



For Immediate Release

Contact: Lawrence Kansas Police Department: LPDMedia@lkpd.org
Lawrence Public Schools: Julie Boyle: jboyle@usd497.org

LKPD/USD 497 Leaders Record Student Message to Deter Threats/Rumors

Lawrence, KS: Chief Rich Lockhart and Interim Superintendent Dr. Jeanice Kerr Swift are working together to send a joint message directly to students about the seriousness of making threats and spreading rumors about threats as well as the importance of reporting safety concerns. They're doing it through video and showing the message to all secondary students in the Lawrence Public Schools. Threats and spreading rumors about threats will not be tolerated and jokes can land you in jail.

"Safety is everyone's responsibility." That's the theme of the recorded message and it's being shared with parents as well, and is posted to both organizations' social media platforms for community awareness.

Dr. Swift shares that threats can lead to suspension and expulsion. "These are serious matters, so we ask you students to help each other and help us because we were all working together to keep our schools safe so students can focus on learning and our staff can feel safe to teach," she urges.

Chief Rich Lockhart gives students direction. "We're asking you to report, not repost. Criminal threats carry serious legal consequences. Students, when you post things that involve school violence or school threats, those are very serious matters that have very serious consequences," says Lockhart. "You can be charged with a felony and a felony means that you go to jail, and we don't want you there."

LKPD and Lawrence Public Schools encourage school families to discuss the seriousness of threats with their children, including setting family expectations and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Other recommendations to families include limiting students' exposure to violence on television, movies, and video games and setting boundaries for students' social media use, including monitoring students' online activities for their safety and well-being.

School families and students should report any safety concerns to an adult at school for immediate investigation and report any potential criminal activity to the Lawrence Kansas Police Department. LKPD assigns school resource officers to each middle and high school. Students and their family members may contact them at school.

Do not hesitate to call the Douglas County non-emergency dispatch number at 785.843.0250 if you hear of any school safety concerns while off campus. To report emergencies, always dial 911.

Members of the media who would like to download a broadcast quality version of the video can do so at:
<https://we.tl/t-Xu6YggbwgQ>

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