



November 21, 2019

Dear Severna Park High School families:

Sadly, the number of hate and bias-motivated incidents in our county and state is on the rise. I am writing to let you know about an incident that has impacted our school, and I implore you to talk with your child not just about the details of this incident, but also about the ways all of us can simply be more kind, respectful, and inclusive.

We received an anonymous student tip that one of our students created an audio music recording containing racist, homophobic, sexually derogatory, and profane language. We immediately involved police and launched an investigation today and were able to identify the student who made the recording.

Additionally, we found that the student who made the recording also played the audio track to several schoolmates during a lunch period this week. The audio recording was not created at our school or during school hours. Further, it was directed toward a child in another state who had engaged in an online gaming portal with our student.

I want to be perfectly clear that such offensive language and actions, regardless of the media source through which they are conveyed, have absolutely no place in our school, school system, and community. This act constitutes bias-motivated behavior and it has caused a significant disruption to our school. Today, the audio file was airdropped to students by an unknown student during a lunch period. We are still investigating the source of that airdrop and ask you to please contact the school if you have any information related to the latter.

I can assure you that we have exercised swift and appropriate consequences for bias-motivated behavior with regard to this incident in accordance with the AACPS [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Please know that our school counselors are always available for students, especially if your child needs to share how he or she feels about this incident, or any other incident. Please also encourage your child to immediately report to a responsible adult any situation that makes him or her feel unsafe. Any safety concern can also be addressed through the Student Safety Hotline at 1-877-676-9854, which can be accessed 24-hours a day, 7 days a week; callers to that hotline remain anonymous.

Please take time to talk with your child about this incident and help them understand there is no tolerance for this type of unacceptable behavior. The words and thoughts in the audio recording are contrary to everything our school and school system stand for; it could not be further from the inclusive mindset that we want all our Falcons to have.

As a school, we will continue to have conversations and advisory lessons with our students, not just about the consequences for this type of offensive behavior, but about changing mindsets so that this type of behavior isn't even a thought. I appreciate your help in this concerted effort.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Bathras
Principal

PB/bm

