

Pittsburg High School students suspended for inappropriate comments posted on Instagram

By Eve Mitchell *Contra Costa Times*

POSTED: 10/09/2013 04:08:00 PM PDT | UPDATED: ABOUT A YEAR AGO

74 COMMENTS

PITTSBURG -- Several students were suspended from Pittsburg High School after sharing a photo posted on the Instagram social network site that included derogatory comments about a girl whom the principal was trying to restrain during a fight, authorities said.

Principal Todd Whitmire said it wasn't the posting of the photo that got the suspended students in trouble but rather the comments that were added to the photo, which he said amounts to cyberbullying through a social network. The two students who fought were also suspended earlier this week for their actions as called for under the state education code.

"It was the reposting, the retweeting, and keeping it alive and assigning negative comments to it and creating a hostile environment" for the girl, he said Wednesday of the posts that followed Friday's on-campus fight.

A new state law that went into effect in 2012 strengthened California's anti-cyber bullying laws to include posts on social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

"It's a tool for educators to use," said Peggy Marshburn, spokeswoman for the Contra Costa County office of education. "That was not something that school districts had before."

The fight between the students, both ninth-graders, started with a verbal altercation on school grounds.

"The young lady hit him and he hit her back," said Whitmire, who intervened in the fight to separate the two.

The posted photo, taken by a student with a cellphone, distorts what happened in that it gives the perception that the girl is being held in a choke hold around the neck, Whitmire said.

"I had separated her and she began struggling and I was pushing her away to get her away from the area and she fell down," he said.

The girl told authorities she was injured by the male student, he said. She arrived at school on Monday with a neck brace, but a video taken of her by a school resource officer shows her moving around comfortably in a classroom. She could not be reached for comment.

Most physical or verbal altercations on campus originate in social network communications, though the fight between the boy and the girl did not, Whitmire said.

"Social media can be a very positive influence and great way to communicate, but also at the same time it can be very disruptive and very dangerous," he said.

Dorothy Epps, associate superintendent for the Pittsburg Unified School District, said the posted comments were inappropriate and the photo "didn't tell the whole story. We we're concerned about the students' safety; there was a fight going on and the principal intervened."

Before the fight broke out, Pittsburg police responded to the school after receiving a tip that a handful of students were planning a brawl at lunchtime, Lt. Ron Raman said.


"We had some information through social media that several students were planning a fight," Raman said. "So we had our school resource officers and additional officers show up to the school to (back up) staff. We had at least six officers and a supervisor there."


As anticipated, Raman said, several fights broke out in the quad area -- a common area that includes the school cafeteria.

"During (the melee), staff members were pulling people away from one another. The principal tried to pull a student away and she fell and he fell down with her," said Raman, adding there is no evidence any battery took place and that no charges are pending.

Recruit Yuri Wright expelled for Tweets

1/20/2012 - [RUTGERS SCARLET KNIGHTS](#),
[MICHIGAN WOLVERINES](#) +2 more

 Share with Facebook

 Share with Twitter

0 ESPN.com news services

Shares

[Yuri Wright](#), the 40th-ranked player on the ESPNU 150 who is being sought by schools in the Big Ten, Pac-12, ACC, SEC and Big East, has put his scholarship hopes in up in the air after being expelled from school for sexually graphic and racial Twitter posts.

Wright was expelled from Don Bosco Prep High School in Ramsey, N.J., on Wednesday, his high school coach, Greg Toal, confirmed to numerous media outlets.

"He was expelled from the school for the things he had written on Twitter," Toal told ESPNNewYork.com. "It was pretty simple really, what he wrote were some graphic sex things. This is a Catholic school, things like that cannot happen. It was totally inappropriate."

The reason, his coach said, was because of a series of tweets that began last July. Among the schools he is considering are Michigan, Rutgers, Notre Dame and Colorado. A number of outlets reported that Michigan has stopped recruiting him.

National signing day is Feb. 1.

Wright, a senior cornerback, was warned about social media consequences, according to Toal. Wright's account, which had more than 1,600 followers, has been deleted.

