

DEVIL ON THE BLACKTOP

Video of Monarch PK-8 students allegedly screaming “Satan” at recess goes viral

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When Monarch PK-8 seventh grader Emily Frost joined her friends at recess, the last thing she expected to hear was a crowd of her peers chanting “Satan.” However, as she walked onto the blacktop on Jan. 12, a group of students caught her eye. She could see them circled around an individual on the ground. Her jaw dropped when they began chanting, “Hail Satan.”

“I slid my phone out of my pocket, so just the front was showing,” Frost said. “One of the workers was walking up to the circle, so I thought he would do something, but he never did, so I just kept filming. Then they started screaming, ‘Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice!’ and then some kids started to scream, ‘Hail Satan.’”

Frost’s video corroborates her story. She became even more shocked when a boy got into the middle of the circle and began shaking on the ground while the students continued to scream.

“I just didn’t feel comfortable. I wasn’t ready to see that,” Frost said.

When she returned home that afternoon, Frost showed her parents the video she had taken and described the unusual recess activity that had taken place that day.

Frost’s parents, Kara and Aaron, were shocked by what they saw. “I’m in a small women’s group at church, so I wrote to them and shared the video,” Kara said. “Unbeknownst to me, they shared it, and it just kept snowballing.”

The video was posted to Facebook by one of the women in Kara’s women’s group. Quickly, news of the event spread. “I think like two days later, it had 120,000 views or close to,” Kara said.

What happened next surprised the Frost family even more.

On the Tuesday following Martin Luther King Jr. Day, school administrators had something to say about the events that transpired. Frost takes her math course at

home during fourth period, but on this particular day, she had to take a placement test at the school. When she finished the exam, her father arrived to pick her up.

It turns out the administration seemed more upset about Frost using her phone to record the incident than the actual incident itself.

“I was waiting to check out when the principal pulled me into a massive room in the back that had a long table with a massive TV,” Frost said. “There were five people. There was one lady who was super close to me on my back. They didn’t have video proof of me taking the video, but I didn’t feel comfortable, so I just told them it was me.”

According to Frost, the district then asked her if she remembered that at the beginning of the year, students were told they could not take photos or videos of anyone else and that phones would be required to be in a locker at all times. Frost explained that she did not feel comfortable doing that and that most of her peers had their phones as well, which is why she had it on her at the time.

“I was just so uncomfortable and wanted to go home so bad,” Frost said. “I was trying to get out of that situation because I was crying.”

Kara and Aaron were just as upset. “I’m a social-emotional learning specialist at my school,” Kara said. “So I was just more concerned with the social-emotional effects for Emily, and that they didn’t have anybody there to help her while they were threatening her.”

Despite the parents’ concerns, Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) maintains that they were simply following their policy. “Following an incident, our typical procedure does involve a conversation with school administrators and students to determine the facts and viewpoints,” Randy Barber, BVSD’s chief communications officer, said. “Those conversations regularly have more than one adult in the room for safety reasons.”

However, Frost feels that being questioned with five adults present was an intense reaction to the use of her cell phone to film the video.

“I mean, I just think they were so embarrassed and didn’t know how to handle it, so they doubled down,” Frost said. “If they see your phone in your pocket, they can take it. I’ve even seen that happen.”

Additionally, Frost is upset with the way that the school handled the students who were featured in the video. She feels that the district should have confronted the students for their behavior at recess that day.

“I wish they would have just said, ‘I’m sorry you had to witness all that happened, and that shouldn’t have been happening,’ instead of ‘You shouldn’t have been on your phone.’”

However, the district does not feel that there was any reason for disciplinary action against the students in the video.

“There is no evidence that the playground incident was planned or intended to resemble a satanic ritual,” Barber said.

Because of how the incident was handled, Frost has decided to continue her schooling at Eldorado PK-8.

“Yeah, I don’t feel comfortable going back,” she said.

Despite Frost’s claims, the district maintains that standard procedure was followed to investigate the incident.

“While we cannot speak about specific student discipline, there was no evidence of bullying, harassment or any other violation of policy or law,” Barber said. “The focus moving forward is building a strong school culture that ensures all students feel safe and welcome.”

This is something both BVSD and the Frosts can agree on. The children’s well-being should be the top priority.

“Mental health needs to come first,” Kara said. “All of our kids are struggling so much as it is, coming from COVID and the fires, and life is just hard right now.”

120,000 views in under 24 hours

What Monarch PK-8 eighth graders at recess have to say about cell phone policy

“Even if you have your phone in your back pocket, they’ll take it away from you.”

“They were looser about the policy before the incident.”

“If you’re using your Apple Watch, you can’t have it either.”

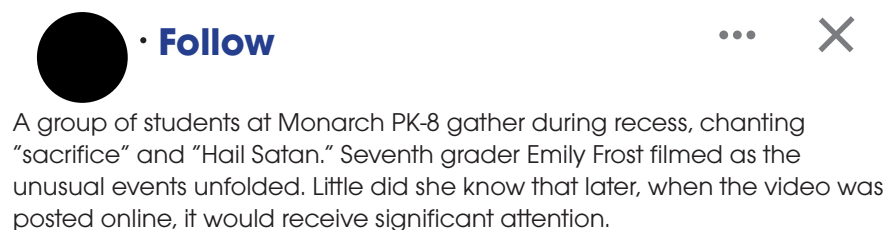
“Before, if you had your phone on you, it was fine as long as you weren’t making any noise.”

What BVSD said

“The Boulder Valley School District is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all students.

Monarch PK-8 investigated the incident captured on the video and shared on social media and found no evidence of bullying or harassment. The school does not have a Satan Club, as asserted in the posts.

We always encourage students who have a concern to connect with a trusted adult or to make a complaint using the reporting options available on our website.”



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