



Michigan Lutheran High School
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**PREPARING YOUNG ADULTS FOR
LIVES OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE**

Dear MLHS Parents,

July 5, 2011

Internationally acclaimed consultant and author Mark Prensky recognizes that something is different about our children today. He writes, “Today’s students have not ... simply changed their slang, clothes... or styles as has happened between generations previously. A really big *discontinuity* has taken place. One might even call it a *singularity* – an event which changes things so fundamentally that there is absolutely no going back... the arrival and rapid dissemination of digital technology... Today’s students – K through college – represent the first generations to grow up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers...” Prensky calls today’s children *digital natives*, because they have grown up in a world where using technology is an innate skill. He calls baby boomers like me *digital immigrants*, who have had to align the way we have always done things (he calls this our *accent*) with rapidly improving technological innovations.

Our world benefits from technology in many ways; however, there are also significant challenges. Our children can communicate with individuals or groups of friends in an instant with two-way audio and video feed. Social networking sites like My Space and Facebook make it possible to connect with friends from around the world. But if it was difficult to ensure our children’s safety and monitor their behavior in the real world, how much more challenging is the added dimension of cyberspace.

The Internet is a very public forum, and electronic interactions are not necessarily confined there. Once something is posted electronically, it is virtually impossible to erase it completely. MLHS students might be surprised to learn that some of their Internet interactions wind up in the hands of school administration. Please take the time to discuss proper Internet use with your children. Ask them to show you their social networking accounts. You’re not invading their privacy – you’re their parent, assigned by God to train them up in the wisdom of the Lord. Tell them that language and images posted on the Internet are powerful and can affect people’s thoughts, actions, and emotions. No matter how others use technology, as Christian we are different because we bear the name of Jesus whether walking through the mall or interacting on the Internet.

We at MLHS consider it a privilege to work with your children. We are likewise grateful for Christian parents who entrust their children to our care. It’s essential for all parents and teachers to be aware of how powerful and accessible cyberspace is to our children. Please take the time to discuss proper use of technology with your digital native. The back of this letter contains related MLHS policies that parents can use to guide discussion.

In Christ Jesus, Mr. Mike Butzow

MISSION STATEMENT

Michigan Lutheran High School provides a Christ-centered, confessionally Lutheran secondary education to prepare young adults for lives of Christian service in their churches, workplaces, communities, and the world.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
1 Corinthians 10:31

Excerpts from Existing MLHS Student Handbook Policies Regarding Computers / Internet

An instructor must supervise all computer use. Computers may be used during a study hall to work on an assignment if a pass has been secured in advance from the instructor of a specific class. Computers may also be used before school from 7:30 to 7:55 a.m. and after school until 3:30 p.m. The use of computers at other times must be arranged with an instructor.

All students must have a signed copy of the MLHS Computer Use Policy on file. Any abuse, misuse or failure to follow the above guidelines will result in a student forfeiting the privilege of using school computers.

Students are not to send or receive email, post or respond to messages on electronic bulletin boards or blogs, send or receive instant messages, or participate in chat rooms / social networking sites without the expressed consent and supervision of a staff member. (*approved BoR July 2006*)

Students who use electronic media to bully, threaten, intimidate, make sex-related comments, or injure the reputation of another will be held accountable under the *Christian Speech and Behavior* section of this handbook. Students will be held accountable whether this activity occurs on the school grounds, if a written or electronic copy of such is brought on campus, or whether the school becomes aware of such abuse that occurred off-campus. (*approved BoR July 2006*) This includes the posting of online messages, parodies, photos, and videos of school related events, faculty, or other students, including but not limited to sites such as Youtube, Myspace, Facebook, and other social networking sites. (adopted by BoR 7/30/08)

Excerpts from Existing MLHS Student Handbook Policies Regarding Cell Phones

The use of personal media players or game devices is limited to before and after school hours. Cellular phones may be used before and after school hours. If brought into the building, these items must be kept in the student's locker in "off" or "silent" settings at all times during the school day. No cell phone use for text messaging or email is allowed during the school day. Should any cell phone use need to occur during the day due to change of plans or emergency, students should talk to the advisor, coach, or lunch room supervisor. (*BoR July 2006*)

Phone use is strictly prohibited in the locker rooms at all times during the school day and during co-curricular activities. The use of any film, tape or digital recording or photographic device is strictly prohibited in the locker rooms at all times. (*BoR July 2006*)

Excerpts from Existing MLHS Computer & Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that those using the technology provided by Michigan Lutheran High School will do so *in accordance with the mission and educational goals of MLHS*.

Violation of these policies, abuse of equipment, and/or illegal conduct such as, but not limited to, any form of vandalism to equipment or information including the uploading or creation of computer viruses, will result in disciplinary action including possible expulsion from school, suspension or revocation of access privileges, and/or appropriate legal action.

Transmission of material in violation of local, state, or federal regulation is prohibited. This prohibition extends to, but is not limited to: copyrighted material; threatening, obscene, or any unlawful material, and material protected by trade secret. Use of MLHS technology for commercial activities, product advertisement, political lobbying, or any illegal activities is prohibited.

- Do not use offensive or inappropriate language, or language that would promote violence or hatred, and do not respond to such. Do not misrepresent yourself or your age.
- Do not reveal your or any other personal address, phone number, or credit card information.
- Do not use MLHS technology in such a way as to disrupt others or abuse access time.
- Do not harass anyone by sending uninvited communication.
- Do not access, download, upload, or print from unauthorized or inappropriate sites
- Do not make unauthorized copies of software or information.