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October 23, 2018

Dear Parents:

In the weeks following last February's tragic school shooting in Parkland, Florida we experienced a notable increase of threats of school violence not only on a national level but also within our State and here in Clinton County. While a vast majority of students making these threats admitted that, "it was just a joke" or "I didn't think it was a big deal" or "I was just kidding around," the incidents are taken very seriously.

In response to these types of threats we crafted an informational letter which was sent to all parents with school age children within our county. You may recall in that letter the outlined seriousness and criminal consequences for such actions including but not limited to: Threat of Terrorism, False Threat of Terrorism, and Use of a Computer to Commit a Crime, the most serious of which carries a possible 20 year prison term.

Just last week a bomb threat, in the form of a note, was found after school dismissed in the Men's restroom of one of our Clinton County High Schools. The handwritten note indicated that the bomb had been planted in the school and would detonate at 11:15 a.m. the following school day. That evening a team of six (6) bomb dogs from throughout the Tri-County area and numerous Clinton County Sheriffs' Deputies responded to the school and conducted a complete and thorough search with no suspicious packages being located. The following morning the school opened with a large police presence at a single point of entry into the school. The person responsible has been identified and confessed to Detectives of the Clinton County Sheriff's Office and will be prosecuted.

We're again asking that you discuss with your children the seriousness of this type of behavior and that they will be held accountable for their actions.

We also bring to your attention another very dangerous and illegal activity which is 'Sexting'. This is not a new issue; in fact we receive several cases throughout the county during the school year regarding this illegal activity. 'Sexting' is the act of an individual sending a nude selfie (generally of themselves) to another person. This may be the result of a dare, bantering or adolescent sexual curiosity. In any case, what a student doesn't realize is that it is considered a crime of Distribution of Child Pornography which is a 20 year felony. Also, if the person receiving the picture saves the photo they could be charged with the crime of Possession of Child Pornography which is a 7 year felony. The true danger with this activity results from the sharing of the photo with numerous others, and the perpetrator/sender becoming a victim of teasing, bullying and even sexual harassment; not to mention the danger of the photo being accessed by child predators via the internet.

Please take the time to speak with your children regarding both of these very important issues and avoid what could be a life changing incident.

Respectfully,

Law Enforcement: Clinton County Prosecutor Charles Sherman, Clinton County Sheriff Larry Jerue, Bath Township Police Chief Lyle Lindemulder, Dewitt City Police Chief Bruce Ferguson, DeWitt Township Police Chief Brian Russell, Elsie Police Chief Joe Spagnuolo, Ovid Police Chief Al Goodrich and St. Johns Police Chief David Kirk

School Superintendents: Mr. Wayne Petroelje Clinton County RESA, Mr. Jake Huffman, Bath Schools, Mr. John Deiter, DeWitt Schools, Mr. Neil Hufnagel, Fowler Schools, Mr. Ryan Cunningham, Ovid-Elsie Schools; Mr. Jeff Wright, Pewamo-Westphalia Schools; Mr. Mark Palmer, St. Johns Schools.