



The Roman Catholic Archdiocese *of* Washington

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Dear Students,

My name is Ms. Kelly Branaman. I am the Superintendent for Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Washington. I have asked your principal to read this letter to you regarding something very important that you need to be aware of and understand. Over the years, there has been an increase in threats made to schools and students. Our Catholic schools are not immune to threats. I want to make sure that each of you understands the serious consequences of making threats to fellow students or to the school. Examples of threats include something said at school, written on paper, posted or reposed on social media, written in a group chat, or statements made online while playing a video game.

I want each of you to know that we take all threats very seriously. If a student says they are going to do something harmful at school or bring a weapon to the building, we must assume that person intends on carrying out their threat. Your safety is our priority, and we have rules and processes established to keep you safe. Threats are not viewed as a joke, and they will not be tolerated. Whenever we learn of these threats, we act immediately to protect our students and staff. In most cases, we must call law enforcement. The police also take these threats very seriously. Also, please know that falsely accusing someone of making these types of threats is also a very serious matter and considered a “felony” offense against the law.

Students, I am asking you to choose your words wisely. Your words are powerful. Your words have meaning and consequences. It is important that all of you understand what we are discussing today. It is never acceptable to say or write such threats.

Before His death on the cross, Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (John 13:34). If we keep that in mind, we should have nothing but kind things to say to each other. Let us help those in need to resolve their differences and reconcile. We are called to love others, even in the midst of conflict. Always, remember Jesus’ teachings of Peace and Love. There is nothing more important to me and our schools than your safety.

I appreciate the fact that our students understand the importance of reporting threats to parents and the school administration. Always tell a trusted adult if you become aware of a threat. It is extremely important that we all work together to keep our schools safe.

“You are the Light of the World” (Matthew 5:14). Let your light shine brightly and bring good to others. Have a great day and God bless you all.

Kelly Branaman
Superintendent of Catholic Schools