



# Niskayuna Central SCHOOL DISTRICT

[www.niskayunaschools.org](http://www.niskayunaschools.org)

**Susan Kay Salvaggio**  
Superintendent of Schools  
1239 Van Antwerp Road  
Niskayuna, NY 12309  
[ssalvaggio@niskayschools.org](mailto:ssalvaggio@niskayschools.org)

Telephone (518) 377-4666, Ext. 50706  
Fax (518) 377-4074

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Dear Middle School Parents:

There is nothing more important than the safety of our students and staff. Safety is a fundamental element of a learning environment that is supportive, positive and focused on student success and growth. As you know, our sense of safety has been challenged at Niskayuna High School over the past week. We have been dealing with the issue of YouTube videos and the very real power that social media has to cause concern and fear in a community. The purpose of this letter is to provide our middle school parents an update on this situation and to enlist your help in educating your children about school and Internet safety. We will also be speaking to your children about these issues at assemblies next week.

Last Thursday, the Niskayuna High School administration became aware of video content on YouTube that included threatening references to two High School students. We immediately notified the Niskayuna Police Department, which began an ongoing criminal investigation into the source of the YouTube postings. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is working with Niskayuna Police on the case. As of today, the video postings are no longer available on YouTube because the account used to post them has been terminated, according to the site. The police investigation into the source of the videos continues.

Staff members at the High School have remained vigilant over the past week at all times to ensure the well-being of students. Niskayuna High School is a community resource, so our priority is the safety and security of anyone who is on campus. We have worked closely with the police and our staff to ensure student safety.

The student assemblies will focus on some of the larger themes that have emerged in the past week, including the importance of talking to adults when something causes a student concern or worry, and Internet/social media safety. We will assure students that their safety is our top priority and explain how they can help in this effort.

Please assist us in this effort as well. You can help by doing the following in conversations with your child:

- Encourage your son or daughter to talk to a trusted adult at school if he or she has a cause for concern or worry – or has heard something and is not sure what to think.



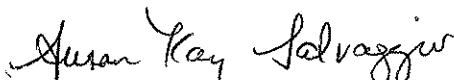
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- Speak with your children about the importance of appropriate behavior online. In the coming days, we will be working with the Niskayuna Police Department to identify age-appropriate information about this issue that we will cover in our schools. We will also be working, in partnership with the police and FBI, to schedule an evening information session on Internet safety for students and parents. We will announce a date and more details as soon as we have them. Please plan to join us. In the meantime, one good information resource on this topic is "On Guard Online", the federal government's resource site for safety, security and responsibility on the Internet and other electronic devices, accessible at <http://onguardonline.gov/>.
- Reaffirm that school is a safe place to be. Adults at school will do whatever it takes to keep students safe. Students and parents can help us by not engaging in the spread of rumors or speculation. Most of what has been circulating over the past week has been rumor or speculation.

The partnership between the school and parents is essential when it comes to making sure our students feel both supported and safe at school. Thank you for your partnership on this issue and for your attention to this important information.

Sincerely,

  
Susan Kay Salvaggio  
Superintendent of Schools

  
Victoria Wyld  
Principal, Iroquois M.S.

  
Luke Rakoczy  
Principal, Van Antwerp M.S.