

Dear Parents:

Jackson-Milton is committed to the safety and education of all our students. Essential to this commitment is open communication with parents about issues such as cyber-bullying. For this reason, I, Kirk Baker, Superintendent want to make you aware of a recent social media situation affecting several school districts in Mahoning County.

At issue are Twitter posts that contain poll-like questions. An innocent example of this would be “Who has the nicest smile.” and then answer Tweets follow. The problem is that several of these Twitter polls are very inappropriate, use crude, degrading language, and often refer to a particular students. This amounts to cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying is like traditional bullying in many ways, except that new technology makes the pace of harassment and the responses to harassment very quick, it sometimes has a broader audience and the anonymity of cyberspace can lead to more vicious attacks than we’ve seen in the past with traditional bullying. While bullying and harassment in any form is unacceptable, these differences make cyber-bullying even more dangerous.

Jackson-Milton takes these actions on social media very seriously and we are doing our part to protect our students from this growing threat. Students are not required to shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse door. However, the right to free speech is not absolute and may be reasonably restricted. With that said, please understand that Jackson-Milton will investigate and punish cyber-bullying that interferes with our educational mission and that targets our students. This is true regardless of where the harasser originally posted, sent, or otherwise delivered the harassment.

In response to this digital harassment we have:

- notified Twitter,
- notified local law enforcement; and
- consulted with our legal counsel

Our policies and procedures are only as good as the information we receive. Cases can be difficult to track and solve quickly, so we will ask for your assistance should a situation arise. Please discuss the seriousness of social media attacks with your child, and if you discover anything please contact us immediately.

Please do not hesitate to call me at (330) 538-3232 ext 1100 or email me at [kirk.baker@jacksonmilton.k12.oh.us](mailto:kirk.baker@jacksonmilton.k12.oh.us) if you have any questions or concerns. Our partnership ensures a safe and supportive learning environment where all students can achieve at their highest potential.

Sincerely,



Kirk W. Baker  
Superintendent  
Jackson-Milton Local Schools