



# ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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Dear Students:

My name is Mr. Bill Ryan, I am the Secretary for Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Washington. I have asked that your principal read this letter to you, regarding something very important that you need to be aware of, and understand. There has been a recent increase in school threats made to schools and students, over the past ten years. Like many schools around the country, 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. Schools and students, across the country have experienced threats in various ways; sometimes, it is something said at school, written on paper or posted on social media, 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 blow up the school, or bring a weapon to harm people, 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 when we learn of these types of threats. These threats are not viewed as a joke and they will not be tolerated. Whenever we learn of these threats, we immediately call law enforcement. The police also take these threats very seriously. Also, please know that 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. Words have meaning and consequences. These types of actions are felony offenses, and it is our obligation to contact law enforcement to investigate all threats of this nature. All threats made against any of our students or schools, even those made “as a joke” will be reported to law enforcement and may turn into criminal charges and a possible recommendation of expulsion from school.

It is important that all of you understand what we are discussing today. I hope that you understand that your words are powerful and it is never acceptable to say or write such threats. It is important that we remember that Jesus gave us a new commandment, “to love one another, as he has loved us.” If we keep that in mind, we should have nothing but kind things to say to each other.

I appreciate the fact that our students understand the importance of reporting these types of threats to parents and to school administration. It is extremely important now, that we all work together, this way, to keep our schools safe.

Let us help those in need to resolve their differences and reconcile. We are called to love others, even in the midst of conflict, and remember Jesus’ teachings of Peace and Love. There is nothing more important to me and our schools, than your safety.

Have a great day and God bless you all.

William H. Ryan, III  
Secretary for Catholic Schools