

St. Martin of Tours ACADEMY  
COMPUTER CLASS NEWSLETTER- FALL 2011  
FIFTH - SIXTH - SEVENTH - EIGHTH GRADES

## An active Christian

who internalizes a system of values based on the teachings of Jesus Christ

Due to the success of last year's Walkathon, we have two new software applications for students to use in the Computer Lab each week, *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing* and *HyperStudio 5* (multimedia design and presentation software). Thank you so much for supporting this important fundraising event for our school each year.

## A diligent learner

who has developed resourcefulness and independence in work habits

An important part of our computer curriculum includes the discussion of ethics and computer safety. The first class of each school year is devoted entirely to the review and discussion of our school policy regarding computer use, technology and internet access (Family Handbook, pages 18-20). The conversation is in-depth and grade level appropriate. In the lower grades, it is limited to personal online safety, appropriate Computer Lab conduct and the school's internet contract.

## A lifelong learner

who has developed study skills and lifetime learning habits

In grades five through eight however, we read and discuss the policy point by point, often including real world examples and consequences. If you have not read it yet, please do so as it covers important information about California law regarding responsibility, prohibited use and vandalism. Additionally, it covers the Academy's rights and responsibilities regarding cyber-bullying, harassment, technology misuse and consequences.

Our state's first anti-bullying law for schools, drafted in 2006, did not include language regarding technology. In 2009 California passed one of the first laws regarding cyber-bullying, which allowed schools to suspend or expel students who harass peers by cyber-bullying, even off campus. In 2010 the California Supreme Court declared that online threats of violence and acts of cyber-bullying are not protected free speech. As of January of this year, California's cyber-bullying law has been updated to include harassment and impersonation on social networking sites like Facebook.

## An integrated individual

who has developed responsibility and self-discipline

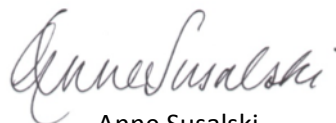
Throughout the school year we will have more lessons regarding online safety and "cyber smarts" in all grades. Resources include videos, activities and discussion points from *Netsmartz Workshop*, a program of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children ([netsmartz.org](http://netsmartz.org)) and Common Sense Media ([commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)).

An important part of the conversation in the upper grades involves parent communication. Students should keep parents in the loop about how they use technology and what messages are reaching them. Parents should always be the first to know when something doesn't feel right to their child, as a matter of personal safety and cyber-safety.

## An effective communicator

who utilizes technology as a tool of communication

Beyond that, parents and students should have a clear understanding of "the next steps." As in, what happens in our family if a child has a social networking "friend" with inappropriate posts? Unfriended? Reported? Ignored? How would your family decide what to do? What role would the child have in this process? As we talk about these things at school, we hope the conversation will continue at home as well.



Anne Susalski

