

3 students charged in bullying case

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GREECE — Three students were charged Tuesday in connection with two alleged incidents of bullying a special-needs classmate at Greece Athena High School. The victim was allegedly coerced into performing dehumanizing acts in a school lavatory on two separate occasions “days” apart, Greece Police Chief Patrick Phelan said Tuesday at a news conference at police headquarters. At least one of the incidents was posted to the social media site Snapchat. “We have more than one video in our possession. Same victim, same suspects,” Phelan said.

Greece police are not identifying the juvenile offenders; Phelan said each is younger than 16.

The three were charged with endangering the welfare of a child, a misdemeanor. One of the suspects received an additional, more serious charge of possession of an obscene sexual performance by a child, a felony. That charge stems from the suspect possessing the act on a mobile device, Phelan said.

One of the alleged incidents involved the victim being coerced into pulling down his pants, grabbing his crotch and drinking urine from a toilet.

Each suspect was given an appearance ticket for Monroe County Family Court.

“I think we have some young people here who have made some bad decisions, and the law will deal with them accordingly,” Phelan said.

The Greece Central School District said that with the criminal investigation complete, it will move forward with its regular disciplinary process for violations of the district’s Code of Conduct policy.

“We have no tolerance for bullying or harassment of any kind, nor for individuals placing themselves in compromising situations to gain attention of others,” Greece schools Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams said in a statement.

Phelan said the victim is trying to cope.

“The victim is upset,” he said. “It’s embarrassing. It’s traumatizing and certainly all the attention given to it doesn’t make it any easier, so he’s working through it the best he can.”

The alleged misconduct was brought to the attention of school officials by a separate student, Phelan said, “one good kid who stood up and saw something he knew was wrong and reported it.” The school district notified police. Athena principal David Richardson sent parents a letter dated March 12 outlining the investigation and encouraging parents to discuss the positive and negative effects of using social media.

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