



January 28, 2008

To families of Woodbury High School Students,

As you may be aware, photos of some of our students in possession of, or consuming, alcohol were brought to our school on Friday. Anytime we receive information that suggests a violation of school rules we begin an investigation to determine if any school action should be taken. We have discussed this situation with all parties involved and can now share appropriate information with you.

As soon as we were made aware of the photos we took them into our possession. We have identified all students, consulted with the district's legal counsel, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) and ensured appropriate action through the district's Rights and Responsibilities student policies. We have spoken to all students pictured and based on the information we received, we took the appropriate action. The consequences students received depended on the information from the investigation and the rules governing the activities in which they participate.

In all, we worked with 12 students and administered some kind of consequence with 4 students. I share this detail with you because there has been so much misinformation regarding the scope of this issue.

This situation has reminded all of us – students included – that web sites such as Facebook and MySpace are not private places. It is our information that the photographs were in large part taken from one of those sites. Their content forms a permanent and public record of conversations and pictures. Because the photos were brought into our building, it is our obligation to address any violations of school rules they might depict. Additionally, we felt it was our obligation to make parents aware of the content circulating about each particular student.

This incident gives us a chance to have some important conversations with the young people we care about. We can talk about their choices around alcohol and drug use. We can talk about the conclusions people might make about them, their school, and their family based on how they are portrayed on social networking sites. We can tell them that there are consequences for the choices they make every day. To assist with your conversations with your child, the district's School Age Family Education is collaborating with other community partners to sponsor a parent workshop titled, "Rewired: Protecting and Educating Our Youth in an Age of IM and MySpace." This FREE presentation is set for Monday, Feb. 4, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Woodbury Lutheran Church. To register, call 651-407-2024.

We want every parent and student to feel that Woodbury High School is a welcoming place, filled with great students and a caring quality staff. Thank you for all you do to make that a reality.

Sincerely,

Linda Plante,
Principal