

Nov. 4, 2022

Dear Viking Family,

Our Promise to You

When we began our roles as your Superintendent and Principal on July 1, we made a commitment to you — our students, families, staff and community — to lead with compassion and transparency and always keep the best interests of students at the center of our work. This week truly has been a challenge, but throughout it we have remained committed to our promise by communicating as much information as we can while still upholding our legal responsibilities and respecting the privacy and confidentiality interests of the minor students involved in this situation. All our communications to you can be found on the *Parents* page of our website ([click here](#)).

We understand that members of our community want details and immediate answers. However, under the law and under Illinois School Board protocols, as a school, we must allow law enforcement to handle the investigation of these matters, and they need the time necessary to do so. We are fully cooperating with the investigation, and as noted, we are respecting the privacy rights of the minors and their families.

We ask for your patience. We promise our transparency and compassion.

Validity of Information

There has been a great deal of information shared in the media, on social media and by word-of-mouth about this situation, by a number of individuals and organizations. Unfortunately, not everything that has been shared is accurate. In times when emotions are high, misinformation spreads quickly. Our hope is that students, families, staff and community will pause to evaluate the messages they are receiving to determine whether they are accurate and reliable before sharing or commenting.

Response Review

We are taking the time to reflect and review school personnel's response this week. Thus far, we can affirm that school personnel followed our established crisis protocols, responded quickly and appropriately, and treated all students, parents/guardians and extended family members with care and compassion. Care was taken to ensure that the legal rights of all students were respected, along with their emotional and physical needs. Additionally, law enforcement authorities were notified immediately, and we are fully cooperating with their investigation which we understand will include personal interviews with each student and witnesses if any. We also immediately reported the incident to the parents of the students involved and to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

In the spirit of transparency, we can provide the timeline below regarding our response and notifications on Monday. We note that the alleged incident was not immediately reported to school personnel, but the response of our personnel, once aware, was immediate and appropriate.

8:50 a.m.	During second period, in response to questioning by a teacher, a female student reports that her friend may have been sexually assaulted.
9:02 a.m.	Teachers go to the classroom of the female student about whom the report was made, to speak with her.
9:09 a.m.	After speaking to the student, school personnel take her to the nurse's office. School personnel, the female student and a friend of her choosing enter the nurse's office at 9:09 a.m. School personnel (including the nurse) and the friend remain in the nurse's office with the student until she is released to a family member at 11:26 a.m.
9:18 a.m.	After speaking with student, school nurse informs school administration of the situation.
9:22 a.m.	Per protocol, school administration calls 9-1-1 and requests law enforcement assistance.
9:26 a.m.	School administration speaks to female student to inform her that her parent/guardian is being called and that authorities have been contacted and are on the way.
9:29 a.m.	School administration contacts the parents/guardians of the female student.
9:35 a.m.	Police arrive at school and investigation becomes the jurisdiction of law enforcement authorities. Law enforcement authorities meet with family members of the female student, but no school personnel are involved in those discussions.
9:56 a.m.	After consultation with law enforcement authorities, male student is taken out of classroom setting.
10:08 a.m.	Male student is turned over to law enforcement authorities.
11:26 a.m.	Female student leaves school with family member.

Open Dialogue - Students

We value student voice and work diligently to ensure that our students feel safe and respected. We are listening and engaging with students in regard to this situation, to understand and address their concerns. We are committed to an open dialogue. This past Tuesday afternoon (November 1, 2022), we hosted an open forum after school for students where they shared their thoughts and concerns, and provided potential solutions for moving forward. A second opportunity for open dialogue with students and administration is being planned for next week as well.

As you may know, our students expressed concerns about sexual harassment last school year. In response, we held a series of conversations with students, and based on the conversations took several actions, including enhancing our already robust harassment prevention protocols and resources:

- We reviewed District policies, including the Title IX Grievance Procedure. The Board of Education adopted the most recent version on August 16, 2022.
- We updated language in the student handbook.
- We took steps to assure lessons related to consent, sexual abuse and sexual health in the health curriculum are taught with fidelity.
- We added additional social work services support for students.
- We have taken steps to raise awareness about sexual harassment and sexual violence issues, including posting sexual assault hotline information in student bathrooms.

