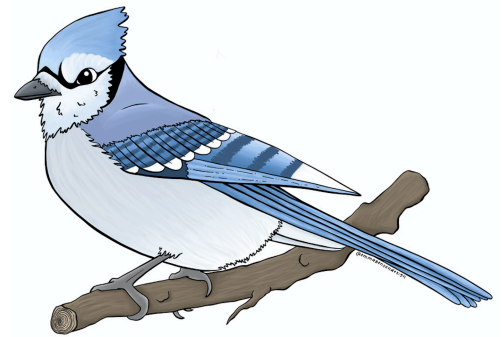


Brookside Elementary Principal's Message

2/25/20



Greetings Brookside Families,

Fifth Grade Band and Orchestra Concert: 2/26 at 7:00 p.m.

We look forward to you joining us for this concert that was rescheduled due to snow. Our fifth graders have been practicing and getting ready with the extra time. 😊

Cell Phones – Turned Off and Put Away

Many families choose to give their kids cell phones so they can be reached when not at home. We certainly respect this family decision. While at school, all students must have cell phones or other devices turned off and placed in their backpack (this includes our pick-up and drop-off times and Extended Care). Staff can give students access to school phones as needed. We appreciate your efforts to help your child understand and follow this policy.

Online Safety

On 2/12, Stephanie Thomas spoke to PTA members about online safety. There is certainly not enough space in this message to cover her comprehensive presentation informed by years in law enforcement. However, there are a few items I wanted to highlight for you here...

- Open Communication: do you regularly talk to your child about online safety? If not, *start now*. Make sure they know if anything seems questionable or negative, they should talk to you about it...even if they feel that they have done something wrong. Online predators can convince children that they will “get in trouble” or even get taken away from their homes for reporting escalating unsafe or grooming behavior. Open and ongoing communication with YOU is one of the best things to keep kids safe online. You should be aware of every account that your child has and know the passwords for each of them. Your child should understand and accept that you are able to, and it is right for you to, monitor all of their online activity.
- Parental Controls: There are many ways to set up “parental controls” that allow you to monitor and restrict your child’s access online. Some are inside individual apps; others involve apps that you can link to your own device.
- Sharing: kids today are shown many examples of people sharing their thoughts and lives online – this feels natural and normal to them. They often distinguish between the online world and “real life” and believe that what happens online doesn’t really matter. Of course, this is completely false and our children need us to help them

understand this. Be clear with your child that a platform, app, or person online is not entitled to any information about them (either text or images). Children often only think about the person they believe they are sending information to; they don't think about that fact that they no longer control where it goes once sent. Teach your child to ask the questions below before sharing information online. Talk about their answers. Help them decide if their answers would be safe and approved by you.

- Why am I sharing this?
- What is the good in sharing this?
- What bad can come from sharing this?
- Addiction: social media and other apps are designed to be addictive. Set up rules about when and where kids can go online. Set clear limits on tech use in your home. Many families have success making tech contracts with their kids. These can include time limits or having their kids “earn” screen time by doing chores, instrumental practice, daily reading, etc.
- Minimum Age: companies set minimum age restrictions for children having their own accounts – use these to guide the choices you make as to whether your child does or does not have an account of their own. Many popular apps and platforms have minimum age requirements that are *older than ALL of our students at Brookside*.
- Location: children run into trouble online when what they do is hidden or unknown to their adults in their lives. If your kid is only ever doing things that are appropriate and approved by you, then there is no reason for them to have a device in private (including the restroom or their bedroom). Have your child only use tech in common areas of your home.

Following these guidelines will help your child stay safer from online predators and allow you to guide them through any negative peer interactions online (whether or not it is actually cyber-bullying). If your child says that you are “unfair” because their friend gets to do _____. Remind them you are only in charge of our own family and will make the best choices you can for that family no matter what other people choose to do (this is what I tell my own kids). If it is helpful, you can also note that Principal Simard supports decisions to keep kids safer online. 😊

Educational Effectiveness Survey Meeting 3/18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Music Room

Around the time of our first conference period, we asked you to take a survey about your impressions of our school. I will be hosting a meeting to review what our families and upper-grade students had to say! Childcare and pizza will be provided. So that we know how much pizza to order, please RSVP by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday 3/12. Call us at 206/393-4140 or email bks.attendance@shorelineschools.org

Thank you for your ongoing support to our school and students,
Principal John Simard