"We told them about 10 or 15 times to get off (Twitter) and not to be involved in it, but there is always somebody who thinks he knows better." Toal told ESPNNewYork.com. "What he wrote was pretty bad, to be honest with you, I can't even say what he wrote.

"He was told on numerous occasions not to be Twittering and there are consequences for his actions."

Wright played in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl in San Antonio earlier this month. Toal said that he has received calls from a few coaches regarding the situation, and believes Wright ultimately will weather the situation.

"There have been schools that have called asking about it, but he'll be fine as far as colleges go." Toal told ESPNNewYork.com. "Some don't like it, but mostly people are just calling to make sure his head is straight."

Information from ESPNNewYork.com's Robert Abruzzese is included in this report.

"Recruit Yuri Wright Expelled for Tweets." *ESPN*. 20 Jan. 2012. Web. 4 Apr. 2015. <http://espn.go.com/college-sports/recruiting/football/story/_/id/7484495/yuri-wright-twitter-posts-cost-college-scholarship>.

Students

Students arrested, expelled for making violent Twitter threats


 Helen A.S. Popkin
NBC News

May 23, 2012 at 3:37 PM ET

A high school junior posted multiple tweets on Twitter about plans to place a bomb in a locker, including a specific place and time. In an unconnected Twitter incident, a sophomore at the same school wrote about shooting himself and other students. Both claimed the tweets were meant as jokes, not threats, [the New Haven Register reports](#). But West Haven High School in Connecticut – where both were students – and the local police department, are not laughing.

Now expelled and arrested, both students face felony charges. The cases serve as yet another example of what happens when schools and social media clash. "The two happened so close together that we thought someone needs to say to these kids that if you post something, you're going to be held responsible," Sgt. Dave Tammaro told the Register.

Like so many other schools these days, West Haven High plans to use these incidents to once again educate parents on why it's a good idea to monitor what their kids are doing on the Internet. Neither the West Haven school district or police department responded to our requests for comment.

But in all the discussion of the cases, free speech doesn't seem to be part of the conversation.

In an April story about three girls in Indiana suspended for joking on Facebook about classmates they'd like to kill, [Wendy Kaminer wrote in The Atlantic](#): "There's no question that those of us not in actual or virtual custody of school authorities have the right to make jokes about killing each other. Student rights, however, are increasingly limited; anxiety about social media and hysteria about bullying or drug use have only been exacerbated by the post 9/11 authoritarianism that permeates our culture and our courts."

Most often, the onus on the school is not to support free speech, but on the parents and kids to watch what the kids are posting. In West Haven, parents were informed in a school newsletter about the threat from the students, whose names are withheld because they are minors, Principal Pamela Gardner told the Register, and the school continues to work with the police on social media matters.

"I think kids don't really think when they post on Twitter, and it's really important that kids understand that what they write on any social media they're held accountable for, even if it's tongue-in-cheek

because you can't get the meaning across — you don't know if it's sarcasm or how it was intended," Gardner told the Register. "And so I think that what is really important is that kids and parents are really aware of how social media is impacting our students' lives."

When it comes to questionable student behavior and social media, arrests are rare. Expulsions however, not so much. Earlier this month, a student came under police investigation after he was suspended from Como Park Senior High School in St. Paul, Minnesota for allegedly serving another student a cupcake laced with bodily fluids, [the Pioneer Press reported earlier this week](#).

It wasn't the "inappropriate prank he pulled on another student" that got the attention of the police, St. Paul police spokesman Sgt. Paul Paulos told the Pioneer Press. It was the kid's tweet threatening to burn down his school principal's house. The police are now investigating the threat, reported on Friday, but the student hasn't been arrested.

Guns, bombs, arson. Sure puts the case of that kid, Austin Carroll, who dropped the f-bomb on Twitter, into context. Earlier this year, Carroll, a 17-year-old senior at Garrett High School in Garrett, Indiana, [was expelled months before graduation for doing just that](#).

"One of my tweets was, f***** is one of those f***** words you can f***** put anywhere in a f***** sentence and it still f***** makes sense," [Carroll told The Indiana NewsCenter](#).

Garrett High School seemed to skirt the whole free speech argument by claiming it had proof the "inappropriate" content came from a school computer, not Carroll's private property.

