



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What is OK2SAY?**

OK2SAY is a student safety program that uses a comprehensive communication system to facilitate tip sharing among students, parents, school personnel, community mental health service programs, the Department of Human Services, and law enforcement officials about harmful behaviors that threaten to disrupt the learning environment.

### **2. How can I submit a tip?**

Tips can be submitted by telephone, text message, email, or at the OK2SAY website. A downloadable mobile application is also being developed. Multimedia attachments (photo, video, audio, etc.) and links to additional information are encouraged.

### **3. How does OK2SAY help prevent harmful student-related behavior?**

At present, a “culture of silence” permeates the American educational landscape. In this culture, threats of retaliation and stigmatization often discourage students from reporting the dangerous behaviors of their peers. Based on research from the U.S. Secret Service, in 81% of violent incidents in U.S. schools, someone other than the attacker had knowledge of the attacker’s plan but failed to report it. OK2SAY aims to eliminate this culture of silence by providing a confidential, collaborative communication system where students and authorities can work together to respond to safety threats.

### **4. How does the confidentiality work? Who is informed when a tip is received? What information is shared? With whom?**

OK2SAY is a confidential communication system in which the identity of the reporting party is statutorily protected. Initial tips will be fielded by OK2SAY operators trained to filter the information to local law enforcement agencies, school officials, or community mental health service programs for timely response. The identity of the reporting party will not be shared with local law enforcement agencies, school officials, or the person against whom a tip is offered, unless the reporter chooses to voluntarily disclose his or her identity.

### **5. Who keeps records of the tips that are submitted? Will schools need to hire more staff?**

Tip records will be kept with the Michigan State Police. Schools and community mental health service programs will not need to hire additional staff members to maintain these records. However, to promote program accountability, existing school personnel (likely the emergency contact designee(s) or other school representative) or community mental health service personnel may be asked to submit outcome reports detailing how incidents are handled.

**6. How is the validity of a tip established? Is there a filtering system in place to prevent program abuse?**

OK2SAY is a resource that individuals must use responsibly. Practical jokes and prank tips will not be tolerated. The program will remind users that reporting a tip is a serious action that will result in a response from the appropriate authorities. OK2SAY operators will use their professional expertise to assess the validity of reports and determine whether further action is appropriate.

**7. What happens to the tip if the individual reporting is threatening to hurt him/herself?**

The OK2SAY operator will address the immediate need and as necessary forward the call to the appropriate responding agency. All psychiatric emergencies are additionally referred to the appropriate Community Mental Health Services psychiatric crisis line.

**8. What is the appropriate action when a tip is received?**

Because the content and circumstances of each tip will vary, the appropriate follow-up action will likewise vary. However, in each case, the emphasis is *not* the arrest of the person against whom a tip is offered. Rather, the goal of the program is prevention of harm.

**9. Is school participation in OK2SAY mandatory?**

No. Michigan schools are free to choose whether or not they participate in the program.

**10. Do schools have to pay to participate in OK2SAY?**

No. The program is offered free of charge.

**11. When will OK2SAY be available?**

The OK2SAY program will be operational by September, 2014.

**12. What are OK2SAY's hours of operation?**

OK2SAY will remain operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

**13. Has this been tried anywhere else? Is it working?**

Yes. Other states have successfully implemented similar student safety programs. Colorado, for instance, has implemented a confidential communication system that allows tips to be submitted by telephone, text message, email, and website mediums. Since 2004, the program has fielded more than 8,911 tips and enjoys a 500% annual call volume increase. It has documented and resolved 284 planned school attacks, 320 gun/weapon reports, 469 sexual offenses, 1,323 planned suicides, and 2,207 bullying instances. Likewise, in Missouri, a similar communication system that also allows tips to be submitted by a downloadable mobile application fielded over 1,000 reports in 2011 alone, earning positive reviews from law enforcement officials and school personnel alike.

**14. What is the appropriate response to incidents that are reported outside school hours (e.g. evenings or summer vacation) or off school property (e.g. sporting events or field trips)?**

Because OK2SAY will operate 24/7/365, tips will frequently be submitted during times when school is not in session. In fact, data from Colorado suggests that most tips are submitted between 3 pm and 10 pm. In these instances, law enforcement officials will either respond directly to the threat or coordinate with a school's designated emergency contact to respond appropriately. The same would hold true for tips that report behaviors taking place off school property.

**15. What about parents? To what extent are they involved in responding to potential threats?**

While the identity of the person submitting the tip will remain confidential, parents can be notified of the existence of a potential threat if the situation demands that they be contacted.

**16. How will OK2SAY be promoted?**

The Attorney General, in consultation with school officials, law enforcement agencies, and other interested persons, entities, and agencies, will develop a plan to promote the use of the program.

**17. When is a tip considered resolved?**

Tips are considered resolved when an outcome report is filed detailing how the situation was handled by law enforcement, community mental health, or school officials.