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# COMMUNICATING STUDENT LEARNING

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## Parent Guide to Digital Portfolios

Dear Parent(s) / Guardians,

Accessing your child's digital portfolio with FreshGrade is an easy way to stay in touch with your child's learning throughout the year. Through artifacts, pictures, videos, and descriptive comments, you will have a continuous view of what your child is learning and his or her progress across all areas of the curriculum. If you have questions about your child's learning, it can be the starting point for a conversation with your child's teacher and it provides a springboard for conversations with your child. Over time, the digital portfolio will develop and highlight your child's strengths and individual learning goals. Students will also have the opportunity to play a significant role in their learning by adding their own learning evidence and self-reflection. The digital portfolio is a platform for you to work with your child and his or her teacher to meet their specific learning needs.

### **STEPS FOR EASY ACCESS:**

1. Return the technology consent form to let the teacher know if your child is able to participate.

*Note:* Your child's portfolio is private and only sent to you. The information collected belongs to your child and they will maintain access to it when they move on to the next grade or another classroom.

2. Confirm your current email with the school secretary or provide your classroom teacher with your email address. More than one email can be included and access can be granted to anyone else with your permission. No email?



3. You will be invited via email to FreshGrade and will be asked to create your own password. Although you will only be required to use a password if you log out on a device, please write the password down. Contact [support.freshgrade.com](http://support.freshgrade.com) if you lose your password.

4. Download the free FreshGrade Parent App available on iOS (Apple) or Android and go to <http://www.freshgrade.com> and follow the prompts for parent access. You will have a choice to receive notifications when something is added to your child's portfolio. Although you can access the full portfolio on a smartphone, it is advisable to visit the web version from time to time for a larger screen, as it is easier to navigate and view the portfolio.

### **COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

#### ***1. How often should I log in to the portfolio?***

Log in to the portfolio as often as you like. Logging in at least once a week with your child is advisable to stay up to date and encourage conversations about their learning.

#### ***2. How should I talk to my child about what I see?***

Invite open-ended conversation such as: "Can you tell me about..." "What do you like about..." "What are you most proud of?" "What were you working on?" "How can I help you with your goals?" "What is your next goal and what steps can we take together to get you there?"

Keep it positive to help your child feel open about sharing.

It may take time for parents to feel comfortable commenting on and guiding their children's learning in a digital space. Face to face conversations are always best and a great way to start. Please continue to communicate with your child's teacher using the form of communication established with the school. You might also look to the teacher's comments as a model and jump in whenever you feel comfortable.

#### ***3. How often should I give written feedback to the teacher and to my child in the portfolio?***

This really depends on the other ways you communicate with your child and his or her teacher. Parents who are not able to be in the school very often may find it helpful to write a note in your child's agenda, or call and request to talk with the



teacher. Interact with the portfolio as much as you need to maintain meaningful insight into your child's learning. Only your child and your child's teacher see the contents of the portfolio. The portfolio is intended to enhance other modes of communication so please continue to call, have face-to-face conversations, or other modes of communication that work best for you and the teacher.

#### 4. What types of comments are helpful to my child's learning?

Instead of saying, good job, consider "good job on..."

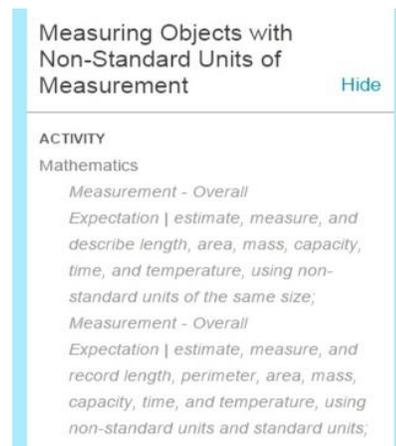
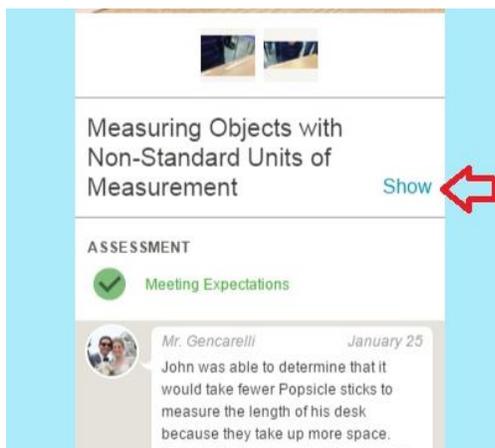
"I like the way you are..." "I'm proud of you for..."

Specific comments help the child become more aware of what they are doing – which is a powerful part of learning.

#### 5. How can I help my child at home?

Try to stay connected and check the portfolio often so that your child's learning needs are being met in a timely fashion throughout the year.

\*When viewing the portfolio click show to reveal descriptions about what the learning intentions are for a particular post and view any resources the teacher may have attached.



Please let the classroom teacher know through the agenda if you are overwhelmed by too much information or would like to see more to have an understanding of your child's progress in certain areas.

Research and experience tells us that parent engagement is key to a student's success in school. Consider shifting the commonly asked question "how was



school today?" to "I noticed \_\_\_\_\_ from looking at your portfolio today, tell me more about that?"

### **6. If I am having trouble using the portfolios, what should I do?**

Please let the school know and give feedback at [support.freshgrade.com](https://support.freshgrade.com). We want to know about technical problems, for example, not being able to open a video, pictures are too small, a button is not working..., etc. Feedback will help to improve the product. As well, it helps us to serve you better if we know what you appreciate seeing in the portfolio, what you want to see more of, and what you want to see less of. We appreciate your honest comments and want to make this experience as valuable as possible.

We look forward to embarking on this learning journey together, communicating student learning in new and innovative ways, to provide you with opportunities to have rich and meaningful learning conversations with your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Regards,

Darcey French

Principal,

St. Mary Catholic School