While not involved in the case at the time, ACLU attorney Aden Fine told me that "the courts are just starting to grapple with this issue, and the (U.S.) Supreme Court hasn't yet made clear what can and can't be punished in school."

Generally, cases involving punishment of student behavior outside of school present a very slippery slope. "What kids say while they're not at school is not the school's business, that's for parents to decide," Fine said. "That's the way it's been for hundreds of hundreds of hundreds of years."

When that speech involves threats of violence however, fears about losing free speech are increasingly left in the dust.

They Loved Your G.P.A. Then They Saw Your Tweets.

By NATASHA SINGER NOV. 9, 2013

At Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Me., admissions officers are still talking about the high school senior who attended a campus information session last year for prospective students. Throughout the presentation, she apparently posted disparaging comments on Twitter about her fellow attendees, repeatedly using a common expletive.

Perhaps she hadn't realized that colleges keep track of their social media mentions.

"It was incredibly unusual and foolish of her to do that," [Scott A. Meiklejohn, Bowdoin's dean of admissions](#) and financial aid, told me last week. The college ultimately denied the student admission, he said, because her academic record wasn't competitive. But had her credentials been better, those indiscreet posts could have scuttled her chances.

"We would have wondered about the judgment of someone who spends their time on their mobile phone and makes such awful remarks," Mr. Meiklejohn said.

As certain high school seniors work meticulously this month to finish their early applications to colleges, some may not realize that comments they casually make online could negatively affect their prospects. In fact, new [research from Kaplan Test Prep](#), the service owned by the Washington Post Company, suggests that online scrutiny of college hopefuls is growing.

Of 381 college admissions officers who answered a Kaplan telephone questionnaire this year, 31 percent said they had visited an applicant's Facebook or other personal social media page to learn more about them — a five-percentage-point increase from last year. More crucially for those trying to get into college, 30 percent of the admissions officers said they had discovered information online that had negatively affected an applicant's prospects.

"Students' social media and digital footprint can sometimes play a role in the admissions process," says Christine Brown, the executive director of K-12 and college prep programs at Kaplan Test Prep. "It's something that is becoming more ubiquitous and less looked down upon."

In the business realm, employers now vet the online reputations of job candidates as a matter of course. Given the impulsiveness of typical teenagers, however — not to mention the already fraught nature of college acceptances and rejections — the idea that admissions officers would covertly nose around the social media posts of prospective students seems more chilling.

There is some reason for concern. Ms. Brown says that most colleges don't have formal policies about admissions officers supplementing students' files with their own online research. If colleges find seemingly troubling material online, they may not necessarily notify the applicants involved.

"To me, it's a huge problem," said Bradley S. Shear, a lawyer specializing in social media law. For one thing, Mr. Shear told me, colleges might erroneously identify the account of a person with the same name as a prospective student — or even mistake an impostor's account — as belonging to the applicant, potentially leading to unfair treatment. "Often," he added, "false and misleading content online is taken as fact."

These kinds of concerns prompted me last week to email 20 colleges and universities — small and large, private and public, East Coast and West Coast — to ask about their practices. Then I called admissions officials at 10 schools who agreed to interviews.

Each official told me that it was not routine practice at his or her institution for admissions officers to use Google searches on applicants or to peruse their social media posts. Most said their school received so many applications to review — with essays, recommendations and, often, supplemental portfolios — that staff members wouldn't be able to do extra research online. A few also felt that online investigations might lead to unfair or inconsistent treatment.

“As students' use of social media is growing, there's a whole variety of ways that college admissions officers can use it,” [Beth A. Wiser, the director of admissions](#) at the University of Vermont, told me. “We have chosen to not use it as part of the process in making admissions decisions.”

Other admissions officials said they did not formally prohibit the practice. In fact, they said, admissions officers did look at online material about applicants on an ad hoc basis. Sometimes prospective students themselves ask an admissions office to look at blogs or videos they have posted; on other occasions, an admissions official might look up an obscure award or event mentioned by an applicant, for purposes of elucidation.

“Last year, we watched some animation videos and we followed media stories about an applicant who was involved in a political cause,” says Will Hummel, an admissions officer at [Pomona College in Claremont](#), Calif. But those were rare instances, he says, and the supplemental material didn't significantly affect the students' admissions prospects.