In addition to the above, at the start of this school year, we established a Principal's Advisory Council, comprised of around 75 students. This council meets monthly with the administration to discuss topics of importance to students and the school, and to take part in leadership learning opportunities. Harassment prevention and combatting sexual violence will be topics of discussion for this group.

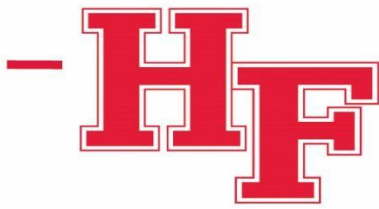
Open Dialogue - Parent/Guardians

We also value the partnership between home and school. We are working with the Homewood-Flossmoor Parent Association (HFPA) to schedule a meeting for parents/guardians and school administrators to hold productive conversations about school safety and trust building. We have reached out to a professional facilitator to help us host a meeting that is focused on what we can do collaboratively to move forward as a united school community. Those details are being coordinated and we will share them with the school community as they are finalized.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Wakeley, Superintendent

Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal



Nov. 3, 2022

Dear Viking Families,

Approximately 250 students voiced their concerns by organizing a walkout today, which began around 1 p.m. The student walkout was peaceful and mostly dissipated by 2:30 p.m. and concluded at 3 p.m. Students walked on Kedzie Avenue in front of the school. The Flossmoor Police Department was on campus today solely to provide traffic control and assure students remained safe. The approximately 2,650 students who chose not to participate in the walkout remained in classes and participated in their school day as usual. Students who participated in the walkout were not subject to discipline and will be allowed to make up all missed coursework. We value student voice and work diligently to ensure that all students feel safe and respected. We are listening and engaging with students to address their concerns.

We are committed to an open dialogue. On Tuesday afternoon (November 1, 2022), we hosted an open forum after school for students where they shared their thoughts, concerns, and provided potential solutions for moving forward. A second opportunity for open dialogue with students and H-F administration is being planned for the near future. We also are working with the Homewood Flossmoor Parent Association (HFPA) to provide opportunities for engagement and conversations with our H-F parents, guardians, and extended family members.

This week has been challenging for the entire H-F family. However, we are confident that by keeping the lines of communication open, following school and legal protocols, and showing compassion and care for each member of the H-F family we will come through as a united school community focused on the safety and well-being of all of our students, families and staff.

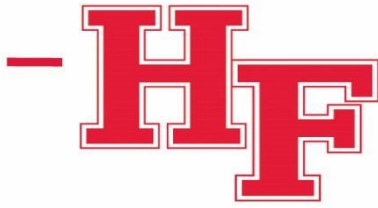
The H-F Board of Education has adopted a comprehensive Title IX policy, which strictly prohibits discrimination based on sex, including acts of sexual violence. [Click here to view District 233's complete Title IX policy.](#) We encourage parents, guardians, and students to bring forward complaints to any H-F staff member regarding any Title IX violations. Information about filing a Title IX complaint is set forth within this Policy.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at scott.wakeley@hf233.org or clinton.alexander@hf233.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Wakeley, Superintendent

Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal



Homewood-Flossmoor High School
999 Kedzie, Flossmoor · 708-799-3000 · hfhighschool.org



Nov. 2, 2022

Dear Viking Family,

We value student voice. At an open forum on Tuesday after school, we expressed to students the importance of their voice and participation while seeking their feedback in order to plan to move forward as a school and community. A second opportunity for open dialogue with students and administration is being planned in the near future.

Additionally, we have been made aware that some of our students may participate in a walkout tomorrow. On Tuesday a small number of students, approximately 40, walked out for a short period of time and then returned to class. It is anticipated that more students may take part in a walkout on Thursday. We will work to ensure that all students are safe and respected. We will be working in cooperation with the Flossmoor Police Department to maintain student safety, provide traffic control and assure students remain on school property.

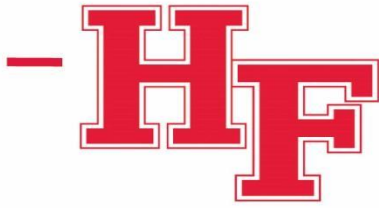
Allow us to share some logistical information should the walkout take place.

