

RUMORS



WHY DO PEOPLE START OR SPREAD RUMORS?

To feel superior

When people are feeling **BAD ABOUT THEMSELVES**, they might think "I'll feel better if someone is *WORSE OFF* than me!"

To feel like part of the group

If everybody else is gossiping or spreading rumors, you might feel pressured to do the same thing in order to fit in. If something **FEELS WRONG**, then don't do it! You will regret it later.

For attention

When you know a secret that nobody knows, it can make you the **CENTER OF ATTENTION**. Constantly gossiping is **NOT** a good way to get attention and it may affect your reputation.

For control or power

Certain people always want to be in control and at the "top of the ladder." You probably know at least one person who needs to be the leader and make all the decisions in their group. When people are at the top of the popularity scale, or are determined to climb higher, one way they do this is by reducing the "status" of another person. Spreading rumors and gossip is one of the main ways people reduce another person's status, especially among girls.

Out of jealousy or a need for revenge

If you're jealous of someone's looks, popularity, or money, you might gossip about that person in order to hurt him or her. If you feel that someone's done something bad to you, or deserves to be hurt, making up a rumor might satisfy your sense of justice.

Out of boredom

Some people spread rumors out of BOREDOM. (If this applies to you, PLEASE find something better to do with yourself!)



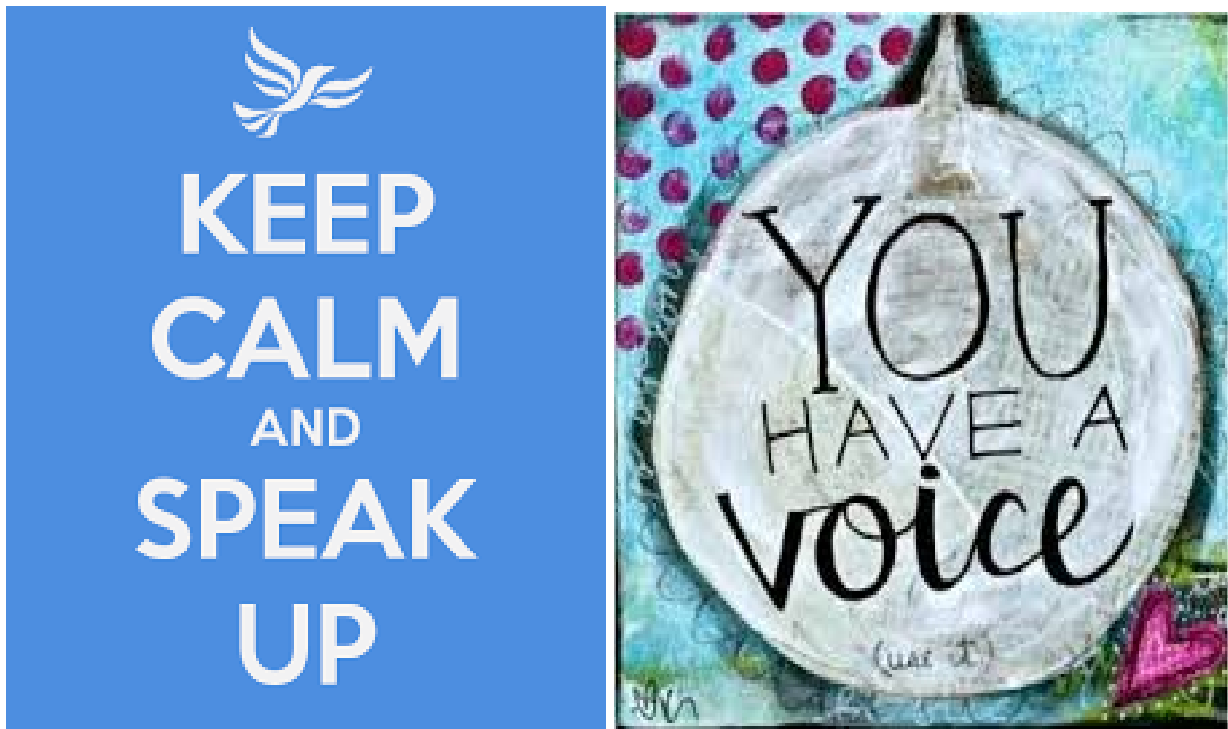
GOSSIP AND RUMORS: WHY IT HURTS, WHY IT'S WRONG

Let's say you have a piece of wood, a nail, and a hammer. Pretend the wood is a person, and the nail is a nasty rumor about that person. If you hammer in the nail, you're obviously hurting him or her. If you then pull out the nail, well, there's *still a hole in the wood*, and the damage has been done.

There are many reasons why that nail of a rumor can be so harmful:

- Words can hurt as much as a punch
- Gossip and rumors can be a form of exclusion
- Gossip and rumors can DESTROY TRUST between friends
- True or not, PRIVATE is PRIVATE
- Believing rumors can lead to bad decisions and misunderstandings

Next Time YOU Hear a Rumor Being SPREAD...



Make the rumor stop with you

If you decide that the rumor is hurtful in some way, take a stand. Decide that you don't want to take part in spreading it. Chances are that the rumor will fizzle out much more quickly if you don't join in. Be a **ROLE MODEL** for other students. You can challenge your friend by saying "Are you **SURE** that's true?" You could also simply say "bye" or "gotta go" and walk away. **Make it clear that you do not like the topic being discussed and DO NOT want to join in.**

Don't be an audience

When someone comes to you with a rumor, try not to be an audience. Don't simply stand there and listen! Tell a joke, change the subject, challenge them ("Why would you want to spread that around?") or walk away.

Respect Others' Privacy

Nobody want their personal/family business out in the open!!! *Private means private.*

Get the facts

If you are really concerned about a rumor, do your research by going straight to the person or persons involved and get the facts, not the gossip! *Finally, if rumors are getting out of control and someone is being made a real victim, get a parent, principal or school counselor involved.*

