

Social Media Threats to Schools Have Serious Consequences: Our Commitment to Action

Over the past month, a nationwide trend of threatening messages has spread via social media platforms. These platforms, originally designed to be a positive, creative outlet, have been used to propagate fear and anxiety. These social media threats have spread like wildfire throughout the nation and our community as they are shared from user to user without a full understanding of the impact they can have on the community.

As a unified community, the law enforcement leaders and education leaders of El Dorado County take these types of threats extremely seriously. Any threat directed towards a place of learning, a student, or a staff member is thoroughly investigated, and law enforcement action is taken when appropriate.

The bottom line is this: threats of violence will not be tolerated. They will be investigated, and those responsible will be held accountable.

Unfortunately, these are days when serious conversations must be had with our children about the consequences of posting threatening material online and the lasting effects it can have. Situations such as these are highly costly and disruptive to both the education system and law enforcement. When a threat is received, real or intended as a practical joke, the response is the same. Resources from local school districts, the El Dorado County Office of Education, and various law enforcement agencies, from local agencies to federal agencies, are redirected to identify the source of the threat and provide protection. When the source of the threat is identified, the real-world consequences can range from incarceration in a jail or juvenile detention facility to suspension from school.

We urge parents to engage in meaningful conversations with their children about the level of power and the significant impact that a message on social media can have. If presented with a message that your student has observed indicating some sort of threat, do not share that message on social media. Instead, please report the message to local law enforcement. The faster it is reported, the faster appropriate investigative action can be taken to disrupt a potential threat or hoax message.

As leaders in El Dorado County, we are committed to the safety of our students, staff, and the schools in our community. A school, ranging from preschool to middle school to high school and college, is meant to be a place of learning and safety where growth and exploration can occur, not fear and anxiety. We are fully dedicated to upholding the safety and integrity of our county's educational settings. Collectively, we will continue to take ANY and ALL threats to our community—especially our schools—extremely seriously, as the safety of those students and staff is our top priority.

As we work through these challenging times together as a community, we recognize the complexities and pressures our children face. By actively supporting our children as they navigate their pathways to success, we can create a collaborative environment that empowers them to make informed decisions and reach their full potential. Let us continue working together to build a better tomorrow for our children, our schools, and our community.

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