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Dear Families,

Keeping students safe on their school-provided devices is of paramount importance to The Village School of North Bennington. In that regard, we would like to make you aware of a recent step the school has taken to monitor school-issued accounts. *Bark for Schools* is a powerful new monitoring service that we are utilizing to help us better protect students, both at school and at home. When schools give students access to laptops and email accounts, an incredible world of learning opportunities opens up—as well as potential dangers. The intent is not to try to catch kids doing bad things; it is to try to educate them on how to be safe, how to be protected, and how to be appropriate with their online and digital footprint.

Bark helps us monitor content that our students are creating, sharing, and sending through school-issued accounts. This helps us to detect potentially dangerous situations that students may be facing both in and out of school, including: cyberbullying, threats of violence, predatory advances, sexual content, and suicidal ideation. The service, called *Bark for Schools*, is a third-party program, but it works in concert with Google. Administrators receive the alerts of concerning student activity (e.g. mentions of self-harm, drugs or weapons) including snippets of conversations or copies of Google docs that contain concerning content.

*Bark* provides all of the above for free as part of their give-back program and is available to all K-12 schools and districts in the U.S.

Thank you for helping us to keep our students safe online and in real life.

Best Wishes,

Amanda Bickford, Technology Director  
Timothy J. Newbold, Head of School  
VSNB