with the types of social media available to kids. Also, it is very important that parents and guardians discuss responsible and appropriate use of social media with their children. The list of social media websites available to kids is ever expanding and not just limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, SapChat and KiK.

The following are some key points to address with your children:

- Ask about what type of social media they use and what kind of privacy settings are in place.
- Personal and private information shared through texts, images or videos may attract unwanted attention from cyber bullies or online predators.
- Deleting a post from social media does not erase the digital thumbprint; a community post is public by default and permanent. Nothing is ever completely erased from the Internet.
- A username does not ensure anonymity; never reveal personal and/or sensitive information.
- Discuss consequences of posting/uploading content that can be emotionally and physically damaging to other students.

Occasionally, serious threats are made on social media towards schools and/or individuals. In these instances, police can file for administrative subpoenas and track down users with accuracy. However, the District Attorney's Office will grant that subpoena only when a serious criminal act is being investigated. For this reason, we need to rely heavily on parents to report harassment, bullying and impersonating directly to social media websites themselves. In addition, any student found to be involved in and/or responsible for this type of negative behavior may receive consequences from his/her school when the behavior detracts from the educational environment and/or is determined that it occurred during school. Please aware that most of this activity is perpetrated on home computers or personal electronic equipment and this limits the schools ability to address the individuals responsible.

If you encounter this type of activity, we advise you to immediately notify the appropriate website so the account in question can be deactivated and/or investigated.

To report hacking, impersonation, harassment, bullying or hate and abusive accounts:

- Facebook: <http://facebook.com/help/>
- Twitter: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169998-reporting-abusive-behavior>
- Instagram: <http://help.instagram.com>
- Vine: <https://support.twitter.com/forms/vine>

Cunningham Middle School believes that through education and awareness, the misuse of social media and its harmful effects can be limited. CMS and Harris County Precinct 2 Constables are here to offer our parents support to provide education on how to monitor their child's activities on the Internet. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your school's administrative team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Justin May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Justin" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "May".

Justin May – Principal
W. C. Cunningham Middle School