

THREATS ARE NO JOKE!

Understanding the Critical Realities of School Threats, Legal Consequences,
and How Parents Can Keep Schools Safe

 Texas State University •  Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC)

The Reality of School Threats

A Single Message Escalates Fast

The "Threats Are No Joke!" PSA highlights how a simple text message shared among students rapidly escalates into chaos—triggering fear, confusion, and a full law enforcement response.

In today's environment, there is no such thing as **"just a joke"** regarding school violence, safety, or harm to others.

⚠ Whether spoken out loud, posted online, or texted, all threats trigger immediate emergency protocols.



Key Facts Under Texas Law



Criminal Offense

Under Texas law, threats—even false ones—that cause fear, disrupt school, or trigger emergency responses are classified as criminal offenses.



Applies From Home

A student faces full school discipline and law enforcement actions even if the threat was created or sent from home on personal devices.



Sharing is Dangerous

Reposting or forwarding threats on social media—even without knowing if they are real—creates panic and carries severe legal consequences.

Serious Life Consequences

Far-Reaching Disciplinary Action

Making or circulating a threat creates long-term fallout that extends far beyond the classroom:



Law Enforcement Action: Criminal investigation, police questioning, and potential arrest.



School Discipline: Immediate removal, suspension, or mandatory DAEP placement.



Permanent Record: Criminal and disciplinary records that linger for years



Future Eligibility: Loss of eligibility for college admissions, scholarships, and military enlistment.



How Parents & Guardians Can Help



Discuss Language

Talk open and candidly with your child about the clear boundary between playful joking and illegal threatening language.



Pause Before Posting

Encourage students to think before they post, text, or speak statements that could easily be misinterpreted by others.



Reinforce Core Rule

Teach your child the primary safety rule:

Don't do it.

Don't share it.

Report it immediately.

Understanding Language & Context

Statement Category	Example Scenario	Legal & School Outcome
Direct Threat (Crime)	Threatening a campus shooting, bomb, or specific violence	Criminal charge under Texas law; immediate police and administrative response.
False Emergency Report	Circulating or reposting fake threat rumors online	Crime under Texas law; causes severe disruption and law enforcement response.
Offhand / Mean Remark	"She's so annoying, I hope she dies!"	Not technically a threat, but results in questioning and discipline for causing fear.
Hyperbolic Statement	"Ugh! I'm going to kill him for telling her!"	Misunderstood easily; leads to serious questioning and disruption consequences.

Off-Campus & Home Activity

Home Devices Are Not Private Havens

Many students mistakenly believe that threats sent from their bedroom, personal gaming console, or private phone are immune from school rules.

If an off-campus text or post targets a school, student, or staff member and disrupts the educational environment, **both law enforcement and the school district have legal jurisdiction to act.**



How Students Should Respond



Report to a Trusted Adult: Tell a teacher, principal, school resource officer (SRO), counselor, or parent right away.



Use Anonymous Reporting Tools: Every school district maintains anonymous tip platforms for students to report concerning behavior safely.



Know Your District Procedure: Ask school administrators to walk you and your student through the exact reporting mechanisms used on campus.



Never Repost or Forward: Do not share threats on social media feeds or group chats. Forwarding amplifies panic and hinders investigations.

Overcoming the "Snitch" Stigma

Reporting is Responsible Care

Students often hesitate to speak up because they fear being labeled a "snitch." Reframe this conversation with your child:

-  **Keeping Friends Safe:** Reporting concerning posts gets troubled friends the professional help they need.
-  **Guaranteed Anonymity:** Reporting tools protect student identity so no one knows who made the report.
-  **Protecting Everyone:** Speaking up prevents tragedy and secures the entire school community.



3 Golden Safety Rules for Students

3

ESSENTIAL ACTION STEPS

Simple Rules That Save Lives

- ✗ 1. **DON'T DO IT:** Never make threats or use violent language, even in jest or anger.
- 🚫 2. **DON'T SHARE IT:** Never repost, screenshot, or forward rumors or threat messages.
- ✓ 3. **REPORT IT:** Always report concerning language immediately to a trusted adult or tip line.

 ACTION PLAN

Parent & Guardian Checklist

1. Review your district's **Student Code of Conduct**.
2. Save school **anonymous reporting tools** on your child's phone.
3. Hold regular discussions on digital responsibility and threat realities.

