

**SHEBOYGAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

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To the Parents of Oostburg High School Students,

My name is Deputy Eric Brushert and I am employed by the Sheboygan County Sheriff's Office, currently assigned to the patrol division. Recently I have been investigating certain conduct of students on social media accounts involving the sharing and / or distribution of sexual related material. This letter is intended to be shared with the parents of students of the Oostburg High School to assist you in monitoring your son / daughters conduct on social media.

The mission statement for the Oostburg High School involves preparing students to be productive and positive contributors to society and the world. As the law enforcement agency which served the Village of Oostburg and the Oostburg High School, we feel it is our duty to assist you, as parents, with reaching this goal for your student the best we can. In the paragraphs to follow I will be sharing with you helpful reminders in regards to how your child should be conducting themselves on all social media sites or phone apps.

This letter is being shared with you to assist you in monitoring you students behavior on social media sites / apps to assist them in becoming productive and positive contributors to society and the world. It has been noted in today's society, high school aged students seems to feel safe with sharing personal information, sexual material, and otherwise illegal activity over social media. This is due to a portion of parents failing, neglecting, or are aware they should be monitor their child's conduct on their phones and social media.

Law Enforcement officers in Sheboygan County have noticed a growing trend of high school aged students taking photos of themselves or others engaged in sexual conduct. I have shared information with the Oostburg High School to share with its students. This is in regards to the act of sharing or possessing material containing sexual explicit conduct of a person under the age of 18 years old. This is a felony in the State of Wisconsin, regardless if all involved persons are under the age of 18 years old.

It has been brought to this my attention, recently students have been distributing sexually explicit content through social medial cites such as, but not limited to: Facebook, Kik, Yik Yak, Omegle, Whisper, Skype, and Snapchat. Contrary to what your student may believe, once this material is distributed or placed on a site or app the materiel does not disappear when the timer runs out or when the app is closed. This material can either be stored by the person receiving the material or is stored on

servers by the company running the website or phone app. This material can then be used to negatively impact the student, family, and community.

It is important for parents to strictly monitor their child's cell phone, social media accounts, and phone apps to assist in catching inappropriate or illegal conduct before your child or others were to become harmed. It is not uncommon for students to feel trapped and not know where to turn to seek help when they are caught in these types of situations. They are commonly afraid to disappoint or be punished by their parents and classmates for making the huge mistake of sharing sexual content, whether they are the person in the content or not. When adolescents feel trapped and do not know where to turn they may feel like the only way to end the pain they are feeling is to commit self-harm or begin a harmful addition with alcohol or drugs.

In the interest of seeing your student succeed in society I hope to never have to respond to calls for service regarding suicidal persons or suicidal attempts. I am seeking your assistance in helping your student know the appropriate way to conduct themselves on social media sites / apps. I also hope this letter opens the door for you as parents to speak with your student about how they present themselves on social media and how to and when to seek help if they were to ever need it.

Generally your student in high school being on social media sites is not always a bad thing, when they are managed and monitored by their parent. Below are three important things to know about your child's phone and social media sites.

- Username and passwords for their phone and social media site or phone application
- Reason for utilizing this social media site or phone application
- Who can see their information which they are putting onto social media

I would like to thank you for your time in reading this. If you have questions in regards to social media conduct please contact me at the Sheboygan County Sheriff's Office or the Oostburg High School administration. You can always report illegal conduct anonymously through the Sheboygan Countywide Crime Stoppers tip lines (see below).

If you would be interested in learning more information in reference to protecting your child on social media or ensuring your child is making appropriate choices on their phones please send me an email to Eric.Brushert@SheboyganCounty.Com, if there is enough interest an in person group presentation can be arranged. To ensure your email does not get missed please put in the subject line, **I want to learn more about social media.**

Eric C. Brushert S284

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Sheboygan Countywide Crime Stoppers
www.cuffthem.com • (877) 283 - 84336
Mobile App: P3 (Android & IOS)