



March 20, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As a community, Excel Academy's first priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of our students. This includes their online presence and how they communicate electronically (i.e. texting, sending information, posting images of themselves or others, etc.). We'd like to address a recent incident and provide you with helpful information so that, together, we can help our students make responsible choices in their electronic communication.

Several weeks ago, an account on Snapchat surfaced that both solicited nude photos of Excel students and showcased nude and clothed photos of a few victims that are students at Excel Academy. Upon learning this, the Dean's Office promptly investigated the incident. We contacted our police office, worked with the District Attorney's office to support the victims and their families, and petitioned Snapchat to take down the site, which they did. Last week, however, we learned that this account was recreated. Though nothing has been posted to the new account, it is vital that we support and monitor our students' safety online, as this continues to pose a threat.

Accounts like this one are dangerous. Because the account is labeled "Excel Nudes," it creates opportunities for predators and others to access information about individuals in the photos. It also allows those who see the images to know the school that the child attends. Those exposed are put at-risk and denied their dignity. Excel Academy takes this very seriously. These images are considered child pornography. Opening, soliciting, or otherwise participating in the distribution of images like these will result in severe school disciplinary consequences, as well as police investigation and potential prosecution.

While this account was active, Excel's Dean's Office received a report of a stranger outside of our school during dismissal. This individual approached one of our students and asked personal questions about her and her friend. Excel has taken action to contact police and ensure that we have significant adult supervision during dismissal, but we urge you to speak to your child as well. Relatedly, we have received a report of a Facebook account that was sending direct messages to students and parents, seeking personal information. This account was immediately reported and removed, but it demonstrates we all must continue to be vigilant.

We at Excel Academy are committed to working together with you to support and monitor students' online presence to ensure they are making responsible, safe decisions. Below is helpful information about online communication that we hope will help you support your student's safety online. Please reach out to your child's advisor or the school with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Ure
Dean of Students

Things to Know About Electronic Communication:



- *There are numerous apps/websites and messages sent over these platforms are NOT private.*
- *Messages sent over apps/websites belong to the app or website, and are NOT permanently deleted; these are the property of the app/website, which may maintain copies indefinitely.*
- *Inappropriate messages sent over apps/websites can trigger criminal and/or civil liability, and can be accessed by law enforcement and/or in a civil lawsuit. Inappropriate messages (i.e. racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise offensive language) sent by your child could lead to criminal charges and/or a private lawsuit. In a criminal or civil investigation, law enforcement or a private attorney can demand access to your child's electronic communications.*
- *Inappropriate messages can be the basis for discipline at Excel Academy. Excel will investigate reports of inappropriate electronic communication that negatively impacts the school environment, determine what consequences apply, and cooperate with law enforcement.*

What Can YOU Do To Protect Your Child?

- *Have a conversation with your child about what is, and is not, appropriate electronic communication, and discuss the consequences of their choices.*
- *Be aware of your child's electronic communications, and monitor it when possible. [Report](#) accounts that are inappropriate through the app/website.*
- *If someone asks your child for private information or makes them uncomfortable, remind them to **Stop, Block, and Talk**. Ask them to **not** reply, but rather immediately block the other user. Then, encourage your child to talk to you or another trusted adult about what happened.*

@StopBlockTalk on Instagram and Snapchat

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