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## **Facebook photos land Eden Prairie kids in trouble**

More than 100 were suspended from activities or reprimanded after being shown drinking at parties.

**By MARY LYNN SMITH and COURTNEY BLANCHARD**, Star Tribune

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Eden Prairie High School administrators have reprimanded more than 100 students and suspended some from sports and other extracurricular activities after obtaining Facebook photos of students partying,

several students said Tuesday.

School administrators and the district's spokeswoman didn't return phone calls, but students called in by their deans over the past two days said they were being reprimanded for the Facebook party photos, which administrators had printed out. It's likely, they said, that other students among the 3,300 who attend Eden Prairie will be questioned throughout the week.

Danny O'Leary, a senior who plays lacrosse, said his dean displayed four Facebook photos of O'Leary holding drinks and told him he was in "a bit of trouble." One photo shows him holding a can of Coors beer, another a shot of rum, he said. In yet another, O'Leary is pictured holding his friend's 40-ounce container of beer.

"I wasn't drinking that night," O'Leary said. But that apparently doesn't matter. "I was told each picture was equal to a two-game suspension," he said.

O'Leary said he intends to meet with the director of student activities today to discuss the suspensions. He said he will point out that two of the photos were taken two years ago, before he joined the lacrosse team and signed a pledge not to drink.

"I'm personally pretty upset and wondering why someone would collect these photos and turn them in," O'Leary said. "A lot of kids' lives are going to be ruined as far as scholarships and sports are concerned."

O'Leary said the school's actions are likely to put a dent in underage drinking among students but not stop it. Kids will just be smarter about not posting party and drinking photos, he said.

"It's dumb to have these pictures up on the Internet," he said, pointing out he has since deleted his Facebook page.

Natalie Friedman, a senior who is not part of any sports programs, said she was called in by her dean and scolded about Facebook photos of her behind a bar at a friend's house with drinks visible. She declined to say whether she was drinking, saying that no one can prove there was alcohol in the beverages.

"I didn't get into any trouble," she said. "But I'm only in intramural sports and some clubs." She said a friend who is captain of a girls' team was stripped of her leadership role because she was shown in party photos.

Friedman said some of the photos obtained by school officials show students holding drinks at weddings and family vacations.

After her meeting with her dean, Friedman said, "I see his perspective. They can't look at these pictures and not do anything about it.

"But it's not going to stop kids from drinking," she said. "We're just going to re-evaluate what we put out in public. We're going to be more cautious."

Eden Prairie senior Rachael Kalaidis said she wouldn't be surprised if she's called to the dean's office this week because she is probably pictured in some Facebook party photos posted on her friends' pages. At least 20 of her friends already have had to report to their deans regarding such photos.

"I don't really put bad stuff on my page," she said. "I'm not dumb."


Students throughout the school are talking about getting stung by the Facebook photos, but the administration has not made any public announcements about it or sent out any information, Kalaidis said.

"Everyone thinks it's pretty weird," she said. "I think it's a huge invasion of privacy."

The Minnesota State High School League requires student athletes to sign a pledge that they will not drink alcoholic beverages.

Principal Conn McCartan declined to talk to a reporter who went to his home late Tuesday. Varsity boys' hockey coach Lee Smith said late Tuesday that no players on his team are involved, but declined to comment further. Eden Prairie girls' hockey coach Tim Morris, reached at home, declined to comment Tuesday.

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