

# Elementary School District 102

Dear parents,

There are many different forms of communication used today that are taught in our schools. E-mail 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 e-mail will also provide students with extra practice using correct writing conventions, improving overall literacy.

In order to meet the standards, and give our students hands-on experience with e-mail, we have obtained safe e-mail accounts through Gaggle for students in grades 4 through 8. Gaggle 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 e-mail 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 inappropriate images are automatically rerouted for review. Gaggle uses a unique anti-pornography scanner, and blocked word lists that are customizable by our schools.

In addition to e-mail, [gaggle.net](http://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 e-mails, and postings blocked for offensive language and images will be rerouted to the teacher for review.
- 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 e-mails and message boards aloud.

We are excited about providing e-mail to our students, and confident that by using Gaggle as our provider we are putting safety first. You can visit [www.gaggle.net](http://www.gaggle.net) for more information, or contact me with any questions.

Respectfully, Al Kirkus  
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