



# ALLEGAN COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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DATE: April 22, 2019

Dear Parents:

Few events hit home for students and families like a school shooting. When students learn of these events on television or on social media, it is natural for them to worry about their own school and their own safety. Unfortunately, some students see these tragedies as an opportunity to gain notoriety and make threats against their schools, teachers, and classmates.

Between 2017 and 2018, the Allegan County Prosecutor's Office received 19 reports from law enforcement agencies of students either using social media to make threats against schools or communicating the threat to other students. Many of these threats turn out to be made by students who claim they were just joking or playing a prank. I want to be very clear: **these threats are no joke, and this behavior will not be tolerated.**

Out of the 19 reports submitted:

- 16 students were charged.
- Each defendant has been charged with False Threat of Terrorism or Threat of Terrorism;
- Both of these charges are felonies that could result in significant incarceration in jail or even prison, if convicted as an adult, and also include the costs associated with investigation and prosecution.

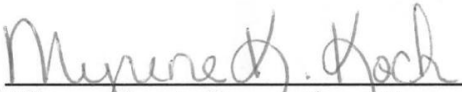
While the punishments dictated by the criminal justice system are stern, students may face additional consequences, including:

- Loss of scholarships and federal aid;
- Denied college admission;
- Being required to disclose pending cases or criminal convictions on job applications.

I urge you to talk to your children about the appropriate use of social media, and the lasting consequences of making threats against our schools. Please stress that there is nothing humorous about threatening to shoot up a school. All threats will continue to be taken seriously and prosecuted to the fullest extent under the law.

By working together, we can provide our children the safe schools they deserve.

Sincerely,

  
Allegan County Prosecuting Attorney

  
Allegan County Sheriff's Office