



October 21, 2006

Dear Parents of CDS High School Students,

I hope this letter finds you well. I cannot believe that the first quarter of the school year is already over. It won't be too long until we are pulling our jackets and sweaters out of the closet – and I can't wait.

“Get Net Safe Tour”

I wanted to take a minute to remind all of you about the Get Net Safe Tour that is coming to Covenant Day School this coming Wednesday night, October 25th, at 7:00 p.m. in the High School gymnasium. Several people have inquired about this night, so I thought it best to clarify some bits of information regarding that night and the involvement of the school.

First, as we have already communicated, the Get Net Safe Tour is a nation-wide tour. There will be presenters here from a variety of sponsors. Most of the presentations will be with regard to helping our children (of all ages) stay safe while on the internet – including personal protection, computer protection, and what to watch for with regards to predators. I have seen a number of presentations on these topics before, and they are always wonderful reminders of our need to be cautious when it comes to online activity. I am confident that it will be very beneficial to all who attend.

Second, however, I need to remind all of “our” parents that we have invited parents from throughout the community. I have distributed invitations to many churches in town through the youth programs, to all of the Christian schools in the area, to a number of private and public schools, and even to neighborhood communities. It is our hope that this will be a service to all parents in our community. I say this to set the expectation for the evening, as this will not be a night to address the CDS laptop/tablet program in particular or the successes/failures of web filters on or off campus.

Update on CDS Internet Filtering

With that said, I would like to give you a brief update on a few concerns that I have regarding filtering and to make you aware of the steps we are taking at school to deal with these concerns. Let me begin by saying that we use a corporate version of “Websense” on campus for our internet filtering solution. It is a strong program that is extremely effective in preventing the unintentional access to inappropriate websites.

It is not, however, foolproof. If you do a “Google search” on how to “bypass Websense,” you will literally get more than 5000 hits – most of which suggest the use of a proxy server or an “anonymizer.” There are a number of similarities in the ways to bypass the filtering and we are working with Websense as well as other schools to determine the best way to be as filtered as possible.

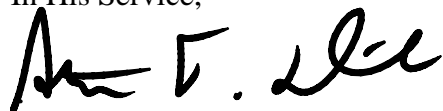
Please know that we are taking this very seriously and will do everything in our power to filter the student access to the internet while at school. In addition to the prevention of further bypass options, we are also in the process of holding students accountable for intentionally circumventing the system in place. According to the Acceptable Use Policy that all students and parents signed at the beginning of the school year, students agreed that they would “make NO effort to bypass security systems” in place on campus or to “utilize Web Proxy Servers.” The ONLY reason for a student to use a proxy server or anonymizers on campus would be to circumvent the filtering software. And, the only reason to do this would be to seek to access a website or web service that the school has intentionally sought to block.

I can also tell you that every single home filtering option is susceptible to the same kinds of issues. I have SafeEyes on my tablet computer – in addition to the “Websense” that filters while on campus. But, even with both of these in effect, after some diligent searching, I was able to connect to a number of proxy servers that then gave me unfiltered and untraceable internet access. I share this with you so that you will NOT rely on the filtering to be a perfect solution. As with any and every category where we are training the next generation, it is imperative to teach to the heart and pray diligently that the Holy Spirit would work in those hearts and change them from the inside out. The only way to ultimately defeat the sinful inclinations of our students is to see their desire for sin to diminish. Yes, we do need to provide external boundaries and consequences in the meantime, but, ultimately, we will not be able to legislate morality with technology any more than we can in other arenas.

I share this with you as a matter for prayer and diligent action for all of us. I am working on a “to do” list for all of us, as parents, to follow that will help guide those (with or without much technological experience) in the proper training, supervision, and follow-up of internet activity among our teenagers. I will have this in your hands as soon as possible. Until then, please join me in praying for protection of our covenant children.

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthy letter.

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott T. Dillon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "D".

Scott T. Dillon
High School Principal