

From: LS_EmailBlast@lsrhs.net
Date: April 27, 2018, 10:29 a.m.

Dear L-S Students and Families,

This is the text of what was said over the PA this morning. Another more extensive email will follow later.

"Good morning, this is Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal for L-S

This message is especially for all of our students. For legal reasons I cannot comment on details related to the lawsuit currently reported in the media. However, I've been made aware the impact of that coverage has caused at least some of you to wonder if you were a victim of sexual assault how safe are you to report that? While I can't comment on the lawsuit I CAN address this.

Sexual assault is an extremely serious matter. I cannot stress enough how much we teach and want you to learn the importance of recognizing when personal boundaries have been crossed and how to respond through de-escalation and/or remove yourself from those situations. I also cannot stress enough how important you know how to safely intervene on the behalf of others and that you do not turn away when you see something happens.

I speak to you today to emphasize that in the event of any unwanted sexually verbal or physical contact to inform a trusted adult – whether it is a family member or one in school. I know that can be easier said and harder to do. Sometimes the first step is telling a friend and your friend can tell an adult on your behalf.

The second you disclose to a trusted adult at L-S you will receive immediate attention and support. Every situation is different and every one of you is unique. We have a huge range of counseling services to meet your needs. L-S is fortunate to have many highly skilled and talented professionals on staff. There is not a single staff person who does not care deeply about your personal safety. You can tell ANY adult in this building and they will know what to do to make sure you get the help that you need.

As I said at the start of this message, sexual assault is a very serious matter. No matter who you are, no one should ever deal with that alone. I want you to know that here at Lincoln Sudbury you don't need to. Don't keep something like this to yourself, reach out.

Thank you for listening."

Sincerely,

Bella Wong

From: LS_EmailBlast@lsrhs.net
Date: April 27, 2018, 3:08 p.m.

Dear LS Students and Families,

This is a follow up note that I mentioned I would be sending. This note focuses on safeguards in place to prevent the possibility of sexual assault on students and to support alleged victims in the event that happens. I can understand how the recent media coverage may have obscured this fact and caused students to feel less safe in school than you had.

Our curriculum teaches the importance of how to recognize and respond to when personal boundaries have been crossed. Wellness courses required for all 9th and 11th grade students address the topic of consent and setting boundaries. An elective self-defense class has been offered since 2015. We communicate the importance of ACT (Acknowledge Care Talk). We utilize peer leaders and other mentors to model the same. We encourage and empower you to let us know when you need help AND to let us know when you think a peer needs help.

We also teach and want you to be active bystanders, to watch out for one another, to safely intervene on one another's behalf. We purposefully recruit and train a representative range of leaders to be representative of our student body as Mentors in Violence Prevention. In recent history, L-S has hosted the Courage to Care Summit several times for the benefit of area high schools to promote a broader understanding of being able to identify the danger signs of potential dating violence. We require all seniors to attend a workshop that teaches guidance on how to support safe relationships in college. L-S has been recognized nationally for being at the forefront of offering such trainings.

We have increased physical safety measures on campus. The number of campus aides increased from two to three in 2014. The number of internal and external security cameras on campus increased by one-third in 2017. We are seeking approval for another increase of security cameras for 2018. We are always considering improvements.

In the event any unwanted sexually verbal or physical contact has occurred students are encouraged to inform a trusted adult – whether a family member or someone in school. Sometimes a student will confide in a friend and that friend will approach one of us as a result. Once we receive this information, we have a deep and broad range of counseling supports we can offer that student. L-S is fortunate to have many highly skilled and caring professionals on staff.

At the same time, we help students inform their family if they haven't already, and seek to partner effectively to provide students with what they may need. Every case is different, and every student is unique. If we think a crime has been committed we must inform the police.

The police are provided the first opportunity to fully interview the affected parties in order to ascertain criminality. In cases of alleged sexual assault, the police also inform the District Attorney's office, which has a special unit for these investigations. Whether a charge will be made is determined by the Police and District Attorney, in consultation with the victim and victim's family. We are able to interview the students more fully once the police have had their opportunity to interview. School discipline can only occur after these interviews are held. At the close of any incident of sexual assault, we also conduct a separate Title IX investigation to ensure that the civil rights of the student involved have been adequately protected.

We rely on every member of our community to help each of our students reach their fullest potential and to keep them safe. We cannot stress enough the importance of their learning about how to best maintain their own personal safety, and to reach out when in need of support. We are fortunate with the support of our community to be able to offer a broad range of highly skilled services when needed. Most of all, I am most appreciative of how deeply the adults of the L-S community, both in and out of school, care about and work together for the well-being of all of our students.

Sincerely,

Bella Wong