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February 20, 2026

## **IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING LIFETOUCH SPRING PICTURE DAY**

Dear RCES Families,

We have received a number of messages this week from families with concerns about our spring picture day photographer, Lifetouch, in connection with the recently released Epstein files. We want to respond directly and be clear about the steps we are taking.

We are aware of the concerns circulating on social media regarding Lifetouch and its corporate ownership. We contacted Lifetouch directly, and they have provided us with the following statement:

*Lifetouch is a trusted partner to thousands of educational institutions and very carefully guards the privacy of all the students it photographs. Lifetouch images are shared only for the purposes of school records and to allow parents or guardians to purchase them.*

*Lifetouch is owned by private equity firm Apollo Global Management, however **no past or present member of Apollo Board of Directors or Apollo's investors have ever had access to student images, for any purpose. This includes Apollo's co-founder and former CEO and Chairman Leon Black, who stepped away from Apollo in 2021.***

*Additionally, Lifetouch never shares, sells, or licenses student images to train AI models, including large language models, or facial recognition technology. Lifetouch has never provided images for such purposes to any other third party.*

*Lifetouch follows all applicable federal, state, and local data privacy laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). In fact, Lifetouch was the first school photography company to sign a voluntary and enforceable privacy pledge—reaffirming our deep commitment to protecting school communities.*

*Our commitments to student safety are publicly available here:*

- <https://lifetouch.com/privacy/>
- <https://schools.lifetouch.com/blog/ensuring-privacy-for-every-student/>
- <https://schools.lifetouch.com/safety-security/>

An official statement from their CEO, Ken Murphy, is also publicly available at:  
<https://schools.lifetouch.com/blog/a-message-from-ceo-ken-murphy-on-student-privacy/>

We encourage families to read that statement to draw their own conclusions.

Regardless of where families land on this issue, we want to be absolutely clear: **no student will be photographed without explicit written permission from a parent or guardian.** We are moving to an opt-IN process for our March 4 spring picture day. A permission form is coming home with your child this week and is also attached to this notice. A signed form is required to participate. Students without a returned form will not be photographed — no explanation or follow-up required from you.

Our elementary school yearbook will be produced by Victor O'Neil Studios using students' fall individual photos. Typically, class photographs for the yearbook would have been taken during spring picture day by Lifetouch. We are pleased to share that Victor O'Neil Studios has generously agreed to conduct a separate class picture day later this spring — meaning class photos for the yearbook will not involve Lifetouch. These class photos will also be available for purchase. A separate notice will be sent out with details regarding RCES class picture day.

If you have questions, please contact the front office at 540-227-0200.

We are also committed to evaluating local and alternative photography vendors as part of our planning for future school years, and we appreciate the community suggestions that have come in on that front.

Thank you for reaching out and for the care you show for the children of this community.

With warm regards,

Dr. Jacqueline Lowe-Barton  
RCES Principal

Dr. Shannon Grimsley  
Superintendent / Cheerleader in Chief

**Rappahannock County Elementary School**  
**Spring Picture Day — March 4, 2026**  
*Parent/Guardian Permission Form*

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Spring picture day is scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026. This year, we are requiring a signed permission form for your child to participate. Students without a returned form will not be photographed.

**Please complete and return this form to your child's teacher by Friday, February 27, 2026.**

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**YES**, I give permission for my child to be photographed by Lifetouch on March 4, 2026.  
 **NO**, I do not want my child photographed on March 4, 2026.

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**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher/Homeroom:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

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*Questions? Contact the front office at 540-227-0200.*