



U.S. Department of Justice

Federal Bureau of Investigation

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FBI, WCPSS, and Wake County Law Enforcement Agencies Launch Joint Awareness Campaign to Warn Everyone to #ThinkBeforeYouPost

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Charlotte Division, the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), and law enforcement agencies across Wake County have launched a new joint awareness campaign to educate everyone about the consequences of making school threats, and remind community members hoax threats are not a joke.

In the aftermath of tragic shootings such as the ones at Santa Fe High School and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the FBI and law enforcement agencies across the country often see an increase in threats made to schools and other public buildings.

Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies follow up on every tip we receive from the public, and analyze and investigate all threats to determine their credibility. Making false threats drains law enforcement resources and costs taxpayer money. When an investigation concludes there was a false or hoax threat made to a school, or another public place, state or federal charges can be levied. A federal charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

“As the new school year ramps up, we need for students to understand this message. Making threats against schools, even those you did not intend to carry out, can result in felony convictions at the state or federal level. It is not a joke,” said John A. Strong, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in North Carolina.

“We all have to work together as a team to keep our schools safe,” said Russ Smith, Senior Director of Security for the Wake County Public School System. “We must allow our law enforcement officers and security staff to focus on school safety, not spending their time and resources investigating hoax threats.”

Public assistance is crucial in our efforts to curb these hoax threats. We ask that the public continue to contact law enforcement to report any potential threats or suspicious activity. If there is any reason to believe the safety of others is at risk, we ask that the public immediately reach out to their local police department by calling 911.

Law enforcement officers spend countless hours investigating threats to determine their credibility. Schools lose precious learning time responding to these threats. And most importantly, a young person can ruin their future by making a hoax school threat. #ThinkBeforeYouPost!

The FBI, WCPSS, and local law enforcement agencies will promote the message across their social media platforms using art, public service announcement videos, and additional resources for parents and students.

What Should You Do to Help?

- Don't ever post or send any hoax threats ... period.
- If you are a target of an online threat, alert your local law enforcement immediately.
- If you see a threat of violence posted on social media, immediately contact local law enforcement or your local FBI office.
- Notify authorities, but don't share or forward the threat until law enforcement has had a chance to investigate—this can spread misinformation and cause panic.
- If you are a parent or family member, know that some young people post these threats online as a cry for attention or as a way to get revenge or exert control. Talk to your child about the proper outlet for their stress or other emotions, and explain the importance of responsible social media use and the consequences of posting hoax threats.

Resources

- [FBI Warns of Posting Hoax Threats to Institutions and Launches Campaign to Educate the Public to #ThinkBeforeYouPost](#)
- [FBI, This Week: Campaign Addresses Consequences of Hoax Threats](#)
- [Esta Semana en el FBI: Por Medio de una Campaña se Abordan las Consecuencias de las Amenaza](#)
- [Think Before You Post PSA](#)

Local Law Enforcement Partners

- Wake County Sheriff's Office
- Apex Police Department
- Cary Police Department
- Fuquay-Varina Police Department
- Garner Police Department
- Holly Springs Police Department
- Knightdale Police Department
- Morrisville Police Department
- Raleigh Police Department
- Rolesville Police Department
- Wake Forest Police Department
- Wake Tech Campus Police
- Wendell Police Department
- Zebulon Police Department

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