

Delaware State Police message on school threats

Because many students do not understand the consequences of their actions until they are arrested, charged and put into the juvenile justice system, police want students to know that an online or verbal threat toward a Delaware school will result in serious consequences.

Delaware State Police will dedicate resources to investigate each threat regardless of whether the intent was a hoax or a real threat. School resource officers and detectives will search a suspect's person, locker, vehicle and residence for items that could be used in an actual attack such weapons, firearms, written plans or anything suspicious or incriminating.

Whether the investigation determines it was a hoax or a real threat against a school, serious consequences can result. Those responsible can be charged with terroristic threatening, disorderly conduct and cyber threatening, which can result in prison time and/or probation. Consequences also may include penalties and fines of \$1,000 to \$2,500 and 100 or more hours of community service.

This is in addition to school sanctions such as suspension and expulsions. A student also can be sent to a different school, including an alternative school. The student may not be allowed to participate in school sports, and a mental health evaluation may be mandated by the court and required by the school before the student can return.

Police advise that someone can be guilty of terroristic threatening if his or her actions cause the likely evacuation of a school, building, place of assembly, or facility of public transportation. If it causes a serious inconvenience or includes the reckless disregard of the risk of causing terror or serious inconvenience at a daycare facility, nursery or preschool or K-12 school, it can result in a felony arrest.

A conviction will follow students and will have to be reported on any job or college application. If you are convicted of a felony and develop a criminal record, it could prevent you from joining the military, being accepted into college or it may even interfere with getting a job.

Police urge students to consider the consequences and remember that school safety is everyone's responsibility.