

Talking about threats with your child

Unfortunately, over the past years, school divisions across the nation have seen an increase in threats – social media posts, verbal statements or graffiti messages - that are made against schools. Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) is no different. It is not uncommon for schools to see more threats reported, especially following a national incident of violence. Any threat - credible or not - increases anxiety, fear and uneasiness for students and their families. That is why VBCPS has developed these important reminders you can share with your children if and when there is a threat reported at their school.

This behavior is unacceptable.

Some think of it as a joke. Some are trying to spread fear. Some simply want to disrupt school operations. There are any number of reasons why students make threats; however, it is never tolerated. Making threats without the intention to carry them out or joking about threats will be disciplined as threats because such conduct causes unnecessary fear and disruption of the educational environment. This includes serious disciplinary action at the school (up to and including expulsion) as well as potential criminal charges (including felony counts of disturbing the peace, making a threat against a school, among others).

All threats are fully investigated.

The moment a threat is reported at a school, an immediate response plan is enacted. Police are notified at once and lead a full investigation, with the support of the school administrators. Depending on the time and type of threat, this includes meeting with students – sometimes in the middle of the night, if needed– to get the most accurate and timely information.

There are protocols in place.

VBCPS has a comprehensive safety plan in place, which was developed in partnership with the Virginia Beach Police Department, Virginia Beach Office of Emergency Management, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services as well as other state and national experts to bring the best safety practices and state of the art security resources to the division.

Normalcy is key.

The school will communicate with families directly to keep them as updated as possible during the investigation process. However, because all threats are a police investigation, there are limits to what schools are allowed to share. That said, if police or administrators have any evidence or any reason to believe student and staff safety is in jeopardy, the school will not open. As such, if the school is opening, it is important for families to maintain their normal schedule and follow the school's lead.



WE ARE ALL A TEAM.

School safety is not just a job for teachers or security assistants or police. It is a combined effort with parents, students and community members. As such, if anyone hears or sees anything suspicious or concerning, report it to police or a staff member at the school. In other words, see something, say something. Families can also download the free VBSchools app and utilize the “Report It” function, where users can anonymously submit tips or report threats and they will immediately be sent to the Virginia Beach Crime Solvers and VBCPS Office of Safe Schools.

