



Oct. 25, 2017

Dear Hamilton Middle School Eighth-Grade Families:

We have been made aware of inappropriate behavior captured on video that has been circulated on social media, allegedly by one of our students. We cannot share further details due to student privacy and an ongoing investigation. Because of the nature of the incident, the Denver Public Schools Department of Safety and the Denver Police Department are investigating. Please know that appropriate actions are being taken to address this per our policies and procedures.

In a time when social media is consistent and present in our everyday lives, I would like to remind our students and families about the responsibility we have as a community. Our students took part in a training that went over the expectations we have for our students when they use social media. We will continue to work with our students to empower them to understand online safety and cyber-citizenship.

We take a strong stance against bullying or any kind, in-person or online. Please remind your child(ren) of the impact their words, actions, and photos can have on their peers when shared on social media. Please let them know that even on "disappearing media," such as Snapchat and Instagram, this does not necessarily mean the post is gone forever or cannot be viewed by others including law enforcement. In addition to screenshots being taken, there are a number of other ways images and posts are preserved. If inappropriate images are saved or shared with others, this could result in unintended consequences for the sharing student, family, and school.

As a reminder, the terms of service for all social networks prohibit anyone under 13 years of age from using the services. This applies to Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and all other social networks. As an additional resource to learn more about cyber-safety as a parent, we encourage you to visit commonsensedia.org, a partnership we have forged through Denver Public Schools.

In addition to discussing good cyber citizenship with your student, we want to make sure to emphasize that if your student is a witness or target of bullying or other inappropriate behavior, please reach out to their teacher, school administration, or as always you can contact Safe-2-Tell. In addition, we ask you to talk with your child(ren) so that they do not contribute to worsening the situation by spreading rumors or discussing with students that may be involved out of curiosity, hostile intent, or even as an act of perceived kindness. We want to respect the privacy of all those who may be involved.

It is important for students to know that Administration became aware of the situation not by those directly involved but by a concerned and kind student who did the right thing to protect his/her fellow students and make Hamilton a safe place for all students. Please have a conversation with your child(ren) about the importance of them being an "upstander" in situations that concern them and counter any negative perception they may have about this being "snitching." We all want Hamilton to be a safe place but it will take a commitment by all staff, students, and parents to work together so every student can be the most outstanding scholar they can be without fear or concerns about safety.

As always, please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Christian Sawyer, Ed.D.
Principal