

MURRIETA VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PARENT ADVISORY

www.myspace.com

6/2/05

Murrieta Valley Unified School District prides itself on providing a safe learning environment for its students. For this reason, we feel parents need to know about a trend among middle and high school students that has the potential to be harmful. You may have heard about the website MySpace.com where students are invited to write and post a personal on-line journal. The concern is that this site also encourages students to put their pictures, location of where they live and the name of their schools on their web journal. Since October of 2004 Murrieta Valley Unified School District has blocked access to this site from any school computer in our district due to the inappropriate content of some of the personal web sites.

It is suggested that parents take a proactive approach to their children having personal web sites and learn of the dangers of posting personal information on the Internet. MySpace.com is a place where adults preying on children have been known to frequent. Unsuspecting children have posted enough personal information to become easy targets for predators.

Another concern is the potential for on-line bullying and threats to other children. There are no legitimate adults monitoring the content on these web pages. Schools have seen a definite increase in negative student behavior as a result of what has been written from home computers. Students who are bullied on-line tend not to report it for fear that they will be barred from using the Internet. CyberBullies, mostly ages 9-14, are using the anonymity of the Web to mete out pain without witnessing the consequences. The instant messaging component of MySpace.com allows children to chat with other children and say things that would not be said in a face to face situation.

Parents are encouraged to visit the MySpace web page by typing <http://www.myspace.com> in their browser. At the site, a first name search can be done to see if your child has posted a web site (unless a nickname was used). You can also narrow the search results by putting in your city. MySpace.com is considered a blog. Generally speaking, a blog is an online journal comprised of links and postings in reverse chronological order, meaning the most recent posting appears at the top of the page. A great deal of what is written may be considered immoral and offensive and some postings may be illegal. Parents are encouraged to investigate what their children are writing and what others are posting on their web sites.

If you would like more information please feel free to contact Erin English, Director of Educational Technology and Information Systems for the Murrieta Valley Unified School District at (951) 696-1600 ext. 1029.