

Weatherstone Elementary parents,

Diversity and inclusion are paramount traits of the Weatherstone Elementary School culture. Many of you chose our school specifically for our highly diverse student population. Together we have built and sustained a school community where students embrace the many differences among them. That is why it is especially important that you be aware of an issue involving our school.

Various news outlets have recently reported allegations of an assault on a bus involving a 7-year-old from our school. I would like to share the information that I have available about this incident.

The articles followed a press release issued this week by the Council on American-Islamic Relations detailing the allegation. The release alleges that the assault by other Weatherstone Elementary students was prompted by the child's heritage.

First, we must be very clear: The type of behavior described in several media reports is abhorrent and terribly disturbing. We have policies that explicitly prohibit bullying. We fully investigate any and all incidents of this nature.

Because we take such allegations very seriously, the staff has spent hours over the past several days talking with parents, students and the driver of the bus about the incident. We began these investigations immediately after speaking with the family about their concerns and continue to investigate the incident.

At this time, the information from the investigation does not support an altercation. In fact, we are not able to corroborate much of what is described in the release. No students who were interviewed witnessed an altercation. The bus driver did not witness an altercation. The child did not report to the bus driver any injury.

We will continue our efforts with the assistance of outside law enforcement officials because this issue is so critically important. I also believe it's important for the health of our school community to be transparent about the attention this issue is receiving. While we don't have evidence that this particular incident occurred, the articles highlight a point on which we all agree -- bullying in any form is unacceptable, and it is everyone's responsibility to address it.

It is important that students feel comfortable talking to adults about their concerns. The best means to keep schools safe is to maintain healthy and open relationships between adults and children at all times. Please help us continue to emphasize to students that they should feel comfortable in talking about situations that cause them concern.

I want to assure you that our first concern is the safety and welfare of our students. With your help, we're working together to teach our students to seek to understand individual differences and perspectives and appreciate and respect all people. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

Thank you for your support of Weatherstone Elementary School.

[www.wcpss.net](http://www.wcpss.net)

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