



Cold Spring Harbor Central School District
75 Goosehill Road • Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724

January 9, 2013

Dear Parents,

Over the past few weeks, it has come to our attention that many of our students have been using a relatively new form of social media called **INSTAGRAM**. This free app (from the iTunes store or from the Google Play website) provides the opportunity for people, even some of our younger students, to post pictures and messages using a Smartphone, iPod, iTouch, iPad, or other tablets and 'smart' devices. While, to our knowledge, this activity has not occurred during the school day, we feel compelled to reach out to you as it is important that our lines of communication continue to remain open. Recently a number of parents and concerned students have informed us that some of our students are not only using this app, but posting pictures and messages that are considered to be inappropriate, embarrassing, and even potentially dangerous to their safety and well-being.

While **Instagram** is what seems to be the trend today, we are aware that in the world of technology and social media, trends change at a rapid rate. Another popular and precarious app seems to be **Snapchat**, in which the user sends a picture that disappears without a trace within seconds. As noted in most registration policies (i.e. *Facebook* and *Instagram*), children under the age of 13 are restricted from use.

With access to devices such as iPads and Smartphones comes a great deal of responsibility. Naturally, we are taking steps to ensure that our students are aware of these responsibilities when using different forms of technology. **We hope that you are joining us in having discussions with them to highlight the importance of making conscientious decisions at all times.** It is crucial that we work together to support our learners and keep an open dialogue.

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents and students of our technology "acceptable use" procedures that are in effect during school hours. The following has been published in all elementary student agenda books:

- **Cell phones, iPods/iTouches, video games and other electronic devices must be kept in students' backpacks during the school day and may *not be used*.** They are to be visible only if a teacher will be supervising their use for instructional purposes.
- **Internet access is only permitted when supervised by an adult. *As always, students must adhere to our Proper and Acceptable Student Technology Use document.***
- **If a student needs to call home, he/she should ask permission to use the phone in the main office. *Students are not allowed to use cell phones during the school day.***
- **No *unauthorized* taking of photos or video/audio recordings are permitted at any time during the school year.**

We would also recommend that families review the *Proper and Acceptable Student Technology Use* document, which can be found on our District website and in the elementary student agenda books.

Thank you for taking the time to help us as we work together to continue to educate our students and encourage their growth. It is our hope that you will use this letter as a springboard to begin or continue a meaningful technology conversation with your children. Please feel free to reach out to administration, teachers or mental health staff with any questions you might have. We would also like to recommend the following website as a resource for Internet safety: <http://www.onguardonline.gov/>.

Sincerely,

Valerie R. Massimo, *Lloyd Harbor School Principal*
Kurt Simon, *West Side School Principal*