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NEWS RELEASE

**FOUR LAKEVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS CHARGED
WITH CRIMES INVOLVING INAPPROPRIATE PHOTOS/IMAGES**

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom announced that four students at Century Middle School in Lakeville have been charged* today with crimes involving the taking and distribution of inappropriate photos and a video in May of 2012. The following charges have been filed:

- (1) A 14-year-old boy has been charged with Conspiracy to Commit Interference With Privacy (a gross misdemeanor) and Criminal Defamation (a gross misdemeanor);
- (2) A 13-year-old boy has been charged with Conspiracy to Commit Interference With Privacy (a gross misdemeanor) and Criminal Defamation (a gross misdemeanor);
- (3) A 14-year-old girl has been charged with Interference With Privacy (a gross misdemeanor) and Criminal Defamation (a gross misdemeanor); and
- (4) A 14-year-old girl has been charged with Interference with Privacy (a gross misdemeanor).

Under Minnesota law, the names of these juveniles are not public information.

Backstrom said that these charges stem from an incident which occurred in May of 2012 (the incident was reported to the Lakeville Police Department on May 21st by a school administrator) in which two girls allegedly took photos and a video of two other girls undressing in the school's locker room. The first girl charged is alleged to have taken four photos of one victim and a video of another victim. The second girl charged is alleged to have taken one photo of one of the same victims. The photos and video showed the backs of the victims partially undressed from the waist down (none of the images showed the victims naked).

The photos and video were later forwarded by the first girl charged to one of the two boys charged. It is alleged that this boy then forwarded the inappropriate photos and video to the second boy charged and another male student. The second boy charged is alleged to have forwarded the photos of one victim to four other male students. Ultimately, it is believed that these inappropriate photos/images may have been seen by more than 40 students from the school.

The two boys charged in this case had apparently created a game in which they took photos of the buttocks of girls in the hallway and forwarded these photos to other students. It is believed that each boy paid one of the girls \$5.00 and one of the boys gave her a can of soda to take the inappropriate images in the locker room. The second girl charged is believed to have taken one inappropriate photo as a result of the urging of the first girl charged in this case.

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Backstrom said these charges will be dealt with in juvenile court in a manner that will hopefully allow these young students to realize the harmful nature of their actions. “No juvenile detention is expected as an outcome in any of these cases and it is anticipated that none of the juveniles charged in this case will be left with a permanent criminal record as a result of this prosecution,” Backstrom stated.

Backstrom said that no further charges will be filed in this case. The four youth charged in this case are those believed to have been directly involved in either taking or causing the inappropriate photos/images to be taken. We have been advised that many of the other students involved in possessing or transferring these inappropriate images have already been sanctioned by the school.

Backstrom praised the Lakeville Police Department and Lakeville School District for their quick and thorough investigation and intervention to appropriately address this troublesome situation.

If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4438.

**Criminal charges are not evidence of guilt. A defendant/suspect is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.*