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Victoria

Melbourne private school students expelled over 'cruel' spreadsheet rating female classmates

Yarra Valley grammar principal says position of two students was untenable and 'they will not be returning'

Cait Kelly
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Yarra Valley grammar principal, Mark Merry, said the students were expelled after staff discovered a screenshot of the spreadsheet in which classmates were ranked. Photograph: Google maps

Two boys at a Melbourne private school have been expelled over a spreadsheet in which female classmates were ranked, its principal has told parents.

Four students from Yarra Valley grammar in Ringwood, in Melbourne's east, were suspended last week after it came to light they had made the list. It included photos of female students ranking them as "wifeys", "cuties", "mid", "object", "get out" and "unrapable".

The principal, Mark Merry, wrote to parents on Tuesday morning and said that while the investigation was still ongoing, he formed the opinion that the enrolment of two boys in the school had become "untenable".

"Others, who have played a lesser role in this matter have been subject to further disciplinary action," he said.

"The investigation of this issue has been complex and time-consuming and can't be rushed and I thank our students and families for your patience and confidence as we ensured that all the circumstances were known."

"The past week has obviously been a difficult one for our community … I am saddened that the actions of a few individuals can cause so much harm as social media has the power to amplify the damage that can be done and the anguish inflicted."

Merry said the school was characterised by respectful relationships "most of the time", but that "more work needs to be done".

"Whilst we conduct regular sessions on respectful relationships and model care and respect in all that we do; this has not been enough," he said.

"We will be reviewing all of our programmes to ensure that the dignity of all is respected. This needs to be a learning moment for all of us."

Merry previously said he had reported the list to the police, and on Tuesday a Victorian police spokesperson said investigators would assess the information to determine if it was 'a matter for police'.

Last week, a screenshot of the list was shared online, with the school becoming aware of the post on Wednesday. The prestigious school costs about $30,000 a year per student to attend.

It created widespread condemnation, with the premier, Jacinta Allan, saying she was "utterly devastated" by the "disgraceful" list.

"To think that you're sitting in a classroom with classmates who not just hold these views, but write them down and share them," Allan told reporters.

"This is no joke. Respect for women has to be at the forefront of every classroom, of every household, of every part of our community, because … too many women [are] subjected to violence, too many women [are] losing their lives."

Speaking on Nine's Today show, the federal education minister, Jason Clare, called the incident "disgusting and appalling".

On Monday an assembly was expected to be held with the entire year level, including parents of the female students named in the document.

Information and support for anyone affected by rape or sexual abuse issues is available from the following organisations. In Australia, support is available at *1800Respect (1800 737 732). In the UK, Rape Crisis offers support on 0808 500 2222. In the US, Rainn offers support on 800-656-4673. Other international helplines can be found at ibiblio.org/rcip/internl.html*

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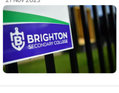

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