



LINDENWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • 801 EGG HARBOR ROAD • LINDENWOLD, NJ 08021

KRISTIN P. O'NEIL, ED.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Lindenwold Families,

Very recently, the District became aware of a new student Instagram Page: [lhs_.gossipgirl](#). This Instagram page has been a source of concern for our students over the past few days.

Please help us. We are asking all families to speak with your children about the negative impact of social media, the potential harm it may inflict on others, and school related consequences. Events that happen outside of school and negatively impact the school daily operations are **STILL** concerns of the school district. It is imperative that we work together on these issues as social media cyberbullying and similar types of behavior have become common sources of bullying across our country in recent years.

Cyberbullying is a serious problem, and the impact to others can be significant.

When most of us (parents / guardians) grew up, bullying wasn't a 24/7 event. You could at least come home and get away from it for a little bit. It would stop for at least an evening. Even then, it was never o.k., and it very seriously harmed the emotional wellness of ourselves, our friends, and our loved ones. We know that. I am sure we all remember that.

However, in 2022, bullying is a 24/7 thing. Many of our students cannot turn it off. They do not get an "evening off." The anonymity of cyberbullying also presents its own challenges as community agencies, families, and schools work to combat such harmful situations.

This particular Instagram page has identified Lindenwold students by name, and in just 3 short days has already become a source of bullying and student anxiety. This Instagram page also posted a video of students fighting at home. The District is actively reviewing posts and investigating to identify the source of the posts as well as all of the students contained within them.

Students need to understand this is not a game, and this is not funny. Emotionally harming others can have very serious unintentional consequences.

This type of conduct also does not reflect the decision making of the majority of our students; however, it does lend itself to defining the overall reputation of our community. Children do not understand this in a way that we do. Lindenwold is not alone in combatting this issue as districts all across our county, state, and nation face the same challenges. It hurts us as educators when outsiders view our community by the childish mistakes of the few.

However, WE KNOW our students are better than this. As families and a school district, we have not taught our children that social media is an effective or preferred way to deal with conflict. It is important that we all continue to work to remind our students of this fact. As adults and educators, we all have a hard job of reminding pre-teens and teenagers that we do understand them, and we actually do have the experience to know how harmful these decisions can be.

Important Information for Students to Understand:

Students who post negative information about their peers in an attempt to embarrass, intimidate, humiliate, shame, or emotionally harm will be investigated through our Harassment, Intimidation,

and Bullying Policy and school consequences will be applied. In some instances, depending on the severity, the information may also be reported to the Lindenwold Police Department.

Also, students who choose to share this information with others (i.e. other students) via text, social media, email, etc..... (even if the student is not the individual who originally posted the information), will be considered to be active participants of intimidating, shaming, and humiliating their peers. Students sharing this information will also face school-related consequences.

Fighting:

It is important to take this opportunity to reinforce - fighting in our schools or in our community is also not an appropriate way to address conflict. Fighting is a VERY SERIOUS safety concern and has the potential to seriously injure others.

It only takes a moment – a split second choice in the heat of a situation – to do something that one cannot undo. This is NOT the way to resolve issues and concerns.

The school district is in need of all of our community members to help us remind students of this message. Students engaged in fighting will also face district consequences which may include: in-district or out-of-district required counseling, suspension, or Lindenwold Police notification.

Students who videotape and share student fights will be considered participants in the process of humiliating, blaming, and shaming others. Students who incite such situations will also be considered participants in the fight itself. A HIB policy will be applied by the district in these situations as well as our Code of Conduct.

The ONLY person a student should ever share a negative video or post with is a trusted adult who can help. Students should only ever share posts or negative videos with their adult family members, school district staff, or the local police department.

STOP IT App

The District has implemented a new app called Stop It. Families and students may report concerns to the district anonymously. Once reported, the District will investigate the reported concerns.

To find the STOP IT app, you can locate it on our district website or download it directly to your phone. STOP IT has been posted on our main website page (www.lindenwold.k12.nj.us). It has also been posted on our District Safety Page. You can find it under the Parent's Tab from our main district website: (<https://www.lindenwold.k12.nj.us/Page/325>).

REPORT YOUR SAFETY CONCERN HERE:

"STOP IT" Reporting Application

The Lindenwold School District has adopted a new application called **STOP IT**. This app will provide our students with a tool to report safety concerns such as bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and potential threats. Notifications will be delivered directly to school district administration.

STOP IT APP



To learn more - please check out the Parent STOP IT Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpg-bli0xas>

School Consequences:

Children make mistakes. That's all a part of growing up. We all made mistakes growing up; they will make mistakes growing up, too. Unfortunately, in 2022, some mistakes may have very, very serious consequences.

Issuing school consequences are intended to help educate students and to deter them from making the same choices or repeating the same actions again. The District does subscribe and implement Trauma Informed Practices as well as Restorative Practices / Processes. We offer in-district counseling services as well as wrap-around counseling services. Families have access to counseling support through a variety of community resources. We can help families navigate these support resources. **Please contact us if you have concerns about your child.**

However, some student actions may result in more serious disciplinary responses such as: suspension, police notification, and even expulsion. Serious errors in judgment and decision-making (even by a child) have had the potential to result in the most serious of offenses. As a District, within the past year, we have already experienced some of these egregious actions with the most severe disciplinary consequences. Such situations are not ones our school, our families, and even our students wish to experience. Often times, students realize too late how serious their choices and actions actually are.

Together we can make a difference, and we can help our children understand the consequences of using social media for inappropriate means. We can help educate our children on the fact their decisions and actions have consequences. We have to do this together. **Children make mistakes; however, it is incumbent upon all of us to help our children learn from those mistakes.**

We continue to be VERY proud of our students who demonstrate what we teach: **See Something. Say Something.** These brave young men and women are Upstanders. Our upstanders are the ones who use

our STOP IT app, who share information with adults, and are the very students who keep the safety and well-being of our entire district and community in the forefront of their hearts and minds. We continue to be very proud and impressed with our Upstanding student leaders. We thank all of our families for their continued support.

It takes a village!

Sincerely,

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