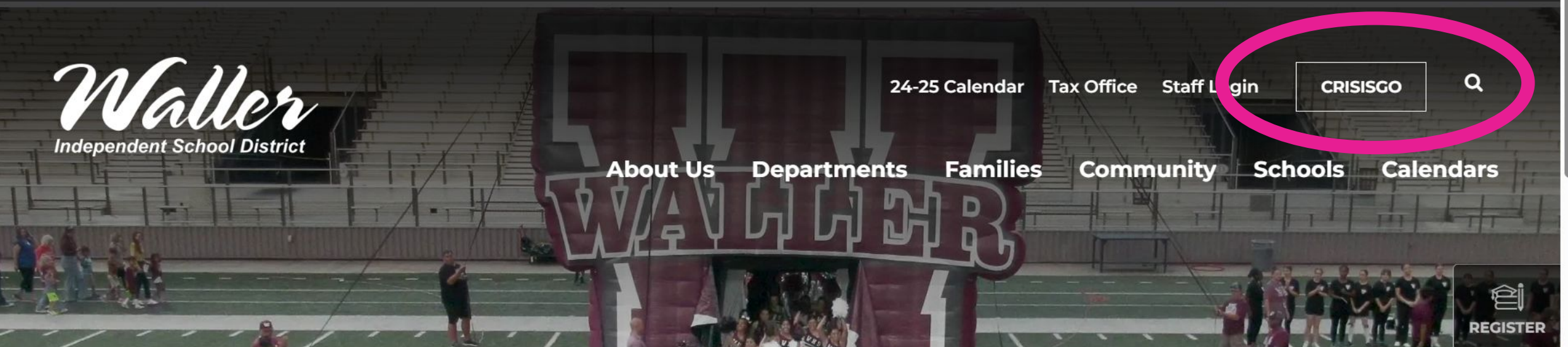
2026-2027
Student Code of
Conduct



Waller Independent School District

24-25 Calendar Tax Office Staff Login **CRISISGO** 🔍

About Us Departments Families Community Schools Calendars



REGISTER

APPLY

ETICKETS

Questions & Resources

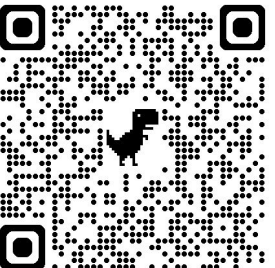
Together, we create safer learning environments by helping children understand that threats are never a joke.

 **Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC)**

 **Texas State University**

For local district threat protocols, consult your school's Student Code of Conduct or District Office.

Threats Are No Joke!
Toolkit



MAKE GUN OWNERSHIP SAFER

Practicing safe gun storage protects our kids, prevents accidents, and keeps our guns out of the hands of criminals. Together, we can KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!



Safe gun storage is the duty of EVERY gun owner.

Gun safety isn't just knowing how to handle a gun properly—it's also about keeping it from getting into the wrong hands. Whether you keep a gun in your car, home, or somewhere else, safely storing it 24/7 is a must.



SafeGunStorageTexas.com





THE 1-2-3s OF SAFE GUN STORAGE

Keep guns safe when not in use by following these three basic steps.

1

Store firearms locked
and unloaded.

2

Store and lock
ammunition safely.

3

Keep others from
getting access to stored
firearms 24/7.



SafeGunStorageTexas.com

**Practice safe
gun storage at
ALL times.**

Safe gun storage must be practiced 24/7. Speak to your fellow Texans about safe gun storage. The more people that know, the better we can KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!



SafeGunStorageTexas.com





TALKING TO OTHERS ABOUT SAFE GUN STORAGE

TALKING TO KIDS

Children are curious and will have questions about guns. Whether there is a firearm in your home or not, it is important to talk to your child about the rules of gun safety. They should know how to act if they see a gun and you're not around.

Choose a time and place where they won't be distracted to have the conversation. Consider their age when you are talking to your child about gun safety. Ask them what they already know, and encourage them to ask questions. And talk to them again to make sure they remember!



SafeGunStorageTexas.com

Learn more at
SafeGunStorageTexas.com



About one-third of homes with children have at least one firearm – and many of those guns are both unlocked and loaded. It is important to keep your child away from firearms. But parents are often uncomfortable having a conversation about gun safety with others. Remember, you're just trying to keep your child safe. The best way to do that is to find out whether there is a firearm and how it is being stored in any home where your child goes to play.



