



New Paltz

Central School District

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Barbara P. Clinton
Principal

Tara Ryba
Assistant Principal

December 1, 2017

Dear Parents:

I am writing to inform you of an incident that happened in two boy's restrooms. On Wednesday, November 28, at approximately 1:15 PM, a student reported to a teacher that there was offensive graffiti in the first floor boy's bathroom across from the cafeteria. Someone carved the "N" word, "ZNA," and a swastika into the partition. Also written on the tile wall were the words, "I'm Jewish and I'm proud" and on another tile, the word, "Chaos." Additional graffiti was discovered in another boy's restroom early yesterday morning.

The bathrooms were locked and the superintendent and the New Paltz Police were notified. I interviewed several students who were known to have used the bathroom that day. As of today, we have not yet identified those responsible.

The police took photos of the damage and the investigation is ongoing. The bathrooms remained locked on Thursday. Maintenance is working to remove the graffiti today.

In response, three assemblies with the student body were held yesterday. Staff stood united at the front of the auditorium as the students were informed of the incident and were assured that such behavior would not be tolerated. They were told that although racism, bigotry, and other ugliness exists, that our school community does not need to accept it and that we can all work together to be agents of change. Students were also reassured that the adults in the school would take action to keep them safe, and reminded them that "if you see something, say something." We hope you can reinforce these messages with your child.

This is a very serious matter that affects all of us in the school community. Our students joined faculty in our discussion and concern over the incident. Further discussions will take place in classes, clubs, and extracurricular activities. If any student would like to speak about this at any time, he or she is encouraged to do so. Our faculty and staff are prepared to meet the needs of the students with class discussions or one-on-one if they would rather share their feelings privately.

This was also a conversation during today's Superintendent Conference Day.

Thank you for your support on this very important issue. Working together—with a common message to our youth—is an important step in actively addressing racism, anti-Semitism, and bigotry not only in our schools, but in society. The youth of today are our greatest hope for promoting diversity and overcoming hate, and we appreciate our community's commitment to the hard work needed to impact change.

Sincerely,



Barbara Clinton

"New Paltz High School...caring, connecting, and making a difference."

New Paltz Central High School Mission Statement:

"To become a community of learners that emphasizes mutual respect and responsibility in which everyone realizes their potential."