

WEST DEPTFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gregory J. Cappello, Esq., Superintendent of Schools
Shawnequa Carvalho, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for HR & CAO
Gene Mercoli, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Thomas N. Tucci, Director of Technology & Special Projects
Kimberly Seifring, Ed.D., Director of Special Education & Related Services



675 Grove Road · West Deptford, New Jersey 08066-1999
Phone# (856) 848-4300 · Fax# (856) 845-5743
www.wdeptford.k12.nj.us

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To the West Deptford School Community:

We hope this email finds you well during these trying times. We want to alert you to an increasing social media issue that is occurring in communities across the country. An online criminal extortion plot coined “Sextortion” has been carried out by individuals seeking inappropriate and illegal photographs of children. This has recently emerged and is a growing concern to our youth, both male and female. It is our hope that this information leads to a discussion with your child(ren) about this issue.

As background, “Sextortion” begins when the predator gains access to a juvenile via social media platforms, (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.) or any other site or app where people meet to communicate. The ultimate goal of the predator is to convince the juvenile to produce an image, either of themselves or their friends, which depicts them in a sexual manner. This is done in several ways, including threats, monetary bribes, flattering, or other deceitful ways. Most commonly, threats are utilized by telling the child that if they do not send them a nude photo of themselves they will “Photoshop” another nude photo with the victim’s face on it and disperse it to their friends. This is typically when the child complies and falls victim to the extortion, or they decide not to send a photo and the predator follows through with their threat.

In some instances, children have been contacted and requested to provide photographs of someone else, such as their boyfriend or girlfriend. An important piece of information you should share with your children is that any child or adult that facilitates the request or forwards an inappropriate photograph of a juvenile is guilty of a criminal act against the victim. This could result in criminal charges in violation of New Jersey’s invasion of privacy laws and/or federal child pornography distribution laws.

One specific threat that we have heard of is when the predator tells the victim if they do not produce a photo or additional photos, they will then send all the photographs that they have to the victim’s school. Recently, under the guise of a “concerned parent,” the predator followed through with the threat to send pictures to staff members of both the high school and middle school, appearing to express concerns about the student internet activity and lists student names along with photographs. These emails come from an unidentifiable email address and are sent by the predator hoping to elicit fear among the victims once they or their parents are contacted by the school.

The goal of this email is to inform you of this extortion plot and to encourage valuable conversations between you and your children. We encourage you to talk with your children, emphasizing the serious danger of providing inappropriate photographs or personal information to anyone. We also ask that you monitor your child's use of the Internet and social media platforms and contact your local police department (856-845-2300) if you suspect that your child has fallen victim to one of these extortion plots or any other inappropriate/illegal activity.

PRIDE, PASSION, AND A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

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The West Deptford Police Department is working along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in an effort to identify these predators and charge them accordingly. In the meantime, we hope that your conversations with your children will minimize the number of new victims to this extortion plot.

Here are a few resources that provide more education on the topic of sextortion as well as suggestions for how to begin the conversations with your children. We would like to thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. If you have any further questions, or information pertaining to these types of scams or the identity of the predators, please contact your local police department. You can also reach out to our School Resource Officer, Officer Brian Kienholz, at 856-845-2300 with any questions.

- [FBI Website on Sextortion](#)
- [Netsmartz Sexting & Sextortion](#)
- [Parent Guide to Snapchat](#)