



WALT WHITMAN HIGH SCHOOL

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December 12, 2023

Dear Walt Whitman High School Community Members,

We are writing to inform you of an alleged incident of hate-bias at the varsity boys basketball game that occurred on Friday, December 8, 2023, when Northwood High School visited Walt Whitman High School to play our team.

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, a Northwood High School parent contacted the Northwood High School administration and coaching staff to report that their Northwood High School basketball player was called the “N-word” by a Whitman fan. These allegations directly conflict with the Montgomery County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct, MCPS Student Culture of Respect, and the R.A.I.S.E. core values of MCPS Athletics core values of respect, sportsmanship, integrity, and character at all times.

Walt Whitman High School administration immediately notified the Montgomery County Police Department, the Office of School Support and Well-Being, and filed the appropriate reporting forms for this matter. As always, this type of behavior is profoundly troubling and requires us to immediately begin an investigation. The use of hate speech or bullying and harassment is unacceptable at Walt Whitman High School and students who engage in this form of misconduct are subject to disciplinary consequences in accordance with the MCPS Student Code of Conduct. Students and student-athletes expect and deserve a physically and emotionally safe environment. We remain steadfast in our commitment to foster an anti-biased school culture and to eliminate hate and bias in all its forms and directed at any group or individual.

I want to remind our students, staff, and parents/caregivers of the Walt Whitman High School vision statement - *Walt Whitman High School is a community which preserves the dignity of all people so that every student will learn in a safe, supportive, and co-constructed environment which cultivates intellectual and social growth.* This statement identifies who we strive to be each and every day, not by our words but by our actions. As such, hate/bias and intolerance have no place at Whitman and are not tolerated in our school. It is imperative that parents have meaningful discussions with their children about the impact of hate speech. Racial slurs, hate-based jokes, and perpetuating demeaning stereotypes cause significant harm to our students and our school environment. In addition, this week our students will be engaging in lessons developed by MCPS focused on developing a **Culture of Respect**. These lessons ensure our students are equipped with the information needed to be able to recognize signs of bullying/cyberbullying, harassment (including sexual harassment), hate-bias incidents, hazing, intimidation, and student gender norms.

The following are resources and guidelines that students, parents, and caregivers can use to ensure that our students are safe and uphold our vision and values as a school:

- Parents and students may report any bullying or harassment to MCPS by completing [MCPS Form 230-35, Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form](#). This form may be submitted to the principal, counselor, or any school staff (via email).
- Staff/Students/Parents can report any incidents of discrimination and/or sexual harassment/assault to Greg Edmundson, Director of Student Welfare and Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at COS-TitleIX@mcpsmd.org. Reports and allegations concerning MCPS Employees will immediately involve the Office of Employee Engagement and Labor Relations at OCOO-EmployeeEngagement@mcpsmd.org.
- [Safe Schools Maryland Tip Line](#) is an anonymous reporting system used to report threats to the safety and/or well-being of students. Call 1-833-MD-B-SAFE or download the app.

Finally, this is an important reminder that fans cannot call players by name or number. Any comments in regard to one's identity, clothing, or features will also not be tolerated. These actions will result in an immediate removal from the game.

for the remainder of the season. We will be communicating these [expectations](#) once again to our students at our Winter Pep Rally this Friday, December 15, 2023.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to ensure that every student feels safe, valued, and can thrive.

Sincerely,

Gregory Miller
Principal Intern