Admissions officials also said they had occasionally rejected applicants, or revoked their acceptances, because of online materials. Often, these officials said, a college may learn about a potential problem from an outside source, such as a high school counselor or a graduate, prompting it to look into the matter.

Last year, an undergraduate at Pitzer College in Claremont, Calif., who had befriended a prospective student on Facebook, notified the admissions office because he noticed that the applicant had posted offensive comments about one of his high school teachers.

“We thought, this is not the kind of person we want in our community,” [Angel B. Perez, Pitzer's dean of admission](#) and financial aid, told me. With about 4,200 applications annually for a first-year class of 250 students, the school can afford to be selective. “We didn't admit the student,” Mr. Perez said.

But colleges vary in their transparency. While Pitzer doesn't contact students if their social media activities precluded admission to the school, Colgate University does notify students if they are eliminated from the applicant pool for any reason other than being uncompetitive candidates.

“We should be transparent with applicants,” says Gary L. Ross, Colgate's dean of admission. He once called a student, to whom Colgate had already offered acceptance, to check whether an alcohol-related incident that was reported online was indeed true. (It was, and Colgate rescinded the offer of admission.)

“We will always ask if there is something we didn't understand,” Mr. Ross said.

In an effort to help high school students avoid self-sabotage online, guidance counselors are tutoring them in scrubbing their digital identities. At [Brookline High School](#) in Massachusetts, juniors are taught to delete alcohol-related posts or photographs and to create socially acceptable email addresses. One junior's original email address was “bleedingjesus,” said Lenny Libenzon, the school's guidance department chairman. That changed.

“They imagine admissions officers are old professors,” he said. “But we tell them a lot of admissions officers are very young and technology-savvy.”

Likewise, high school students seem to be growing more shrewd, changing their searchable names on Facebook or untagging themselves in pictures to obscure their digital footprints during the college admission process.

“We know that some students maintain two Facebook accounts,” says [Wes K. Waggoner, the dean of undergraduate admission](#) at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

For their part, high school seniors say that sanitizing social media accounts doesn’t seem qualitatively different than the efforts they already make to present the most appealing versions of themselves to colleges. While Megan Heck, 17, a senior at [East Lansing High School](#) in Michigan, told me that she was not amending any of her posts as she applied early to colleges this month, many of her peers around the country were.

“If you’ve got stuff online you don’t want colleges to see,” Ms. Heck said, “deleting it is kind of like joining two more clubs senior year to list on your application to try to make you seem more like the person they want at their schools.”

Social Media Shocker: Twitter and Facebook Can Cost You a Scholarship or Admissions Offer

BY RACHEL ROWAN · APRIL 24, 2014



You can have a stellar GPA, extracurricular activities galore, speak a foreign language fluently and may give tons of time to charity, but find yourself rejected for admissions or denied a scholarship because of your social media shenanigans. Unless you're Miley Cyrus or one of the Jenner/Kardashian clan that relies on controversial tweets and selfies to promote concert tours and product lines, you should not be acting out on any social media site.

According to a study by test prep giant Kaplan, 27% of admissions officers Google candidates and 26% check Facebook. When it comes to scholarship applications, there's really no telling how high this percentage may be since there are so many sources of funds and an endless stream of people that weigh in on whether you're worth the money. The bottom line is that your social media activity can absolutely cost you an acceptance to the school of your choice or a scholarship to help pay your way. The less you have in scholarships, the more you may have to borrow, so your tweets and Instagrams can quite literally cost you tens of thousands of dollars over time. Youth in their mid-twenties and younger are a generation that share thoughts and images on social media constantly – many without filtering what they share. You may feel your right to self expression shouldn't be censored and the whole First Amendment thing, etc., etc.

But the bottom line is that what you tweet, like and share can and will be used against you in the court of public opinion and if you are smart, you will censor yourself lest it cost you a college admission, scholarship and, eventually, career opportunities. Even high school yearbooks are now incorporating Twitter posts into their pages – that will see your tweets into perpetuity.

