

# Google Apps for Education (GAFE)

## Parent / Guardian Documents

### What is Google Docs for Education?

GAFE is a free, “walled garden” style learning platform where students can have discussions, share their learning and collaborate on projects. They will also gain access to a document and media creation platform similar to Microsoft Office that includes online cloud storage via through Google Drive. This private online learning environment is teacher managed and students will only be able to interact with others in the class, other teachers, and specific outside agencies based on educational need (Distance Education providers, etc).

### Why am I using Google Apps for Education?

Provide students a set of free tools to do all their work for all classes, store and manage assignments across all platforms (Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, etc), and collaborate and receive feedback among their teachers and peers in real time.

### Risks that could arise

The GAFE web platform requires users to register for a “@DOMAINNAME.org/com” email account that is stored on Google Servers in the United States.

See: <https://www.google.com/edu/products/productivity-tools/>

It requires users to register by uploading a username, as well as a first and last name. However - they do not require a “real” full name and students may use a pseudonym if they wish.

According to the Google Apps for Education agreement (see: [https://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/terms/education\\_terms.html](https://www.google.com/apps/intl/en/terms/education_terms.html)) all student data will never be shared with any Third Party unless ordered by subpoena, warrant, etc and there is no advertising data extracted from student accounts. However, because Google is located outside of Canada, these accounts are “governed by California law, excluding that state's choice of law rules. FOR ANY DISPUTE ARISING OUT OF OR RELATING TO THIS AGREEMENT, THE PARTIES CONSENT TO PERSONAL JURISDICTION IN, AND THE EXCLUSIVE VENUE OF, THE COURTS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.” Also “Each party may disclose the other party's Confidential Information when required by law but only after it, if legally permissible: (a) uses commercially reasonable efforts to notify the other party; and (b)



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gives the other party the chance to challenge the disclosure.” This disclosure clause is subject to privacy laws in effect in Santa Clara County, California. This also makes it subject to US Federal Law, including the Patriot Act.

To protect the students’ privacy, Our school recommends that they register using a pseudonym (shared only with members of our class). I further recommend that they opt out of promotional communication with the company and they will be walked through this process in class. While in class, students will receive training on proper privacy settings and the importance of protecting their privacy as well as that of fellow classmates. For example, students with pseudonyms would be instructed to not include their name within the text of homework assignments. Furthermore, all “best practice” steps have been taken by our domain administrator to limit the amount of data uploaded and shared with Google Servers. This includes, but is not limited to, turning off of search, location, and browsing history and all non-school related 3rd party services.

This agreement will last from time of signing until completion or withdrawal at Mount Sentinel. If the ToS (Terms of Service) required by Google change, and those changes impact this agreement, you will be notified in writing and further consent required to continue. These changes will be done prior to the school year, at the end of the school year and during the mid year semester change - three times a year - by the school’s head of technology in conjunction with school administrators. The head of technology will be responsible to monitor ToS changes and account deletion.

Please give consideration as to how this tool will enhance your child’s learning in our school. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at PHONE NUMBER. If you consent to your child’s use of GAPE as described above, please complete the form attached and return it to the school. Should you decide that you do not want your child to have access to this web 2.0 tool, please indicate that by checking off the appropriate opt out box on the attached form and an alternative will be provided without any affect to your child’s grade.

## **What’s ‘personal information’?**

“People have different standards of what they consider ‘personal’ information. Sharing over social media has done a fair bit to reset our expectation. Regardless of personal definition, if the information, data, or content could be used to identify you, it’s ‘personal information’ – though professional or business contact information may be treated separately.” <sup>1</sup>(Henglstler, 2013). A student’s personal information could include: name, date of birth, address, telephone number, email address, educational information, and anything that identifies an individual, including photographs. If any information, data or content could be used to identify you it is then qualified as “personal information”.



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## **Why is BC so sensitive to privacy laws regarding data?**

“Shortly after the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001, the American government enacted the United States Patriot Act that allowed the United States government to search private and public data housed on servers on United States soil. At the time, The British Columbia Medical Services Plan was hosting our provincial medical records in the United States. Unions in British Columbia expressed concern over the ability of the American government to search through British Columbian’s personal medical records and histories. Ultimately, the rule is: if you transfer or authorize the transfer of your personal information outside of Canada, that data is subject to the laws and practices of the country where it sits – be it the United States, China, or India. (Remember that minors, under the legal care of an adult, cannot authorize such a transfer.) Not all locations have similar notions about your right to privacy. Since cloud computing is a relatively new technology, the laws and best practices governing it are still changing and there is a need to stay current.” <sup>1</sup>(Hengstler, 2013)

## **Why is a consent form necessary?**

Various provinces in Canada – and other jurisdictions across the world – have enacted laws to protect personal privacy. In BC, the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) covers all independent schools and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) covers all public schools. It is one of the most defined privacy protection frameworks in Canada. PIPA states that ‘private bodies’ such as independent schools have defined legal requirements for handling your personal information when it is within their ‘custody’ and ‘control’. Generally, private bodies must make sure that your personal information cannot be stored or accessed outside of Canada without your expressed permission – ‘consent’ (Note: there are certain expectations in the law like data covered by treaties, etc.). PIPA states that your consent must be in writing, state to whom your personal information may be disclosed, and how your information will be used. Also, if you post personal information about others, their permission must also be secured.

## **What if I don’t want to consent?**

You have the right as a parent/guardian to withhold consent to your child using Google Apps for Education. Alternate activities will be provided to students in the event that parents/caregivers choose to withhold consent and that selection of an alternate activity will not affect a student’s grade.

While no internet-based experience can ever be 100% risk-free, know that I will take every reasonable measure to manage expected risks.



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[http://www.viu.ca/education/faculty/profiles/hengstler\\_j.asp](http://www.viu.ca/education/faculty/profiles/hengstler_j.asp)



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