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To: Parents and Guardians
From: Kathy Schrock, Administrator for Technology

MySpace and Other Online Social Networking Sites

There have been many articles in the media lately about MySpace.com and the other online sites that allow users to post photographs and information about themselves, as well as containing a journal component. These sites allow the users to join communities which may be formed around similar interests, similar geographic areas, or communities of users attending the same school, and also allow users to comment on each others' pages.

MySpace, and other sites like them, all include an extensive survey when a user signs up which includes a series of questions that range from "Coke or Pepsi" to "Drink or Smoke". In addition, because a user has to be 16 years old to create an account, many younger teens are not truthful about their birthdates, and are representing themselves as older than they actually are.

The Hartford Courant recently ran a series of articles which both explained about MySpace and also gave some tips for parents about monitoring their child's MySpace pages. One article dealt specifically with the "teen bragging" and inappropriate comments and language which appear on many sites. The suggestion for parents who find this on their child's site is to "...explain that while they trust their child in many areas, they may not trust them to know how to behave on MySpace" and talk about what they feel is appropriate information that should be shared via the Web site.

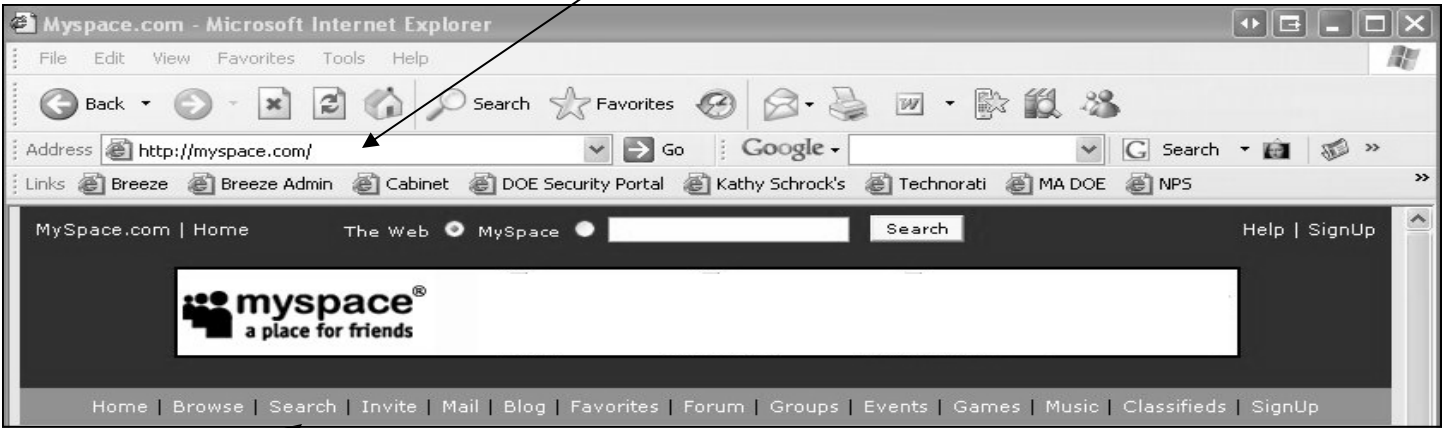
MySpace users can choose to have their Web pages be only available to an approved list of friends, but most users simply leave the pages wide open for anyone on the Internet to view. There is no need to sign up for the service in order to view MySpace pages. However, with an account, a user can see additional photographs from other user's sites, can conduct searches on specific topics, can comment on anyone's MySpace page, and invite other users to become their "friends" or members of a community.

As per the Acceptable Use Guidelines signed by all students in the Nauset Public Schools, personal communication and access to sites such as MySpace.com are prohibited on campus at any time. In addition, the schools are taking measures to try to ensure students are not viewing or using these sites on school-owned computers by employing both content filtering and monitoring student use of computers.

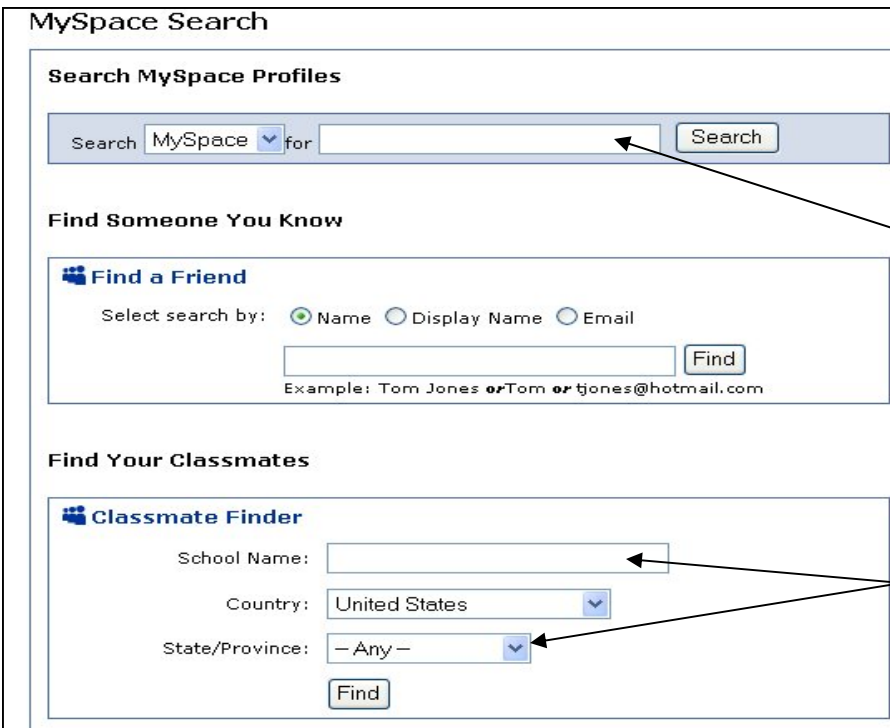
If you are interested in researching MySpace to see if your child has a presence on the site, the process is not difficult, but your search may not yield the information you are seeking. For instance, if your child put an incorrect town and state into the survey data, searching by zip code will not pull up their site.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SEARCHING MYSPACE.COM

Open Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape, or Safari.
Type **http://myspace.com** in the address box.



Choose the **SEARCH** tab along the bottom of the menu. (The **BROWSE** tab is covered below.)
You will be taken to the MySpace search page.



Without an account, there are only certain fields you can use.

Using this field results in too many returns.

Typing the school name (Nauset) and choosing the state (MA) will probably yield the most relevant results.

If you choose the **BROWSE** tab from the first page of MySpace, you will have the chance to limit the search by other items.

