



Finding the Truth Behind a Student's Lie

By Educator Barnes – October 3, 2019

Outrage spread across the country when a black female student, Amari Allen, accused three of her white male classmates of holding her down and cutting her dreadlocks. These accusations took on a life of their own when the media shared that Allen is a student at Immanuel Christian School, the same school where Vice President Mike Pence's wife, Karen Pence, works part-time. This school was criticized earlier this year when it was revealed Pence was an employee

because the school does not admit LGBTQ+ students. So, when Allen made these accusations, it intensified the outcry against Immanuel Christian School.

In the midst of the outcry and outrage, it was revealed the young lady lied. As with any reports of student misconduct, administrators investigate to confirm what took place before doling out punishment. Video footage showed that Allen's story could not be true, and when confronted with this evidence, she admitted to making up what happened to her; however, she insists she was a victim of bullying.

The school responded to the truth being revealed, and in part of their statement, the school acknowledged the hurt on all sides and the racial issues in our country.

While we are relieved to hear the truth and bring the events of the past few days to a close, we also feel tremendous pain for the victims and the hurt on both sides of this conflict. We recognize that we now enter what will be a long season of healing.

This ordeal has revealed that we as a school family are not immune from the effects of deep racial wounds in our society. We view this incident as an opportunity to be part of a learning and healing process, and we will continue to support the students and families involved.

As an educator, I find this incident disappointing. I would not have been surprised if her story was true; however, I'm not surprised that she lied, but maintains she was bullied. People, especially children, lie for a reason. Unfortunately, because Allen told one lie, it will be hard for anyone to believe any reports she makes about other students in the future. I've seen this before, more than once, during my career. I've seen students lie about other students to get them in trouble because they are angered that those students did something else for which there were no consequences.

We all know that lying isn't the answer. When I have been involved in those situations where students lie, I tell them it is a learning opportunity and that they have a long road ahead because adults will be less likely to believe them. I've heard people compare Allen's lie to Jussie Smollett's hate crime hoax and even tear her down on social media, but she is still a child. Yes, by 6th grade, she should know better, but I also know kids get to a point where they can't take the bullying anymore and take actions into their own hands. I know of situations where students lied to get others in trouble because of something those students have done in the

past and it is later revealed that the incident that took place before the fake incident actually happened and those students were bullying other kids too.

Kids lie. They lie about not doing their homework. They lie about who broke a plate because they don't want to get into trouble, but when kids lie in the manner Allen did, I believe there is more to the story. It could be more to what is going on with her personally or it could be indeed bullying. We will probably never know.

What I take from this situation is that we have to be more vigilant as educators and parents so we can be more aware if a child is in distress because the child has a personal issue or if a child is facing external issues from other students.