



Wheaton High School

The Academies

Academy of Bioscience and Health Professions
Academy of Information Technology
Academy of Engineering
Institute of Global and Cultural Studies

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February 15, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to inform you about an extortion phone scam that is impacting our community.

In the last week, multiple MCPS families have been targeted by what is known as a virtual kidnapping scam. The scam begins with community members receiving a call from an unfamiliar number, often from an international area code. When the call is picked up, community members have reported that they have heard screaming sounds in the background and a message from the caller claiming that they have the person's child and intend to do the child harm unless ransom is paid. [[Read more about the scam from WTOP.](#)]

National and local enforcement are aware of the scam. The Montgomery County Police Department has provided the following advice:

- Do not wire money.
- Contact your child's school.
- Contact the police via 911 or on the non-emergency number, 301-279-8000.

The FBI has also provided guidance to help community members avoid becoming a victim of this scam. This guidance can be found at:

<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/us-citizens-threatened-by-mexican-virtual-kidnapping-scheme>

Please do not hesitate to contact our school if you receive this call. The safety of our students is a top priority.

Thank you,

Dr. Debra Mugge
Principal

/DM/sbc