

Teacher's porn cache 'gross stuff' Sheriff probing claim that he abused 75 boys

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The Antioch middle school teacher charged with possession of child pornography told police he has had sex with dozens of young boys over the years, though police have not been able to confirm his claims.

Kenneth Lee Johnson, 60, of 450 N. Main St., No. 407, Wauconda, told arresting officers he has sexually abused 75 boys in Illinois and Washington dating back to 1974. The majority of those boys lived around Antioch and Wauconda, said Lake County Sheriff Mark Curran, whose office officially announced Johnson's arrest Monday morning.

Johnson remained in Lake County Jail on Monday in lieu of \$500,000 bond.

Johnson was charged last week with 10 counts of possession of child pornography, following an FBI tip, Curran said. When investigators questioned Johnson, he admitted to the crimes, and police found more than 1,000 images and close to a 100 videos depicting boys as young as 2 years old engaging in sex acts.

"It's gross stuff," Curran said.

It is not believed that Johnson manufactured the pornography.

He was placed on leave Wednesday from Antioch Upper Grade School, where he has taught social studies since 1989. The school district released a statement Monday expressing concern with the health and safety of district students and emphasizing its cooperation with police.

Superintendent Scott Thompson said he never had reason to believe that Johnson was acting inappropriately.

"There's nothing in his background that would have us be suspicious," Thompson said.

Police are now trying to determine whether Johnson's claims of sexual abuse are true or fantasies, said sheriff's Det. Sgt. George Manis.