

ISLAND TREES UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
*Office of the Superintendent of Schools*  
74 Farmedge Road  
Levittown, New York 11756  
(516) 520 – 2100

**February 28, 2008**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In view of the many rumors that have permeated our school community, I am writing to inform you about the activities of February 28, 2008, at both the High School and the Memorial Middle School.

Unfortunately, rumors that were not credible, regarding a “possible shooting” or a “lockdown” or that “something” would happen on February 28<sup>th</sup>, were rampant among students and parents. We believe they stemmed from an incident that occurred at MacArthur High School a few weeks ago and were fueled by some recent graffiti on the boys’ bathroom wall at the High School (“2/28”, swastikas and “2/28” next to a student’s name). The graffiti in reference to 2/28 was deemed non-threatening by both police and school administration. The swastikas were photographed and turned over to the Nassau County Police who will forward the pictures to the Hate-Crimes Unit. This graffiti fueled the rumor mill.

Today, February 28, 2008, attendance at the High School was greatly impacted. The absence rate, usually 5.5%, was 26%. Students who were in school attended their classes as they normally would. No one was attacked. There were no bomb threats. No “shootings” took place nor did any “lockdowns” occur. There was an incident involving a student who was found to be in possession of an object similar to a knife. Appropriate action was taken in accordance with the district’s Code of Conduct. Allegations were made regarding a second student having a weapon. These allegations were totally unfounded.

The rumors, as you may know, spread to the Memorial Middle School. Again, these rumors were unfounded. Attendance at MMS was not impacted very much. There were about twenty more students absent than usual. During the day, graffiti that was determined to have been written today was discovered in the girls’ locker room. It read, “Everyone will die at 2:47 on 2/27... Be aware....Bomb Threat.” There was no validity to this graffiti. Again, it just helped to fuel the rumors and heighten the apprehension that our children and parents were experiencing. Please note that at no time did the school go into a lockdown.

Unfortunately, the perpetuation of these unfounded rumors negatively impacted our school program. We certainly encourage people with information about anything that could be harmful or dangerous to come forward and to report it immediately to someone in authority. This will enable us to respond to the situation swiftly and definitively and to quell any unnecessary anxieties stemming from unfounded rumors.

Our children and staff were safe today. We will continue to make safety and security a top priority. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

James Parla  
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Board of Education  
Staff