

# EASTPORT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**JOSEPH A. STEIMEL**  
*Superintendent of Schools*



**THOMAS FABIAN**  
*Principal*

May 14, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am writing to inform you of a deeply concerning and dangerous trend that has recently come to our attention. It has been reported that some students are participating in a viral TikTok challenge that involves inserting inappropriate items into the USB ports of their school-issued Chromebooks. This behavior is not only damaging the devices but is also creating significant safety hazards.

Tampering with the USB ports has already led to several instances of electrical shorts in schools throughout the country, some of which have caused the devices to emit toxic smoke. More alarmingly, there is a very real risk that these compromised devices could trigger a thermal runaway in the lithium-ion batteries, which may result in an explosive fire condition. This poses a severe threat not only to the student handling the device but to everyone nearby.

Please refer to the attached Information Bulletin from the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control which offers more detailed information about this trend. Safety is our highest priority, and we cannot allow such reckless actions to endanger our school community. We ask that you please take this opportunity to speak with your child about the seriousness of this behavior.

As a reminder, any student found tampering with a Chromebook in this manner will face strict disciplinary consequences. This includes notification of law enforcement, a suspension and Superintendent's Hearing, which may result in further disciplinary action in excess of a 5 day out-of-school suspension. In addition, the District will seek financial reimbursement for the full replacement cost of the damaged device.

We appreciate your support in helping us reinforce the importance of responsible behavior and digital citizenship. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school administration.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Fabian  
Principal  
Eastport Elementary School

**Eastport-South Manor Central School District**

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# Information Bulletin

## School Response Guidance Document – Chromebook Social Media Trend

The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control and the State Education Department have become aware of a dangerous social media trend known as the “Chromebook Trend” or “Chromebook Challenge” that encourages students to insert lead or metal items like paperclips, pushpins, aluminum foil and mechanical pencils into the USB port of their Chromebook forcing an electrical short circuit. This action can result in the failure of the lithium-ion battery in the device, posing a serious fire risk and the production of large quantities of toxic and flammable vapor.

Several incidents have been reported within New York State schools.

### Hazard:

The lithium-ion batteries in the laptop can go into thermal runaway causing the release of flammable and toxic vapors. These vapors can ignite causing fires and explosions.

### Response:

Do not touch the device! Stay as far away from it as possible.

If safe to do so, ensure you remove the power source if the device is plugged into an outlet for charging.

Follow your building fire evacuation plan. Utilize the **R.A.C.E.** acronym.

- R** - Rescue or remove anyone from the immediate area of the event
- A** - Alarm / notify the building occupants by activating the fire alarm system
- C** - Confine the area by closing the door behind you when evacuating
- E** - Evacuate the building. Do not stay in the area of the device even if there is no visible flame. The smoke released from a battery is toxic and flammable. Extinguish the fire only if it is blocking your exit path and you are trapped. Lithium-ion batteries require specialized techniques to properly extinguish them. Do not attempt to fight a fire if you are not trained to do so.

Report any suspicious activity involving tampering with battery powered electronic devices. Remove any damaged battery powered electronic devices and dispose of them in accordance with recommended safety practices.

Notify all staff including bus drivers and student guardians, and parents of this trend.

If a device is tampered with at school and it does not fail (catch fire, explode or create vapor), it can still fail and cause a fire or explosion at a much later time when the device is off property such as on a school bus or at home or left unattended.

If a device has been tampered with, do not plug the device in to a power source to charge it.

