

September 11, 2020

Dear AUSD Community,

As families we are all, by no choice of our own, spending an increased amount of time online. Last weekend's widely reported revelation of a viral video depicting a tragic and graphic actual suicide is a reminder of the need for us all to be very attentive to what our students are accessing and how they can practice good digital citizenship. Monitoring and limiting our kids' access to harmful, traumatizing, or exploitative content is a job that relies on the entire community.

On the district side, we have installed some safeguards on devices and platforms to deter students from accessing inappropriate or distracting content. For instance:

- If your child logs onto an **AUSD Google Chromebook** using an AUSD email account, Internet website access will be controlled by GoGuardian. This district-wide software prevents students from accessing several categories of inappropriate content, including pornography, drug-related information, opportunities for academic dishonesty, and sites that can cause computer viruses when contacted.
- If your child logs onto a **non-AUSD Google Chromebook** using an AUSD email account, the content filtering will also apply.
- If your child logs onto a **non-AUSD, non-Chromebook device** (e.g., a family member's laptop or iPad) using an AUSD email account, the filtering may not apply.

Until this week, AUSD's Chromebooks accepted "guest" log-ins, so that adults could also use the devices. Starting this week, we have limited Chromebooks to work only with alamedaunified.org and AUSD accounts.

For parent/guardian resources that can help you protect your child's online safety, we recommend:

- Commonsense Media: "[Privacy and Internet Safety](#)"
- Federal Trade Commission: "[Protecting Kids Online](#)"
- National Online Safety: "[10 Top Tips: Remote Learning for Children](#)"
- National Online Safety: "[Safe Remote Learning](#)"

As descriptions and videos about suicides, such as the one mentioned above, can be troubling for young people, we'd also like to remind you that we have information about detecting symptoms of suicidality, talking to your children about suicide, and preventing suicide on our website in several places, including:

- [AUSD Suicide Prevention Page](#)
- [COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#)

Please also know all AUSD students and their families have access to our Care Solace resource, which provides live 24/7 staffing to assist individuals in finding local mental health programs and counseling services. You can find information about accessing this free service on the [COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#) page.

We know that these can be hard and sad topics to discuss, but we encourage you to explore these resources. Many of our young people are experiencing unprecedented levels of stress and anxiety at this time and may in some cases be more vulnerable to ideas of self harm.

I would like to remind everyone that having children spend this much time online and away from our schools is not AUSD's ideal - not for our own children and not for your children. As such, we continue to thoughtfully explore ways of bringing students back for in-person instruction or support. We will provide more information about those explorations in the near future.

Respectfully,

Pasquale Scuderi
Superintendent