June 2015

Dear Westbury Middle School Families:

I am writing to ask you for your continued support in an effort to maintain a positive and safe environment for our students in regards to using social media. Recently it has been brought to our attention that some students are sharing and following pages with inappropriate photos on Instagram. With sites like Instagram, Vine, Kik, SnapChat, Tumblr, Facebook, and Twitter and many others available on most cell phones, tablets and computers, there are more possibilities for children to access and/or post inappropriate material than ever before. In addition, this could impact your child’s safety.

At Westbury Middle School, we continue to have discussions with the students about appropriate uses of technology in order to promote a safe learning environment. We also had the Nassau County District Attorney’s Office conduct an assembly regarding Internet Safety this school year. However, we need your assistance since much of the inappropriate behavior occurs outside the school day. It is imperative that our students understand that the use of the Internet, specifically any images shared through email or on social media sites are considered to be public, once uploaded. These items can be forwarded by anyone, to anyone, at any time, thus broadening the viewing audience well beyond what the sender may have intended.

In order to continue to ensure the safety of our students, we ask that you:

1. Have a conversation with your child about the appropriate use of any social media especially in the area of photographs, videos, and other transmissions that can be seen or shared by others.
2. Remind your child that posting, forwarding or being in possession of obscene material can violate the law.
3. Regularly check your child’s cell phone and electronic devices to ensure that there is nothing inappropriate on it.
4. Review with your child the school’s “Cell Phone Protocol” which states: “Cell phones are emergency communication devices that, if brought to school by students, must be turned off and kept out of sight during school hours. Students may not accept cell phone calls, make calls, take pictures, send text messages, e-mail text or pictures, or use any cell phone function (instant messaging, calculator, games, etc.) at any time during school hours without administrative approval. Students violating these rules may be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension from school.

In addition, if a student’s cell phone or electronic device is confiscated, based on visibility or disruption, by any staff member, a parent/guardian may be requested to pick it up.

Collaboratively, we need to work together to continue to instruct and review Internet safety protocols with our students. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

We appreciate your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Mr. David Zimbler
Principal