If you have social media accounts, you should get them cleaned up ASAP so they don't cost you hits to your reputation that can ruin the rest of your life. Here are some things to consider:

#1 Keep the profile name appropriate

Your profile name on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and even your email should not contain profanity, sexual innuendo, implications of drug use or alcohol abuse or your tendency to party. First and last

name are safe. Don't call yourself SexyKitten05 or HotStud15. Just don't. This may impress someone you're trying to get with, but will be a huge detractor to admissions.

#2 Be mindful of what images you post and pose for

Not only do you need to be careful about what images you share, but also what pics you allow to be taken of you that may get tagged on Facebook and viewed. Making out, hoisting red Solo cups, flipping people off and bikini selfies should be avoided. If you are caught on camera, ask that the images or video be deleted and confirm they are before they are posted and out of your control.

#3 Be conservative in what items you like and share

You may find a racist or homophobic cartoon hilarious, but sharing it on social media can make you look like an intolerant extremist. Sharing videos, images or posts of a sexual nature, that endorse drinking or drug abuse or anti-social behaviors should also be avoided. Colleges and scholarship providers want to know they are investing their time and money into serious students.

#4 Keep your opinions out of the fringes

Hot headed political extremism, intolerant religious views, condemnation of other races, religions or sexual orientations are all poor fodder for your social media accounts. It's fine to debate with your friends, but posting way left or right-wing musings can cost you big.

#5 Be sure you keep as much as you can private

Adjust your privacy settings as high as possible on all social media accounts so that casual browsers cannot access your posts. Require approval before you can be followed and don't share with contacts of contacts. But even if you restrict access, still don't post willy nilly. Also, limit what other people can post to your pages, block photo tagging and delete anything inappropriate from friends that have posted on any of your social media walls.

#6 Go back and clean house on all accounts

Go back through all posts and clean them up and delete any that are questionable. Some social media accounts can be shut down and all posts deleted. If you don't want to sift through, delete the account and start over. Facebook keeps old accounts archived, so you will have to clean that one up. Don't try and use dummy accounts because they can be traced to you and make you look sneaky or dishonest.

#7 Stay safe by inviting your family over

One of the best ways to keep your social media G or PG rated and safe for admissions counselors, scholarship judges and future employers is to share with your family. If you aren't comfortable posting something for your dad, grandma and favorite uncle to see, it probably shouldn't be posted. Think of your social media walls as glass houses that anyone can see into and judge you at will.

Hot headed political extremism, intolerant religious views, condemnation of other races, religions or sexual orientations are all poor fodder for your social media accounts. It's fine to debate with your friends, but posting way left or right-wing musings can cost you big.

#5 Be sure you keep as much as you can private

Adjust your privacy settings as high as possible on all social media accounts so that casual browsers cannot access your posts. Require approval before you can be followed and don't share with contacts of contacts. But even if you restrict access, still don't post willy nilly. Also, limit what other people can post to your pages, block photo tagging and delete anything inappropriate from friends that have posted on any of your social media walls.

#6 Go back and clean house on all accounts

Go back through all posts and clean them up and delete any that are questionable. Some social media accounts can be shut down and all posts deleted. If you don't want to sift through, delete the account and start over. Facebook keeps old accounts archived, so you will have to clean that one up. Don't try and use dummy accounts because they can be traced to you and make you look sneaky or dishonest.

#7 Stay safe by inviting your family over

One of the best ways to keep your social media G or PG rated and safe for admissions counselors, scholarship judges and future employers is to share with your family. If you aren't comfortable posting something for your dad, grandma and favorite uncle to see, it probably shouldn't be posted. Think of your social media walls as glass houses that anyone can see into and judge you at will.

Texas teen tweets herself out of pizzeria job

Published February 10, 2015 · FoxNews.com



1488



537



1326



A Texas teen lost her job at a Dallas area pizzeria before she even started when she trashed the gig in a tweet that her prospective boss spotted.

“Ew I start this f*** a** job tomorrow,” Twitter user [@cella](#) tweeted on Friday regarding her new job at Jet’s Pizza in Mansfield, along with a string of emojis depicting seven thumbs down.

But the worker was served up a cold slice of reality when another Jet’s employee showed the missive to franchise owner Robert Waple. He responded to the young girl with a tweet of his own.

