



## Clark Mills School

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Dear Parents,

In today's world of social media, it is essential that schools are proactive in addressing concerns regarding student interactions and safety. With that said, this morning we received information from a few of our fifth grade students that a threat was made to them last week and earlier this week on the app House Party. This app is intended for use by students 13 years of age and older. These threats were made by older males. On this site, threats of a sexual nature were made towards the students and there was also a threat against our school community. We were told that one of the males stated that "he would come to the school and shoot it up on Thursday." At no time did our students give the name of our school to these individuals.

The Manalapan Township Police Department is currently investigating the incident. Preliminary investigations indicate that this is not a credible threat, and it is believed that these are just older children intimidating younger children on social media. In the past, people have used incidents like this to cause a disturbance in the school. However, we must treat every threat seriously. With this in mind every precaution will be taken tomorrow to ensure that all remain safe. Only parents approved through passage point will be able to enter the building, students will not be permitted to go out for recess, there will be a police presence at our schools tomorrow, and we will follow our usual, stringent safety procedures.

As a community, I implore you to reevaluate the benefits of social media for your children. Students at the elementary level are not developmentally ready to handle such privacy and largely unmonitored independence. In order to be in compliance with The Children's Online and Privacy Protect Act of 1998, social media apps that our children use, such as Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and House Party all have terms of agreement that require the user to acknowledge his/her age as 13 years of age or older. All of our students are underage for these apps. If as a community we sought to abide by the terms of agreement, no parent would have to feel compelled to allow their child use of social media for fear of being the only child without or FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), as the online world refers to it.

Unfortunately, today we experienced another example of how allowing our children use of social media apps can grow into a significant event. Should you have any questions regarding the events of today, you can contact the building administration or the Manalapan Police Department.

As always, your child's safety and well-being are of our utmost concern. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this very important manner.

Sincerely,  
Jayme Orlando  
Principal

Jessica Gent  
Assistant Principal