

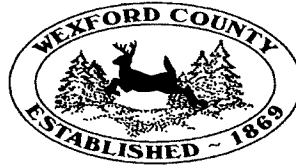
WEXFORD COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

JASON J. ELMORE
Prosecuting Attorney
jelmore@wexfordcounty.org

COREY J. WIGGINS
Chief Assistant Prosecutor
cwiggins@wexfordcounty.org

JOHANNA C. CAREY
Assistant Prosecutor
jcarey@wexfordcounty.org

COURTHOUSE
437 EAST DIVISION STREET
CADILLAC, MICHIGAN 49601
(231) 779-9505 FAX (231) 779-9108



CATHY WRIGHT
Office Administrator
cwright@wexfordcounty.org
STEVE SCHRYER
Child Support Specialist
schryers@michigan.gov
SHARON D. HAGSTROM
Interstate Child Support
hagstroms@michigan.gov
SHAWNA SHELTON
Victim Advocate
sshelton@wexfordcounty.org
RICHARD OLSON, Clerk
rolson@wexfordcounty.org

September 10, 2018

Dear Parents:

We at the Wexford County Prosecutor's Office, hope that this letter finds you and your student ready for a great new school year after having had a terrific Michigan summer.

Supporting a safe and nurturing educational environment is important to all of us in Wexford County. Thus, we are sending on this letter to raise to you a few issues.

Our office has received multiple reports from law enforcement agencies of students using social media to **harass other students and make threats against schools**. Many of these acts and threats turned out to be made by students who claim they were just joking or playing a prank. We want to be very clear: **these threats are no joke, and this behavior will not be tolerated**.

This summer, there were some changes made to the laws regarding **sexual misconduct** cases in which juveniles are involved. Students who receive an adult conviction or juvenile adjudication for some sexual offenses, could be suspended or expelled from school as well as prohibited from attending the same school or school functions as the victim.

The use of social media and electronic devices to take and distribute **sexually explicit images** of other teens can result in several criminal charges, such as harassment as well as production and distribution of child pornography.

Please also **monitor your student's use of social media**. As parents, we want to get along with our children, and such monitoring may seem intrusive; however, our first responsibility is to raise good young people and protect them from those who seek to do them harm. Our office regularly receives police reports involving adults seeking out and arranging inappropriate encounters with children. Parents, you are the best line of defense. The uncomfortableness that comes with the intrusion is better than the alternative.


Another concern is **truancy**. Children cannot gain the education they need to succeed in this world without being present at school. This is a responsibility shared by the parent/guardian as well as the student. Moreover, students who are not active in school tend to be more prone to mischief, which could result in other criminal charges.

For parents/guardians, truancy is when they do not send children between 6 or 18 years old to public school. During the school year, the child's attendance must be "continuous and consecutive." There are, of course, a few exceptions, such as those attending approved private school, who have graduated, and those receiving proper homeschooling. Homeschooling can be, and is, a valuable and rewarding option for families. Parents/guardians, however, may not claim homeschooling as a defense when there is no actual homeschooling being done. There must be an "organized educational program."

For children, truancy is when one is "willfully and repeatedly" absent from school or school program intended to meet the student's educational needs. It also includes when student repeatedly violate rules and regulations of the school or program that may cause expulsion or suspension.

While not only are the punishments issued by the criminal justice system stern, students may face additional consequences, such as loss of scholarships and federal aid, denied college admission, being required to disclose pending cases or criminal convictions on job applications, and being ineligible for military service. We urge you to talk to your children about the appropriate use of social media. Explain to them the terrible consequences of harassing students and making threats toward schools. Talk to them about respecting others and making responsible choices regarding social media, sexual conduct, and remaining focused on their future. By working together, we can provide our children the safe schools and nurturing environment they deserve.

Very Respectfully,



Jason Elmore
Wexford County Prosecutor