



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THREATS

Adapted using MDE's ["A Parent's Guide to Understanding Threats"](#)

In today's world, there is no such thing as "just a joke" when it comes to threats of school violence or harm to others. Whether a threat is spoken, posted online, or sent in a text, the consequences can be serious and long-lasting.

Regardless of intent, threats can lead to legal action, school discipline, and lasting impacts on a student's future, including their eligibility for college and military service.

What Parents/Guardians Should Know

- Under Michigan law, a threat (even a false one) that causes fear, disrupts the school environment, or triggers an emergency response can be a criminal offense.
- A student can face consequences at school and with law enforcement, even if the threat was made from home.
- Jokes or offhand remarks like "I'm going to kill him" or "She's so annoying, I hope she dies" are taken seriously and can result in serious questioning and consequences, even if they aren't technically a legal threat.
- Sharing or reposting a threat on social media—even without knowing if it's real—is dangerous and can lead to severe consequences.
- If a student overhears a threat or sees something online that concerns them, they should report it immediately to a trusted adult or use their school's reporting tool. This is not being a "snitch"; it is being responsible and showing you care.

How You Can Help as a Parent/Guardian

- Talk to your child about the critical difference between joking and threatening language.
- Encourage your child to think before they post, text, or say something that could be misinterpreted.
- Reinforce this simple, life-saving message: Don't do it. Don't share it. Report it.
- Remind your child that if they hear or see a threat, they should report it to a trusted adult at their school. They can also submit a tip to OK2SAY, Michigan's Student Safety Program.

By working together, we can help our kids understand that threats, even those they think are harmless, are a serious matter.

For more detailed questions and answers read: [Parents Guide: Frequently Asked Questions about Threats](#)