- During the walkout, access to the campus will be closed.
- Students may choose to participate in the walkout or choose to stay in classes.
- Students are being asked to stay on campus for their safety.
- If you need to pick up your student, please contact the Deans' Office and follow normal procedures for sign-out at Door 1.
- Student drivers who need to leave campus should exit the campus via the access road and exit on Governors Highway.

If you have any questions, concerns or need support, please contact us at 708-799-3000, clinton.alexander@hf233.org or swakeley@hf233.org.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Wakeley, Superintendent
Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal



Nov. 1, 2022

Good Evening, Viking Family,

We wanted to update staff, students and families regarding the student forum held after school today and the next steps as we work together to provide a safe and secure learning community for all. We are working with the HFPA to develop an engagement opportunity for parents and administration to partner on this important topic. Details regarding that opportunity will be shared once we have met with HFPA leadership.

Today, 85 students gathered with us in the south gym to discuss their concerns and potential solutions. In small groups led by social workers, school counselors and school psychologists the students openly shared their ideas and then reported to the larger group. Students expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to share their perspectives and a desire to engage in future conversations.

There were four key themes to the feedback provided by students today:

- Relationships with school staff to build a sense of safety
- Safety measures, rules and enforcement
- Education and awareness
- Student voice

We are incredibly proud of the engagement of students in this conversation. We have committed to working collaboratively to facilitate ongoing dialogue.

We again would like to thank the H-F family for your ongoing support and patience in these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Wakeley, Superintendent

Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal



Nov. 1, 2022

Dear Viking Family,

We are committed to transparency surrounding the events that occurred at HF on October 31, 2022. The Board and Administration take reports related to student safety very seriously. While we cannot speak directly about the alleged sexual assault due to student privacy rights and the ongoing police investigation, we can share information about school protocols. We can clarify that the alleged incident did not take place in a classroom, as has been reported in some news reports. Students were working in small breakout groups within the theater department to rehearse lines when the alleged sexual assault occurred.

The safety and security of our students and staff is paramount. We are committed to following safety protocols and appreciate the patience of our school community. We are all feeling a variety of emotions, including shock, sadness, and anger. We want you to know that Homewood-Flossmoor High School staff members are specifically trained to process these emotions with your child(ren). If your child needs additional support, please contact me or your student's social worker or school counselor immediately.

In terms of our process, all allegations of sexual assault are reported to the parents/guardians of the students involved and local law enforcement officials. Local law enforcement has opened an investigation which will include personal interviews with each student and witnesses, if any. Care is taken to ensure that the legal rights of all students are respected, along with their emotional and physical needs. We are fully cooperating with law enforcement officials relating to their investigation. We immediately reported the incident to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

We understand that members of our community want details and answers immediately. However, we must allow an investigation and law enforcement process to take place. We also must respect the legal privacy rights of the minors involved.

If you or your child have information regarding a situation, we ask that you contact the Flossmoor Police Department at 708-957-4500.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Wakeley, Superintendent

Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal



Homewood-Flossmoor High School
999 Kedzie, Flossmoor · 708-799-3000 · hfhighschool.org



Oct. 31, 2022

Dear Viking Family,

As a school, we feel transparency surrounding the safety and security of our students and staff is of the utmost importance. That being said, this letter is to inform you that we are aware of an alleged assault involving two students on campus Monday morning. The school is fully cooperating with the law enforcement investigation. While we cannot share specifics about the situation due to the ongoing investigation and confidentiality of the minors, we are communicating with students and families the information we can. We will provide additional information as the situation develops.

If you or your child have information regarding this situation, we ask that you contact the Flossmoor Police Department at 708-957-4500.

All of us will be feeling a variety of emotions, including shock, sadness, and anger. We want you to know that the Homewood-Flossmoor High School staff cares about the emotions our students may be experiencing. If your student needs support, we ask that you contact their social worker or school counselor.

Sincerely,

Dr. Scott Wakeley, Superintendent

Dr. Clinton Alexander, Principal