



An Important and Urgent Message from the Superintendent and the Director of Technology & Innovation

May 16, 2025

Dear Irvington Families,

We are sending this urgent communication to bring your attention to a highly dangerous and destructive behavior that has recently emerged among students, driven by a social media trend known as the “Chromebook Challenge.” This trend encourages students to insert metal objects, such as paper clips, pushpins, or foil into their school-issued Chromebooks - specifically into USB ports or other device openings - with the intent of causing an electrical short.

This behavior is extremely hazardous. According to [guidance from the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services](#), these actions can trigger a lithium-ion battery failure - leading to toxic and flammable vapor release, and potentially causing fires or explosions. These risks extend well beyond the school day, as damaged Chromebooks can later combust off-campus - in a student’s home or even on a school bus.

Tampering with school-issued devices in this way is not a prank - it is a deliberate act of destruction and will be treated as such. These actions violate the Irvington UFSD Code of Conduct and may result in serious disciplinary consequences, including principal or superintendent-level suspension regardless of whether a fire is started or an evacuation is triggered (as detailed under Section VII of the Code of Conduct).

This action constitutes:

- Disorderly conduct: Disrupting the normal operation of the school community.
- Endangerment: Placing others at risk of harm or injury.
- Vandalism: Willful destruction of school property.
- Violation of technology use policies: Unauthorized use or damage of District-issued equipment.
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We also want to remind all families that, as outlined in the [Chromebook Program Parent/Guardian Responsibility Form](#), that was signed at the start of the school year, families are financially liable for any damage to Chromebooks. This includes intentional acts, such as inserting foreign objects. The form clearly states that parents may be held responsible for up to the full replacement cost of the device, as well as repair costs if applicable.

We urge all families to:

- Speak with your children about the seriousness of this issue.
- Reinforce expectations for safe and responsible use of school-issued devices.
- Remind them that tampering with technology may result in disciplinary, financial, and even legal consequences.

If you suspect that your child’s Chromebook has been damaged or tampered with, do not attempt to charge the device. Report the issue immediately to school personnel so that it can be evaluated by trained staff.

We are grateful for your partnership in maintaining a safe learning environment and in helping our students make smart, responsible choices. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mara Ratesic
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Jerrod Blair
Director of Technology and Innovation



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