“No you don’t start that FA job today! I just fired you! Good luck with your no money, no job life!” [@Robertwaple](#) tweeted on Saturday, using his account for the first time since signing up for the social media service in 2009.

The public firing didn’t seem to bother Cella, who tweeted out her joy over being fired on Twitter.

“I got fired over Twitter,” she said.

Waple tweeted out a second message to Cella which has since been deleted according to reports.

“Working register, taking phone orders, making subs/salads. Eating free pizza. How hard would that have been?” he said in the tweet.

Some questioned the validity of Waples’ account, but Cella confirmed the message was legitimate in yet another tweet.

Waple’s pizza shop is a franchise of Jet’s Pizza, which has nearly 400 locations in 18 states.

“The location in question is an independently owned and operated franchise store. Jet’s America, Inc., as the franchisor, cannot dictate the employment practices or decisions of independently owned and operated franchise businesses,” a spokeswoman for Jet’s Pizza’s corporate office said in a statement provided to FoxNews.com.

High School Coaches Back UGA's Social Media Scrutiny

by Michael Carvell; Staff  August 2014



AthleticBusiness.com has partnered with LexisNexis to bring you this content.

Copyright 2014 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Mark Richt's decision to drop a Georgia football recruit for misbehaving on Twitter didn't surprise many high school coaches across metro Atlanta.

"I think it's an excellent policy, and I wish there were more stories like this to drive the point home to the kids," Central Gwinnett coach Todd Wofford said.

Social-media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are extremely popular among recruits. It gives the prospects a chance to express their thoughts and to interact with fans, while providing the colleges an opportunity to monitor a kid's personality and behavior.

Richt, who has been criticized for the off-the-field behavior of several of his players since the end of last season, pointed out to reporters last week that he dropped a kid committed to Georgia last year because of character issues. He declined to publicly identify the recruit, but explained that it was connected to Twitter.

"He had some stuff on social media that we didn't like and we keep an eye on all that," Richt said.

"We told (the kid, and) we told his coach (that) we don't condone that, and he was a guy who was already committed to Georgia. And he persisted. Well, actually he changed his (Twitter) handle and continued to do that kind of thing thinking we wouldn't find out. And we found out about it, and we cut him.

"We rescinded that offer to him because if he's not going to do what we say to do at that point, then what's going to make us feel like he's going to do it when he gets here? There's definitely a vetting process that we're very serious about."

Richt's actions didn't surprise Tucker coach Bryan Lamar, who saw two of his players sign with Georgia in February.

"Sometimes it's hard to judge that type of situation because you don't know all the details and maybe a college will say that to get out of a commit?" Lamar said.

"But it seems pretty clear what happened here. Georgia told the kid to stop it, and the kid opened up another Twitter account to do the same stuff. In that case, I'm with it. Get rid of him.

"If you can't stop doing little things like that that embarrass the school on social media, that's a problem. How can they trust you when you get on campus? That's a bigtime red flag. And you know Georgia is under the microscope with their (player) behavior anyways, so I don't have a problem with it."

Sandy Creek coach Chip Walker lectures his players every year about appropriate conduct on social media. He also makes sure the team is aware of situations like what happened recently at Georgia, along with Penn State.

A couple of weeks ago, a Penn State assistant tweeted that he "dropped another prospect (due) to his social media presence," while adding, "actually glad I got to see the 'real' person before we offered him."

Said Walker, "We tell our kids that things they put on social media are directly tied to their character, even if it's a retweet. I completely understand people not wanting to recruit kids that have potential to have character issues down the road.

"I agree with coach Richt's stance, and I think it shows that he wants high-character people to properly represent the University of Georgia. We tell our kids the same thing about representing Sandy Creek and their family the right way."

Rusty Mansell is a recruiting analyst for 247Sports.com who also runs several high-profile prospect camps across the state. He makes it a point to remind kids that colleges are tracking them on Twitter and Facebook.

"I tell the kids, Colleges aren't looking for a reason to offer you; they are looking for a reason to not offer you.' And social media, as much as game tape, is a way to separate kids on your board.

