

May 31, 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Our entire school community is saddened by the loss of a student as a result of an accident. At the request of the family, and due to privacy laws, we cannot share further information. Please know that we are here to support your students and our staff during this time. Counselors have been available since Tuesday, and they continue to be available on a daily basis to support our students.

Today, our students and staff are coming together to honor the memory of the student and showing kindness toward each other. Students have been using social media to share thoughts and memories about the student. Yesterday and last evening, using social media and technology, they shared a request for students and staff to wear purple today in the student's memory. Today there is a sea of purple at our school, and we hope that this unity comforts students and staff.

At the same time, technology and social media can be misleading and hurtful. Last night and this morning, we received multiple reports from students, calls from parents, and calls to our Safe Schools Line concerned about a post that spread throughout the school community. To these students and parents, we thank you. This is exactly what we ask you to do in this age of heightened security. We wish to give you some background about the post and our investigation.

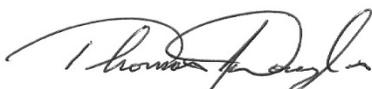
The post reported to us included a photo of a person holding a bb gun. Our school resource officer, local police, and administration immediately investigated the concerning post and determined that it was a screen capture from a music video and did not threaten the school or our students. It was an unfortunate result of someone wishing to share a memory. The post has been taken down, but as you know, postings to the Internet never truly go away.

Additionally, we have learned that a fake account has been created in the name of the student who has passed away, and that unkind things have been posted to this account. We are saddened by this, and we continue to investigate with local police.

We ask that you talk to your children and ask them to be very cautious whenever posting or reading items on the internet. Please encourage your students to think hard and use kindness before posting to social media always, especially in a time like this. Many students are hurting today, and this type of online activity only further hurts those who knew the student.

Please know that safety and security are our highest concerns, and we will continue to investigate any concern brought to our attention. If you feel your student needs support at school, please contact us.

We thank you for your concern and for your attention to matters such as this. If you have questions, please feel free to contact us at kdonahue@horseheadsdistrict.com or (607) 795-2500, x1601.



Dr. Thomas J. Douglas
Superintendent of Schools



Karen Donahue
Principal