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Dear School Parents, Teachers and Staff Members:

Congratulations and best wishes on the start of the 2026-2027 new school year. Although this is a time of excitement and optimism, I also believe that it is a good time to consider and discuss a few things with your students and children that can help maintain safety in our schools.

To begin, few events affect students, their families, teachers, and staff members like a school shooting, or even the threat of such an event. When people learn of these events, from television, social media, or school rumors, it is natural for everyone to be concerned with their safety. Unfortunately, some students see these events as an opportunity to gain notoriety by making threats, actually intended to be carried out or not, against their schools, teachers, staff members or classmates.

During the past few school years, my office has filed school threats charges against several individuals in Midland County. Many other complaints were deemed to be appropriately handled by the school and the students' families. Almost always, these students claimed that they were just joking or playing a prank on someone. But school officials and the police cannot afford to wait to respond to school threats, and the response can be very expensive and resource consuming. Let me again, be very clear; **school threats are no joke and this behavior can lead to very serious criminal charges.**

School threat cases can lead to charges ranging from False Bomb and/or Terrorism Threats, to Intentional Threats Against a School, School Employees, or Students. Some of these charges are felonies that can lead to imprisonment for up to 20 years. **Under Michigan law, it does not matter if the person truly intends to, or has the means to, carrying out the threat.** The threats alone can cause great concern and emotional harm. While the punishments dictated by the criminal justice system can be harsh, students may also face additional consequences, including:

- Suspension or expulsion from school;
- Loss of scholarships and/or financial aid;
- Being required to disclose pending cases or criminal convictions on college and job applications, and being disqualified from obtaining employment with certain security requirements.

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We have also seen heightened activity in schools with students seeking and/or possessing intimate images of other students (sexting), or threatening to disclose these images to others if the student does not provide additional images, money, or refuses to do other acts against their will (sextortion). Now, with the advancement of artificial intelligence, we are seeing cases involving “deep fake” images of students or staff members with their faces placed on intimate images. These are also felony offenses with serious potential penalties. **It is also illegal to make, possess, and/or distribute a naked image of anyone less than 18 years old, or of an adult without their permission.**

I urge all parents to talk to your children about these issues and the appropriate use of cell phones and social media, and the lasting consequences of making threats against our schools or anyone in them. Please stress to them that there is nothing humorous about threatening to shoot up a school, classmates or teachers, and there is no such thing as a joke involving the threat of mass murder.

One additional matter I would ask you to discuss with your students concerns the OK2SAY Program maintained confidentially by the Michigan State Police. Experience has shown that students often know of possible threats, or of a fellow student in crisis, before adults do. Since its launch in 2014, OK2SAY has received more than 78,000 tips, many of which have helped save lives or gotten help to a student in need. Please encourage your students to reach out to a teacher, staff member, School Resource Officer or their parents, when they see or know of someone in crisis. **Or, they can simply call 8-555-OK2SAY (855-565-2729) or text to OK2SAY (652729).**

All threats, actual assaults, or other similar violations made in schools and/or directed against school personnel or classmates, will continue to be taken seriously and prosecuted as appropriate. My hope and belief is that by working together, we can provide our children and school staff with the safety and security they deserve. Again, I wish everyone well for a safe and successful school year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,



J. Dee Brooks
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cc: Chief Nicole Ford, MPD
Sheriff Scott Holzinger, MCSO
Chief Richard Ward, CPD
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