"I don't know how else kids are going to understand that. But colleges make tough decisions at positions when they can only take so many. If you've got two players who you think are at the same level, and you've got concerns about the character of one of the kids based on his history on social media, it's a no-brainer. You're not taking that kid."

Concord coach invites Twitter to 'burn down' RFRA-supporting pizzeria

Jess Dooley, a Concord High School golf, softball and basketball coach, was suspended hours after responding to Religious Freedom Restoration Act news story with Tweet about arson.

A Concord High School coach has been suspended after she tweeted about arson in relation to a Walkerton pizzeria whose owners told the media they agree with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Jess Dooley, who is the head coach of the girls golf program and also an assistant coach with the softball and girls basketball programs, took to Twitter Wednesday, April 1, to voice her opinion about the RFRA.

She was adding to the conversation about Memories Pizza, a Walkerton restaurant whose owners announced in a television news segment that they would not cater gay weddings.

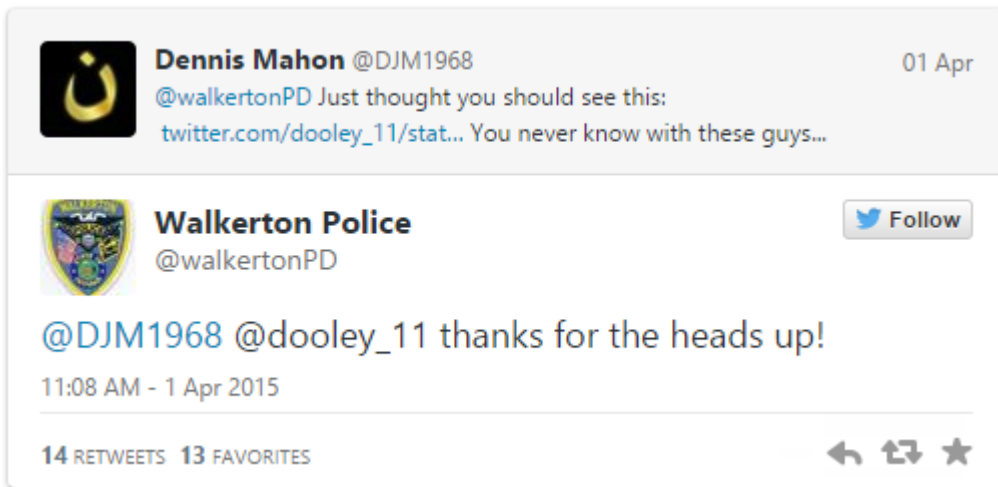
Her tweet read: “Who’s going to Walkerton, IN to burn down #memoriespizza w me?”

The situation started early Wednesday after Crystal O’Connor told ABC 57 that her family’s pizza business would not cater to gay weddings because of their Christian beliefs, according to 95.3 MNC’s website. O’Connor added that her family would not deny service to any customers visiting the restaurant to dine.

Since the story aired — which BuzzFeed and Politico also picked up on — thousands of people from across the country have targeted the business’s Facebook and Yelp pages. The pizzeria’s rating on both sites has plummeted to a single star. The business’s website was also hacked to display pornography and graphic language.

Dooley’s Twitter account was deleted quickly, taking the tweet in question with it, but that did not stop hundreds of Twitter users from responding. Many announced they would be contacting the school and asking for her to be disciplined, and others criticized her violent response.

One user pointed the tweet out to the Walkerton Police Department.



The police department conducted an investigation and forwarded the case to the St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office for possible charges, according to a statement released to the media.

"The Walkerton Police Department is committed to extending professional police services to all in need, regardless of said person's sexual, religious, or political views," according to the release.

"We encourage all to follow Indiana Laws and Statutes. We ask that all frustrations and rebuttals with Memories Pizza's recent media statements remain within the law."

Concord Community Schools superintendent Wayne Stubbs confirmed that the district is aware of the situation and Dooley has been suspended from her coaching duties pending further investigation.

Dooley also works with Concord as a paraprofessional through the Elkhart County Special Education Cooperative. Because the district contracts with the cooperative for support, Stubbs said he could not comment on that part of her employment status. As of 5:30 p.m., a call to ECSEC from The Elkhart Truth was not returned.