

Session for parents to learn Internet pitfalls for children



Ladysmith Secondary School's parent advisory council is holding a parents only session about Internet safety, with a police officer presenting.

Photo Illustration

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Students and parents are about to be schooled in being a good digital citizen.

An assembly on Internet safety, presented by a Victoria police officer and security expert, is aiming to teach parents how to protect their children online and show young people the consequences of a life lived on the digital highway.

"There are risks associated and things you can do to minimize risk," Staff Sgt. Darren Laur said of surfing the net and using social networking sites.

Laur, co-owner of Personal Protection Services Inc. and a 25-year veteran of the Victoria force, stressed the importance of Internet safety and protecting one's digital footprint.

He said parents and teachers have done a good job talking to youth about the dangers of speaking to strangers on the Internet but there is more to do.

"What no one's talked about is what can be socially engineered for crime or other personal gains," he said.

Richard Hill, chair of the Parent Advisory Committee at Ladysmith Secondary School, said this session was planned since last year.

"The media events in the last few weeks have brought it into sharper focus," he said, referring to the alleged gang rape of a teenage girl in Maple Ridge.

"In general, parents are not full aware and informed of the scope of the online world," he said.

“Youth are digital citizens and adults are digital immigrants,” Laur explained.

Colleen Christensen, a member of PAC with children who attend LSS, said she is absolutely thrilled about the presentation.

“I’m most interested in being able to see what my kids are doing,” she said. “How to look back on that history and keep tabs.”

She said she thinks it’s important to have restrictions put on children using the Internet.

Laur said he wants students to know what they post online can come back and hurt them down the road.

For parents, he said, the focus will be on learning how to monitor what children are doing online.

“The Internet is part of our everyday living,” he said.

He said he thinks the Internet is a pretty cool tool to use — especially in schools, but students and parents need to know the pitfalls and how to stay safe.

“The best filter anyone has is between their ears,” he said.

The session is Oct. 21 for all grades during the day. The parents and other adults are invited to the school from 7 to 9 p.m. No children are allowed at the evening presentation.