



December 9, 2019

Dear parents/guardians,

In an effort to keep you informed and work together to support our students, I am reaching out about a situation involving social media.

In the middle of the night, last night, we learned that a Link student posted a message on social media about a non-Link student coming to Link with a gun. Due to the serious nature of this initial threat, we immediately engaged members of our school safety team and contacted Newark Police, with the school resource officer arriving to the school building just after 8 am today. After a thorough investigation with the support of Newark Police, we learned the circumstances that led to this posting and the school safety officer determined that the threat was empty and not intended to be acted on.

The safety and wellbeing of our students is of utmost importance. As you are aware, we must take all statements impacting student safety very seriously and must follow the protocol set by the school's policies and state law. Students do not always understand the severity of their words and that they must be taken at face value. We are required to contact officials and law enforcement in these circumstances and that can have serious ramifications for young men and women.

Dean DeNully and Ms. Turner spoke with the grade level most impacted today about the importance of not engaging on social media or gaming systems with strangers, communicating with adults immediately if things are said or done that impact safety and wellbeing, and not posting about situations on social media as that can instill fear in others and make the situation worse. We are also writing to all parents to make them aware.

A common response to such postings is ongoing communication that frankly engages more students and distracts everyone from learning. Students genuinely care about one another and are often very concerned about what they see online. Please speak to them. Conversations help them work through their emotions. And, do not hesitate to lean on us. Our social workers, Ms. Turner and Mrs. Dandie-Lashley, meet with students regularly and often tackle these situations to help them process what they see. Together, we can best support our students.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions, via [khester@linkschool.org](mailto:khester@linkschool.org) or 973-642-0529.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Hester, Ed.S.  
Principal