GoGuardian Parent Communication 2018-2019

In our consistent effort to keep students safe online and help them make responsible choices when using school-issued Chromebooks, Rush-Henrietta has purchased GoGuardian software. This monitoring software will give increased visibility into how our students are using these devices as well as their school-assigned accounts both in and out of school.

GoGuardian is used to filter the content of the Internet on the district-owned Chromebooks as well as Rush-Henrietta accounts used on home computers. Using GoGuardian's CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) compliant categories, the district has the ability to blacklist (block) entire sections of the Internet (e.g., explicit material, weapons, drugs, etc.), as well as add individual websites we deem inappropriate or dangerous for students. GoGuardian's content filtering applies to district-owned Chromebooks as well as when students are signed into their school accounts on personal computers. It is always on no matter where the student is. This means that the filtering is still working regardless of where the student is accessing the Internet. The student could be at home, the library, a coffee shop, a friend's house, etc., and the Internet will still be monitored and filtered.

One of the features that makes GoGuardian stand out versus similar applications is its use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Historically, internet content filters have blocked websites based on the address of the site (i.e. block all access to xxx.com). GoGuardian filters based on what's on the screen regardless of on what site the content resides. The application uses artificial intelligence to examine the words and images on a web page for inappropriate content. If the system believes the material on the screen is not suitable for students (i.e. explicit material), it will block the page immediately and alert building administrators.

This real-time content filtering helps to ensure that students are not exposed to unwanted material accidentally or intentionally. Additionally, the artificial intelligence engine inspects pages for potential self-harm concerns. If students are searching for information about how to hurt themselves, alerts are triggered that let the district administration know, and immediate action can be taken. Based on what content is accessed, building administrators, counselors, and social workers will work with students and families to have important conversations regarding digital citizenship, online safety, and potential self-harm situations.

Finally, GoGuardian can be used to track lost or stolen devices. When a student reports that the Chromebook is missing, our technology staff can place it into a unique mode. This Anti-Theft Mode will disable the normal Chrome browser and user logins, and will give the district geolocation information, pictures from the webcam, keys typed on the device, and page screenshots. This information will be shared with law enforcement in order to recover the devices.

We believe that this tool will enable our administrators to guide our students to make better, smarter, and more responsible decisions with the Chromebooks and learn (for now and then later, in life and work) how to best use school-issued devices in appropriate and productive ways.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact any of the building administrators.