GLENEAGLES
SECONDARY COLLEGE

The internet is a powerful learning and communication tool that needs to be used responsibly.

Parents and guardians are often concerned about the children's use of the internet and the potential for inappropriate access to "unsavoury" sites or the risk of cyberbullying. At school, all access to the internet is monitored and daily reports are reviewed to address any behaviours of concern. This, alongside ensuring our students are very clear about the requirements spelt out in our User Agreement, provides a reasonable level of safety while your children are at school. But what about when they are accessing the internet through their mobile device or using your home internet provider? I thought I would share some resources with the parent body.

We have some helpful advice on how to address cyberbullying on the College Website which can be accessed by using this link issues-with-the-use-of-social-media-e.g.-Facebook/

How parents can help

1. Do not threaten to take away take technological devices if cyber bullying occurs
2. Teach your child how to create secure passwords
3. Know the websites your child visits and help the child set privacy and security settings properly
4. Teach your child not to provide personal information on any website
5. Check history on computers used by your child to know what he/she is doing online
6. Check or request records from mobile phones
7. Do not allow your child to have technology accessible 24 hours/per day.
   e.g. mobile phones can be left in a charger in a public room; laptops are not in bedroom all night.

There are software options to assist parents to monitor their children's use of technology. The following article is from Choice and it contains a review of Family Zone, a software package that you might like to consider for your family. Of course there are other software packages in the market that might suit your circumstances better. GSC is not endorsing the Family Zone product and receives no benefit by sharing this article. It is simply part of our school strategy to generate discussion around the responsible use of technology.

CHOICE ARTICLE   Last updated: 04 October 2017

Playing it safe

Many parents are worried about the unsavoury elements of the internet finding their way to their children's devices and frustrated about getting their kids off their devices and to sleep at night.

At one time, an internet filter on the home computer could do the job. Now with the widespread use of mobile devices, and with many young children using them, there's a lot more to manage.

Enter Family Zone, a box that plugs into your home gateway or router and acts as a cyber-gatekeeper for all your digital devices – including phones, tablets and games consoles – along with an associated web portal and app.

If you want to have an overview of all the devices in your family, and the ability to manage and control internet access by these devices and the home Wi-Fi network, Family Zone may be an appealing solution.

Getting started

Plugging in and connecting to the dashboard through a browser is simple and registration only takes a few steps.

Set-up is not for the faint-hearted, however, as each feature – and there are many – requires some customisation. The dashboard is clean and easy to navigate, but there are a lot of settings to go through, first to understand what is being controlled and then how to manage access to content for each user.

Family Zone works locally on devices, as opposed to computer-based filter or router controls for a home network that manage when devices can connect, along with some site blocking. When the Family Zone app is installed on a device, it reviews and reports on all of the currently loaded apps.

Filters for each family member

All users need to be registered with an age profile. The profile then determines how Family Zone manages access to websites and which content is permitted or blocked. In the dashboard, parents can review and adjust what's permitted in various categories such as advertising, criminal or violent content, alcohol-related content and 'alternative' content that includes sexual, 'non-traditional' and graphic material. Access to social networks can be controlled, along with specific site blocking, and you can restrict device functions such as camera, access to iTunes and the installation of apps.

The dashboard also offers the ability to program in daily times for school, study, play and sleep and controls to turn on or off the filtering for each of these time zones for each user and their registered devices. You can view reports on internet usage from registered devices, check blocked sites and see any red flags for sites or apps that may be problematic.

Wireless protection

Family Zone provides a restricted home Wi-Fi network, which is dual band, and has a separate guest network for those worried about their kids' friends hooking devices that could have viruses or malware into their network.

If you don't feel confident in your ability to navigate all the settings, or you just don't have the time, there's an option to hire a 'cyber expert' to install and do the work for you, starting at $29 a year.

If you've got a tech-savvy kid on your hands who's likely to try and fiddle with the app, you can choose to receive a notification or even send automatic consequences to disable apps or put the device to sleep.

CHOICE verdict

If you want to be master of your family's digital domain, at home and away, then Family Zone may appeal. It's going to require a fair bit of time to set it all up and manage the access on an ongoing basis so that devices are safe but still enjoyable to use.

Family Zone Cyber Safety
$89 Home Zone Box; subscription $5.95/month
familyzone.com