

September, 2014

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s),

Just a few short years ago, there was no such thing as Facebook, cyber-bullying, Smart Phones, YouTube or texting. We now live in a rapidly changing media and technology rich world where our kids are far more plugged in digitally than adults are. For adults it can be incredibly tough to keep up with all this technology. Even if we're a bit clueless about our kids' online and cellphone lives, we can still help them learn how to use technology wisely.

The 2010 Kaiser Family Foundation Study suggests parents and students set up time limits for technology use, and discuss appropriate, safe online and cellphone behavior to help students learn how to use technology wisely. We encourage Mt. Ararat Middle School parents and students to create a family plan about the laptop use at home. We suggest you and your child make the plan together. Here are some ideas to consider as you make your family plan:

Internet Use

We have to know where our students are going online and what they're doing there. Sit with your child and talk about the Internet sites your family agree can be accessed from home.

Establish limits.

Discuss with your student the time he /she should log off the laptop each night. Expect and enforce the agreed upon time. Choose a place for the laptop to be stored as it charges each night.

Encourage balance.

Get your student involved in offline activities. Limit recreational screen time to two hours a day.

Establish a weekly physical checkin time.

Students are responsible for the laptop. If they damage it, lose it, or choose not to keep it clean the school will hold them responsible. A minimum consequence of fees will be charged. Find time weekly to check the physical condition of the laptop. Encourage your student to use the cleaning supplies in the computer lab to keep the laptop clean. If you and your child find damage to the laptop, your child should report the damage to the lab immediately.

Impart your values.

Cheating, lying, being cruel --they're all non-starters. Right and wrong extends to online life.

Explain what's at stake.

Let students know that what they do today online can be abused by someone tomorrow. Help them understand they should "think before they click."

If your student breaks the family rules you set up in the family plan about laptop use at home, discuss it. Set consequences with your student. Enforce the agreed upon consequences.

Once you have had a discussion with your student and have determined your family plan, please return this form to school with your child. Your child needs to hand the family plan into his / her homeroom teacher.

Sincerely,

Bill Zima,
Principal Mt. Ararat Middle School

Family Plan 2014-2015

Student Name _____ Homeroom Teacher _____
Grade level (please circle) 7 8

Here are some suggestions of things you and your child may want to discuss about MLTI laptop use at home:

- A time the MLTI laptop will be turned off and put away each night.
- The location the laptop will be kept each night when it is turned off and is being charged.
- The communication tools such as social networks (Facebook, Tumblr, etc.), Skype, iChat/iMessage that can be used at home.
- The importance of using communication tools in safe, appropriate ways.
- The importance of limiting recreational screen time to 2 hours per day as advised by the American Pediatric Association.
- The websites your family feels are acceptable and appropriate to access at home during recreational time.
- A weekly time to examine the laptop, charger, power cord, and its case to be sure it is clean and working properly.
- Right and wrong extends to online life, so if it is wrong in the off-line world it is wrong in the online world.
- Agreed upon family consequences for not following the guidelines.

Parent(s) signature _____

Date _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Please have your child return this form to the school office.

Checklist for Bringing Home an MLTI Laptop

To be able to bring home an MLTI laptop beginning Friday, Sept. 12, 2014 8th grade students must do three things:

- ✓ **return a completed Take Home Coverage Form to the office**
- ✓ **complete a Take Home Ticket at school**
- ✓ **complete a Take Home Ticket at school**

To be able to bring home an MLTI laptop beginning Friday, Sept. 26, 2014 7th grade students must do three things:

- ✓ **return a completed Take Home Coverage Form to the office**
- ✓ **complete a Take Home Ticket at school**
- ✓ **return this MLTI Family Plan.**