

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON

129 SEAMON ROAD, SUITE 2, FARMINGTON, ME 04938

Phone (207) 778-6571 | Fax (207) 778-4160

COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all.

TO: RSU 9 Students, Parents, & Guardians
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: We value Transparency, Safety, and Collaboration!
DATE: 4-3-2024

Over the last couple of weeks concerns have been raised around two physical confrontations which have taken place at Mt. Blue Campus. One confrontation is too many, especially for those who have been injured either physically or verbally. To have two in two weeks certainly makes some wonder if something may be wrong? Understandably, it could make some believe that there is a problem in RSU 9.

To say that we are saddened by these events is an understatement. No one, I repeat, no one at Mt. Blue Campus or in RSU 9 wants any of our students to be injured or to feel unsafe, disrespected, or intimidated. When student-to-student concerns are shared with, or reported to, an RSU 9 staff member or administrator we expect those concerns to be investigated promptly. Often multiple staff members are involved as we dig for all facts, witnesses, and information that will help us try to mediate the concerns between the students in conflict before they escalate into physical altercations.

To address these most recent instances, Principal Joel Smith and I have met several times to discuss the details and are working with staff, involved students, and parents so that we can do our best to ensure they don't happen again. More broadly, the Mt. Blue Campus administrators are reviewing other concerns that have been shared by some of our parents. We know it is imperative that we look into each and every concern to determine what we could have done better or, if we made mistakes, to make sure they are not repeated. There have been seven physical confrontations/fights this year at Mt. Blue Campus. We would love for that number to be zero and will always strive for zero but, in reality, that will be difficult to achieve. On a campus the size of Mt. Blue Campus, with over a thousand individuals walking its halls each school day, the chances are good that our young adults will have disagreements that may lead to conflict taking place. It doesn't help that, unfortunately, we are living in a time where, throughout our country, conflict and confrontation are becoming the norm.

RSU 9 staff work hard to educate students about what bullying is and they work everyday to help settle disagreements and disputes. These are not simple or easy tasks and we are not perfect. Each year we train staff to understand what bullying is and we continue to learn and adjust as needed based on each event that occurs in our schools. In order to increase our expertise and to have more tools at our disposal we are also presently working with outside consultants who are currently assisting us with Social-Emotional Learning. We are asking that they also assist us in our work with students, parents, and staff around conflict and bullying. Additionally, we are reviewing our procedures (something we always do when questions come up) to see if there is a better, more effective process for students and parents to share their concerns with

COMMUNITY | CULTURE | CURRICULUM

Working together to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all



us so that we can work more proactively with students and families to prevent conflicts such as the two we have seen recently.

In RSU 9 we work hard every day to be positive and hopeful. I believe that most of those who choose to work in education are naturally hopeful. We join this profession because we believe our time and effort will help the young people we are fortunate to work with, along with their family, and that we will make a difference and help our communities become stronger! Our goal is for our students to want to come to their school and for our parents to want to send their children to schools where safety is most important. Education is not an exact science. Every year we learn and find new and differing ways and opportunities to support our students, and you, our families. Adapting and growing, even in the most trying of situations, shows our commitment to you!

As mentioned we are reviewing our procedures and practices. The following links will take you to the documents and policies we use and follow when we investigate conflict and bullying and ask that you take a moment to review them at your convenience. Thank you!

[Conflict vs. Bullying](#)

[JICK](#)

[JICK E1](#)

[JICK E2](#)

[JICK E3](#)

[JICK R](#)

Please ask any questions you may have with your child's principal about this information.

RSU 9 is committed to looking at our efforts and adjusting and adapting if that is what we need to do! You have my word on that!

Thanks for taking the time to read this memo!



CONFLICT VS. BULLYING	
Conflict	Bullying
Between Friends/Equals/Peers	Not friends/Imbalance of Power
Spontaneous/Occasional	Repeated Over Time
Accidental/Not Planned	Intentional
Little or No Serious/Lasting Harm	Physical/Emotional Harm
Equal Emotional Reaction to the Incident	Unequal Emotional Reaction to the Incident
Sense of Remorse	No Remorse, Blames the Target
Desire to Solve the Problems	No Effort to Solve the Problem

Source: Kent School District