Dear Students and Parents:

I am writing to inform you of a new networking application that computer science upperclassmen at University Neighborhood High School will use called Rocket.Chat. Rocket.Chat is a networking platform similar to Slack, that allows teachers, students, and administrators to communicate through threaded channels and direct messages that permit the use of texts, pictures, and movies. While there will be moments of levity in these channels and messages, all discussions will adhere to the school's code of conduct and remain professional and scholastic. Students are strongly encouraged to use Rocket.Chat and most class communications will take place on this platform; however, students may also decide not to participate, in which case, their grade will not be directly or negatively impacted. Use of Rocket.Chat will not be a part of any course's grading policy.

Student data is important to us at UNHS (and to the NYC Department of Education, at large). By law and academic policy, only programs that have secure mechanisms for handling student data may be utilized by schools. We know that Rocket.Chat is both legal and ethical. All student data will be hosted and maintained on a local, secure server located at school. Rocket.Chat is one of the only GDPR and HIPAA compliant platforms available. Personal student data will remain on the local server and will not be transmitted to any outside companies or vendors. Student data will be removed from our local server when that student has graduated or transferred while messages older than 100 days old and unpinned files older than a year old will be purged and securely deleted. Rocket.Chat does not sell private information to third-party vendors, and, as administrators, we will ensure that privacy settings are set as restrictive as usability allows.

You can find more information about Rocket.Chat's Privacy Policy, please click here. We found it to be easy-to-understand, but if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,
Jimmy Dillon