

Miller Place Union Free School District

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March 31, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the past several days there have been social media community discussions regarding the current Miller Place High School bathroom procedures and a situation that occurred at the Miller Place High School Variety Show last Thursday night. I have been requested to clarify these issues. Therefore, the intent of this letter is to advise you of facts.

Regarding the recent change of bathroom procedures at Miller Place High School:

- During recent weeks there have been confirmed instances of illegal drug use within the student bathrooms.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult to monitor these bathroom activities, as drug use with vapor devices and smoking with e-cigarettes is odorless and thus, not quickly apparent.

Approximately two weeks ago, the high school administrative staff reinstated the following procedures that have been used in the past: one student at a time will be allowed in the bathrooms. We believe this procedure:

- Has reduced drug sales and usage in the bathrooms.
- Does not deny any student access to a bathroom.
- Eliminates the possibility of students being put in uncomfortable or difficult situations of witnessing illegal activities occurring in student bathrooms.

This procedure is not exclusive to Miller Place. It is being used in neighboring high schools under similar circumstances. For your reference, Mr. Slavin, high school principal, has posted his March 29, 2015 letter to parents explaining and detailing the issues regarding the current bathroom procedures on the school website at www.millerplace.k12.ny.us.

The Miller Place High School administrative staff has been discussing alternatives to the “one-person at a time” bathroom procedure and intends to discuss those alternatives with the building based School Improvement Team (SIT) Committee, which includes students, parents, teachers, administrators and community members.

Regarding the recent incident at the High School Variety Show:

1. Students are invited to audition for skit, musical or theatrical performances. All of these routines need prior administrative approval.
2. Skit performances require all scripting to be submitted in writing.
3. In order for a person’s name (adult or student) to be used, directly or implied, that person must give prior permission.
4. Students are informed of the rules of participation, which clearly state that only approved scripting can be performed. Students are reminded of these rules prior to auditions, rehearsals and performances.

5. Students are aware there are consequences for breaking performance rules.
6. The consequences of breaking performance rules have been consistent from year to year and have been enforced in the past.

On the first of the two nights of performances, a student performer ad-libbed verbiage referring to me as the superintendent. It was done without prior approval. As a consequence, the student was not permitted to participate in the second night's performance. As noted above, this consequence has been imposed in prior years to students who chose not to follow the rules of participation.

Unfortunately, I was not present at the Thursday night performance. When I was advised of the ad-libbed lines I agreed with the high school administration that we needed to be consistent regarding no ad-libbing and apply the same consequence as in the past. Many parents may recall, at last year's Variety Show there was a skit that included a portrayal of me. As required by the participation rules, I agreed to the parody prior to the performance, and the skit was included in the show. This current ad-libbing situation is simply an issue of rules and consequences, and not about me as the superintendent.

I sincerely appreciate the support from the parents, staff and students who have contacted me over the past several days. In closing, I hope this letter clarifies and provides information regarding these two issues.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. It is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Marianne F. Higuera, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools