

3/16/15

Dear DVS Family,

It came to our attention over the weekend that there is a new app out called "Burnbook" that is designed to allow users to anonymously join "communities" – which they have set up for virtually all of the high schools in the geographic area of the user – and make posts anonymously. Because it is anonymous, people can join the group for any school, and write posts about people in that school, whether they attend that school or not. Of course, the site is designed to facilitate and even encourage bullying, despite their own user agreement that users must be 18 and must not engage in bullying. (It should also be noted that the posts are not truly anonymous, as someone who posted a threat in Lawndale High's Burnbook group last week was traced and arrested by the police.)

While it is revolting that the adults who created and run Burnbook are making money facilitating young people hurting each other in this way, it is also an unfortunate reality of this digital age. While we have sent them multiple requests to remove the DVS group from their app based on the bullying nature of the posts, we have little hope that they will do so because this is, in fact, the intent of the program.

Even if Burnbook were to disappear tomorrow, another app like it would soon take its place. The only ways to protect yourselves from things like this are 1) not to download or use it (posting or viewing posts – Burnbook gets money from advertising with each viewer) and 2) not to get sucked into conversations people might start about what's there. The truth is that there is just no reason to participate in any program that allows users to make anonymous posts.

Students, remember that you are in control of what programs you download, view and participate in. The more that Burnbook is ignored and looked down upon by our DVS family, the less ability it will have to hurt us and the less money we will give to the people who are behind it. I encourage you all to stay above things like this and to be a model of a healthy school family.

We are proud of you and are counting on you to keep this family a good place to be for each other ☺

Sincerely,

Steve & Erin