SAFE GUN STORAGE DEVICES



CHOOSE WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU

Protecting all Texans means knowing how to stop weapons from reaching the wrong hands. No matter where you keep your gun, it needs to be stored safely when you're finished using it. There are many choices when it comes to safe gun storage. It all depends on the type of firearm, your living situation, and cost.



CABLE LOCK

A cable lock blocks the barrel of the firearm from locking into position to prevent firing of the weapon. They are available with a key or combination lock.

- ★ Affordable
- ★ Widely available



STRONG BOX

A strong box is a small safe designed to store a single or multiple firearms. They are accessible with key, code, or fingerprint technology. Most are designed to be mountable to a vertical surface.

- ★ Portable
- ★ More durable than gun cases
- ★ Difficult to steal if permanently mounted to a vertical surface
- ★ Can store multiple firearms



TRIGGER LOCK

A trigger lock clamps down around the trigger and trigger guard to prevent the trigger from being pulled. They are available with a key or combination lock.

- ★ Affordable
- ★ Widely available



GUN CABINETS

A gun cabinet can store multiple firearms. They're more like furniture and are often crafted of wood and glass to display guns. Most will have a locking feature.

- ★ Usually less expensive than a gun safe
- ★ Aesthetically pleasing



BIOMETRIC LOCK

A type of trigger lock, the biometric lock is customized for you and your firearm. It uses fingerprint technology to allow access.

- ★ Quick access in case of emergency
- ★ Only authorized user(s) will be able to handle the gun



GUN SAFE/VAULT

The most secure option, a gun safe can store multiple firearms and ammunition. They are usually made from steel and heavy. It is recommended they be secured to prevent them from falling over. They can be opened by a key, code, or fingerprint technology.

- ★ Difficult to steal
- ★ Can store multiple devices and other personal items
- ★ Keeps firearms out of sight
- ★ Most are fire-resistant



GUN CASE

A gun case is a portable firearm storage case that is made of plastic. An external lock can be added for extra security.

- ★ Easily transported
- ★ Protects firearm from damage

The Texas Department of Public Safety does not endorse any type or manufacturer of gun safes or locks.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!

SafeGunStorageTexas.com

© 2024 Texas Department of Public Safety

SAFE GUN STORAGE CHECKLIST



SAFELY STORING FIREARMS IS THE DUTY OF EVERY GUN OWNER

Gun safety isn't just knowing how to handle a gun properly—it's also about keeping it from getting into the wrong hands. Whether you keep a gun in your car, home or somewhere else, safely storing it 24/7 is a must in order to protect our children, prevent avoidable injury, and keep our weapons out of the hands of criminals. Together, we can keep our fellow Texans safe!

THE 1-2-3s OF SAFE GUN STORAGE

1

Store unloaded and secured by using a trigger lock, biometric lock, gun case, strong box, gun cabinet or gun safe.

2

Store and lock ammunition safely.

3

Keep others from getting access to stored firearms 24/7. That includes family, friends, children, or other visitors.

ARE YOU PRACTICING SAFE GUN STORAGE? **Make sure you can check ALL the boxes!**

- ☐ Firearms are stored unloaded and locked using a firearm safe, lock box, trigger lock or cable lock.
- ☐ Ammunition is safely stored.
- ☐ Access to stored firearms is restricted from unauthorized persons (family, friends, children, contractors, repair personnel or uninvited persons) at all times – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, no matter where the firearm is located.
- ☐ All locking devices that use keys are in a place children and other unauthorized users are unaware of.
- ☐ I have read and understood the laws around my responsibility and liability, as the owner of the gun, should it be used by an unauthorized person such as a child.
- ☐ I have spoken to family members and trusted users asking them to use these safe storage steps. (Consider keeping this checklist near where you store your guns!)
- ☐ When my firearm is taken outside of my home (e.g., in a car), it must still be stored safely. Safe storage of firearms is practiced at all times.



**A HIDDEN
FIREARM
IS NOT A
SAFELY
STORED
FIREARM**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
HOW YOU CAN HELP
KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!**

SafeGunStorageTexas.com

Questions?

Resource: <https://safegunstoragetexas.com/>

School Support

Adela Cornejo

acornejo@wallerisd.net

936.310.6564



**LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP
KEEP 'EM SAFE, TEXAS!**

[SafeGunStorageTexas.com](https://safegunstoragetexas.com)

© 2000-2020 Texas Department of Public Safety.