

# WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future*

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## **Subject: Parent Alert: popular new social media app, Yik Yak**

Dear Parents,

I am writing to share with you news of a worrisome new social media platform, Yik Yak, that has become popular among many Westwood students. Similar to a virtual bulletin board, the app displays user messages anonymously to other users in their geographic area. Users vote on each others' messages, promoting those that they find entertaining or humorous.

The anonymous nature of the app, as you might imagine, results in interactions between users that can be alarming. Though some of the comments are positive or neutral, most are negative. The result is a virtual environment that is ripe for hostile, unkind interactions, even bullying. We also understand that it can facilitate the real-time coordination of teens, which can result in instances where social events (i.e. access to alcohol) are communicated in an almost-viral nature.

Fortunately, Yik Yak cannot be accessed in the school building, but it is accessible just about anywhere else. Please take a moment today to talk with your children about what apps they use and educate them about the dangers of social media, especially Yik Yak.

Sincerely,



Sean Bevan