

Lunenburg Schools Teach Internet Safety

The Internet is the world's largest network and can be used by children as a valuable learning tool. It provides students with access to unlimited information and numerous databases. E-mail allows them to communicate with people in other countries and with experts in different areas. While realizing that the Internet is a great educational tool, everyone must work together to keep children safe while cruising the information superhighway.

Congress, in December of 2000, enacted the Children's Internet Protection Act and the Neighborhood Internet Protection Act. Both pieces of legislation require schools to have an Electronic Acceptable Use Policy that addresses the issue of Internet safety; to have measures that block or filter Internet access to inappropriate sites; and to develop a school-wide curriculum which teaches students to use the Internet safely and legally.

Lunenburg County Public Schools and other schools in the Southside Virginia Regional Technology Consortium have joined together to create a standard Internet Safety Curriculum, which is taught in grades K-12. The curriculum covers a wide-range of topics, including the following:

1. Personal safety—not revealing personal information
2. Netiquette—being polite and respectful while online
3. Security—learning about viruses, worms, hacking, and Trojan horses
4. Intellectual property—respecting copyrights and avoiding plagiarism

While the Internet is an extraordinary resource, it is not without pitfalls. The safety curriculum will teach students how to avoid pornography, deal with cyber bullying and cyber stalking, and identify online predators.

In addition, the Lunenburg County School System wants parents and community members to be aware of potential dangers of the Internet. All four schools will be periodically sending information home to parents concerning Internet safety. More information on Internet safety can be obtained by contacting Frances Wilson, Director of Technology and Testing at Lunenburg County Board of Education by calling 434-676-2467.