Dear Parent,

There are many different forms of communication used today that are taught in our schools. Email is one form that is quickly becoming the preferred method of communication for most adults, for both personal and business applications. It is important for students to become proficient in this tool in order to be successful adults, and our state education standards include technology and electronic communication. Using email will also provide students with extra practice using correct writing conventions, improving overall literacy.

In order to meet these standards, and give our students hands on experience with email, we have obtained safe email accounts through Gaggle.Net. Gaggle.Net is a safe, web-based Internet system for students where the teacher is always in control. They provide numerous tools that protect our students from the potential problems of email and social networking. The school controls what level of access the students have and whom they can communicate with, and can set it to be as restricted as necessary. All messages pass through a number of filters. Messages with offensive language, questionable domains, banned file types, or pornographic images are automatically rerouted to the student's teacher for review. Gaggle uses a unique Anti-Pornography Scanner, and Blocked Word lists that are customizable by our school.

In addition to email, Gaggle.net has many advanced features that will enhance students' educational experience.
- All users have a Digital Locker, which is an online file storage system. Files can be uploaded and accessed from anywhere, so students can work on documents or projects at home without needing a floppy disk or USB drive. Our teachers can also store files that can be accessible to students or parents.
- Teachers can create school or class Message Boards or Chat Rooms for ongoing discussions or homework help, and control which students have access. These are filtered in the same manner as emails, and postings blocked for offensive language and images will be rerouted to the teacher for review.
- Homework Drop Boxes can now be utilized to communicate via email what assignments have been given in the classroom and can provide access to homework information wherever the student has internet access. When students are absent from school, it is a great tool to log into to view missed assignments.
- Teachers and students can create a Blog as a personal webpage or journal. Unlike many of the popular blogging sites that have been in the news recently, Gaggle Blogs are safe because they are filtered for content and images. The teacher controls access, and entries can be reviewed at any time.
- Additional features include built-in Language Translation, Spell Check, and an Auditory Feedback System that will read emails and message boards aloud.

We are excited about providing email to our students, and confident that by using Gaggle.Net as our provider, we are putting safety first. You can visit www.gaggle.net for more information, or contact the school with any questions. 260-589-3131

Online Safety Pledge

I want to use the computer and the Internet. I understand that there are certain rules about what I should do online. I agree to follow these rules:

1. I will not give my name, address, telephone number, school, or my teachers'/parents' names, addresses, or telephone numbers, to anyone I meet on the Internet.

2. I will not give out my email password to anyone (even my best friends) other than my teachers/parents.

3. I will not send a picture of myself or others over the Internet without my teachers'/parents' permission.

4. I will not fill out any form or request online that asks me for any information about my school, my family, or myself without first asking for permission from my teachers/parents.

5. I will tell my teachers/parents if I see any bad language or pictures on the Internet, or if anyone makes me feel nervous or uncomfortable online.

6. I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my teachers/parents. If my teachers/parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and that I am accompanied by an adult at all times.

7. I will not use any articles, stories, or other works I find online and pretend it is my own.

8. I will not use bad language online.

9. I will practice safe computing, and check for viruses whenever I borrow a disk from someone, download something from the Internet, or receive an attachment.

10. I will be a good online citizen and not participate in any activity that hurts others or is against the law or my school's policy.

_____   _____
Student's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Parent's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Teacher's Signature   Date