

May 18, 2022

Dear Manhasset School Community,

Earlier this year, the District accepted a gift of a memorial bench in honor of a student who tragically passed away. The bench was recently installed at Memorial Field. When visiting the bench today, the child's father discovered a swastika etched into the concrete footing. We immediately reported this symbol of intolerance and hate to the Nassau County Police Department and our custodial team painstakingly removed the antisemitic etching.

Sadly, this is now the second time this school year that I am writing to you with disturbing news of this nature. I want to be clear that this symbol of antisemitism, or any other intolerant symbol or slur, has no place in our school, our community, or society. The District once again strongly condemns the defacing of school property with symbols of hate and finds such action to be abhorrent. These incidents are deeply troubling as they do not reflect who we are, what we value, and what we stand for as a community.

We realize that addressing the serious issues of racism, antisemitism, intolerance and all forms of hate requires an ongoing effort from both the district and our community. Earlier this year, the District formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion working groups, in furtherance of the District's mission to develop learning environments in which we treat each other with dignity, courtesy, and respect. The work of the working groups will deepen our collective understanding of dignity, belonging, and inclusion for all children throughout our school community.

We are committed to this effort and once again look to our continued partnership with the greater Manhasset community for unity, as our differences have always been a source of strength. We recognize that these are emotionally charged times. Now more than ever it is important for our school community to come together in service to our children who are first in all our hearts and minds.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gaurav Passi
Acting Superintendent of Schools