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The Candor

Covering Benedictine University and the Chicagoland area



Student arrested for child pornography, BenU reacts

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Editor-In-Chief

Benedictine University students and employees reacted strongly to last week's arrest of a BenU student on child pornography charges.

"I was surprised that someone at this university would be involved in that form of disgustingness," said a BenU employee, who wished to remain anonymous.

Joseph Wilke was charged with multiple felonies related to the possession and dissemination of child pornography videos, according to a press release from the DuPage States Attorney's Office. The victims were under the age of 13, according to the 18th Judicial Circuit Court records; the Daily Herald reported they were between the ages of five to eight.

"I don't really like making assumptions but he was a little bit off. When I look back on it, he didn't really talk at all and then out of the blue, he quit the [football] team," said a team member who wished to remain anonymous.

Wilke lived in student housing on campus and was charged on March 15; he turned himself in to authorities later that day. He was released on bail and his next court date will be on April 17, according to circuit court records.

The Candor reached out to multiple university administrators for additional information and to confirm if Wilke was still on/off campus, all declined to comment. "Due to the fact [that] local authorities are engaged in an ongoing investigation, we are unable to comment at this time," said President Charles Gregory.

"It was definitely kind of weird hearing about something like that. That's something you don't want to hear about, especially [if it's] about the school you're going to," said Daniel Chojnowski, a freshman student at BenU.

The Lisle Police Department received information about a person's IP address, potentially engaging in child pornography. It is alleged that Wilke was in possession and spreading videos of child pornography in October 2022, according to the news release from the DuPage State's Attorney's office.

The Candor reached out to Darren Robards, Chief Information Officer at BenU, to understand Benedictine's IT departments possible involvement in the case, he stated he was not able to comment. While this case may/may not have involved BenU technology, the university has clear policies about technology usage.

According to the university's **Acceptable Use of Technology Resources Policy** – "The University, in its discretion, may also disclose the results of such monitoring, including the contents and records of individual communications, to appropriate University personnel or law enforcement agencies, and may use those results in appropriate University disciplinary proceeding."

Wilke was a member of the BenU eSports roster during the 2021-2022 year, according to the Benedictine Athletics page.

"I found out about it [Monday]," said an eSports team member, who preferred to be anonymous. "You don't really think about this sort of stuff happening in your day-to-day life. Never did I get a sense that this could be going on."

DuPage officials complimented the university's response.

"Authorities at [BenU] have been extremely cooperative throughout this entire case and for that I thank them," stated the DuPage County State's Attorney Robert Berlin.

The discussion on the exploitation of children is not just a BenU topic.

"Child pornography is a huge issue in America, and I feel like it's not as addressed as it should be," said Nabeel Salah, Senior.

"That's the problem with the internet, it's so open. There's no limitation

Note: Nick Schlager and Suad Hussein contributed to this article.

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