Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Your child is taking part in classroom lessons from the Common Sense Media Digital Literacy and Citizenship curriculum. The goal of this curriculum is to encourage young people to harness the power of the Internet and digital technology for learning, and to become safe, responsible, and savvy digital citizens. In the Safety and Security strands of the curriculum, students will learn that they can take steps to monitor their online privacy and think critically about the information they share online.

What we teach

In this set of lessons, your child will learn how to deal with unwanted contact online, create strong passwords, evaluate privacy policies, and identify spam.

What families can do

As we complete these lessons in class, we will be sending home parent tip sheets, links to online videos, and an occasional homework activity for you to do with your child. We encourage you to read and view the parent materials, have fun with the homework activities, and use this as an opportunity to learn about online safety and security together. If you have access to the Internet at home or at work, you can visit the Common Sense Media website at **www.commonsense.org** and take a look at the parent resources on kids and media. Here are some tips you can use to teach your children about safety and security:

Safety:

- **Discuss safe and responsible online behavior.** Talk about who it's okay to chat with and what it's okay to talk about. Children shouldn't answer questions online that make them feel uncomfortable. They also shouldn't talk about adult topics with strangers.

- **Make sure your child feels safe telling a trusted adult.** If something creepy or inappropriate happens online, kids need to know they won't get in trouble if they tell an adult they trust.

- **Remind your kids not to give strangers private information.** Kids should never give out their name, address, school, phone number, email, pictures, or anything else that could identify who they are.

- **Block, ignore, or leave.** Most kids know to brush off unwanted contact. Encourage this behavior.

Security:

- **Help your child master the fine art of password creation.** Teach them:

  » **Not to use passwords that are easy to guess, such as their nickname or their pet's name.** People can guess these kinds of passwords.

  » **Not to use any private identity information in their password.** Identity thieves can use this information to pretend to be them.

  » **Not to use a word in the dictionary as a password.** Hackers use programs that will try every word in the dictionary to guess passwords.

» **To use combinations of letters, numbers, and symbols.** These are harder to crack than regular words because there are more combinations to try.

• **To be careful with what they download.** Let them know not to download free games or videos to their computer. These programs often come with spyware and viruses that will land the computer in the shop – and them in hot water.

Sincerely,