**This was sent to all your families GRADE 6-8 via email on Friday**

**DO NOT SEND HOME – YOUR INFORMATION ONLY**

May 31, 2019

*I'm a believer that when a child is on a screen,*

*they should be within the vicinity of a parent.*

*Paul Davis*

Dear St. Bernadette Families,

In our continuing effort to be vigilant regarding the safety of all our students, we are sending a timely reminder to parents about the dangers of social media and the need to monitor children for their protection.

If your child is under the age of 13 and has opened a Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account, they have done so falsely. Privacy and protection legislation prohibits companies from gathering information from anyone under the age of thirteen. Children are able to work around these limits by giving a false birth date and by setting up an account without parental knowledge. If you are tempted to make an exception for them, you might want to consider the message you're sending about honesty in all things.

It is important to recognize that the majority of issues with social media take place while children are accessing their accounts in the evenings and on weekends while at home or with friends. Ask important questions that will help keep your child safe from cyber-bullying: *Do you have a Facebook (Instagram, Twitter) account? Do your friends have any of these accounts? Are you involved in a friend Chat room?* Make sure your child knows that you will be checking their computer, phone, etc...to ensure that you know who they are communicating with and for what purpose. When children and their friends know that parents are involved and checking, they are less likely to be victimized by others.

It is not the school’s responsibility to monitor or fix communication when it occurs off-site. It is your responsibility to know the “who, what and when” of children, our job is to educate them in the walls of the school. At times, items are brought to the attention of the school and with the partnership of Halton Regional police and community agencies decisions are made and implemented, each situation is unique. Again, off-site actions are home responsibilities.

We encourage all parents to visit our school's website to access information related to keeping children safe while using technology as well as the consequences when those rules are not respected. As always, we thank you for having courageous conversations with your children regarding their use of social media and for your continued support in ensuring the safety of our students.