

Park West Offers Google Tools for Students and Staff

Park West School Division is pleased to announce that we will be making a transition to Google Suite for Education for divisional communication and collaboration tools. In September 2018, all staff will have access to PWSO Google accounts. Student accounts will also be created, but students may begin using their accounts at different times over the next several months as we begin the transition. Schools will provide student account information and support students in using Google accounts for learning.

Google Suite offers a variety of tools including:

- Google Docs for word processing
- Google Slides for presentations
- Google Sheets for spreadsheets
- Google Drive for file storage
- GMail for email
- Google Classroom for assignments and classroom communication

Having school division accounts allows students and staff to take advantage of these free tools to enhance teaching and learning. Some of the advantages of an online platform include:

- **Anytime, anywhere access:** When users save their work online, they can access it anywhere they have internet. That means no more emailing files home for homework or transferring files to a USB!
- **Capacity for collaboration:** The Google tools allow users to share their files with others, so that multiple users can work on the same file at the same time. This is very useful for teamwork!
- **Cross-platform functionality:** Google tools work on most computers, phones and tablets.

We recognize that with these advantages also come responsibilities. We understand that staff and students may need support to learn to use these tools effectively. Professional learning opportunities for staff are part of the transition plan. In-school support for staff and students is available from the LwlCT Teacher Leader. Technical support is available from our team of technicians. We also appreciate the role that parents and caregivers will play in supporting students as they learn to use these tools for educational purposes.

Part of using any technology tool is to develop digital citizenship, including internet safety. A few important things to remember:

- **Protect your information:** It is important for students and staff to keep their account information secure. Passwords should be kept private and login information should not be shared with others.
- **Remember to sign out:** It is important to sign out of Google, especially on devices that are shared with others.
- **The possibilities are endless:** Tools that allow us to connect and collaborate with others can support incredible learning opportunities. We hope you will find exciting ways to use these tools!