

March 12th, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians of 4th Grade Students,

In recent months you received the below letter from our school following a letter sent from our superintendent, Chris Smith. As both a proactive response and action to behaviors we have noticed, our Mental Health and Administrative team will take a small amount of time during our normally scheduled Den Circles on March 25th to meet with our students. Words matter, so we will focus on the importance of using culturally appropriate and kind words at school, intent vs impact when speaking to others, and how words with derogatory meanings can impact the well-being of others. If you wish for your student to opt out of this conversation, please email Chelsea Carson at ccarson3@cherrycreekschools.org, no later than Friday, March 15, 2024. As always, we appreciate your partnership and support in helping to spread kindness in our Polton community and beyond.

At Polton we take great pride in providing a safe learning environment for all students. We prioritize the development of trusting relationships with adults and peers who they interact with daily. We work to provide welcoming classroom environments that allow multiple opportunities for students to express their feelings and to advocate for their needs in the ways that serve them best. Polton has a very robust Social Emotional Learning team that is equipped to give support to our students as they navigate challenges throughout their school day. Social and emotional pressures are on the rise for students across the country, as they may watch or hear about upsetting events unfolding in the world around them. We have seen increases in anxiety and stress among our student population as well over the past few years. It is important for students to know that they have a voice, and are encouraged to share lived experiences, deepen their understanding and their perspective of others, and appropriately problem-solve alongside staff and peers as conflict arises. You should have received a letter from our Superintendent Chris Smith yesterday regarding the use of hurtful and offensive language, including racial slurs. We share this message with you again, as we are committed to upholding a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. We will continue to partner with our school community and staff to ensure that our Polton students and families feel safe, loved, valued and heard.

Sincerely,

Angie Lore, Principal

Courtney Blume, Assistant Principal

Dear Cherry Creek Schools Community,

As a school district grounded in our Core Values, I want to address a societal crisis that is impacting our schools. In recent weeks, we have observed instances of students using hurtful and offensive language, including racial slurs. This is not unique to the Cherry Creek School District. It takes a concerted effort from all community members to combat racism. The Cherry Creek School District has spent decades grounding ourselves in the work of equity to support the lived experiences of our students, and we will continue this work. Words matter, and derogatory or hateful language can often bring significant trauma. You can play an important role in reinforcing our values and creating school communities that are inclusive and welcoming. I encourage you to talk to your children about not using racist language – at school, on social media, or anywhere. I want to be clear – the use of hateful language, including the “N word,” is unacceptable. Recently, we have had instances of racist videos that were created off-campus and caused disruption of the learning environment. Students engaging in this type of behavior have and will face consequences. These can range from restorative practices up to suspension and/or expulsion from school. As a school district, we cannot solve societal problems alone, but we will continue to take steps to ensure our schools are safe places for all. Thank you for your partnership in staying true to our values so that students may be free to learn and grow.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Christopher Smith