



SOUTH WHITEHALL TOWNSHIP
POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of the Chief
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8 September 2022

Media Release
Threats at Orefield Middle School

On September 7, 2022, at approximately 8:30pm, the South Whitehall Township Police Department was contacted in reference to a Safe2Say report of a threat directed at the Orefield Middle School. An investigation was immediately initiated by the South Whitehall Township Police Department with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Investigators have been working diligently throughout the night to try to identify the suspect in this threat. SWTPD has been in constant communication with the Parkland School District and supports the decision to close all district schools on Thursday, September 8, 2022, out of an abundance of caution. We take all threats seriously and will continue to collaborate with all of our law enforcement partners to solve this investigation. The Lehigh County District Attorney's Office, the Pennsylvania State Police, Upper Macungie Township Police Department, and Federal Bureau of Investigation are all assisting with this investigation.

This investigation is ongoing, and there is a coordinated effort between Law Enforcement and the Parkland School District to ensure the safety of every student within the Parkland School District. If the person responsible for this threat is identified, the South Whitehall Township Police intends to prosecute to the fullest extent within the guidelines of the law.

We ask for your patience, as the release of information will be done deliberately as to not negatively impact the investigation. If anyone has any information that may aid us in this investigation, please contact the South Whitehall Township Police Department at 610-398-0337.

Update as of 9 September 2022

The safety and security of all Parkland School District students, faculty, and professional staff, as well as the Parkland community, is of paramount importance.

We consider all threats to our schools to be serious in nature until they can be thoroughly investigated. These methodical investigations do take time and we ask the community to be patient while we follow the leads and develop the facts surrounding the person or persons responsible for making these threats. There was a specific timeframe provided in the threat and that has passed. There have been no additional threats made at this time.

After collaborative conversation and planning with the South Whitehall Township Police, Upper Macungie Township Police, and Pennsylvania State Police; the Parkland School District is planning to re-open all schools and transportation in the district next Monday, September 12, 2022. The School District will make the final determination and notifications on Sunday, September 11th. All schools in the district will have an increased police presence to help ensure the safety and security of students and staff.

I want to emphasize that this investigation is still ongoing, and anyone with information should contact the South Whitehall Township Police Department at 610-398-0337 or pdinfo@swtpd.org.

Update as of 12 September 2022

The South Whitehall Township Police Department makes every attempt to be transparent with communications that are critical to public safety. During this investigation, it was determined that it was in the best interest of the criminal investigation to withhold specifics, so we did not jeopardize our efforts. We understand that the lack of information can lead to speculation and hypervigilance, especially when it comes to our children.

We believe we are at the stage in the investigation that we can provide some details. On Wednesday, September 7, 2022, at approximately 8:20 pm, an anonymous person made a Safe2Say threat to come to Orefield Middle School on Thursday, September 8, 2022, to shoot people. The Parkland School Administration decided to close school on Thursday out of an abundance of caution and to hold a virtual learning day on Friday, September 9th. Due to the passage of time and lack of additional threats, school was re-opened on Monday, September 12th. The South Whitehall Township Police Department provided several additional police officers at all the district schools within the Township to help ensure the safety of students and staff. The Upper Macungie Township Police Department and Pennsylvania State Police also provided additional Officers and Troopers at the District schools in Upper Macungie and North Whitehall Townships.

The investigation into who lodged this threat is still ongoing, and additional police resources will be made available to help safeguard our schools. The law enforcement response and coordination with the Pennsylvania State Police, Upper Macungie Township Police, and Federal Bureau of Investigation in collaboration with the Parkland School District Administration has been tremendous. It is the joint goal of the Parkland School District and Law Enforcement partners to provide a safe and healthy environment for students and staff within all District schools.

Anyone with information related to this information should contact the South Whitehall Township Police Department at 610-398-0337 or email pdinfo@swtpd.org. Students are encouraged to utilize the Safe2Say application to provide information that may aid in this investigation. The intent is to hold the person or persons responsible for this threat criminally accountable for their actions to the fullest extent of the law.