

Washington Township Public Schools



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September 1, 2025

Dear Washington Township Public Schools Families,

As we begin a new school year, I want to share how seriously we take the responsibility of keeping our students and staff safe. Security in our schools and the way we respond to threats are matters we treat with the utmost importance. The safety and well-being of every child and adult in our district remains our highest priority, and we approach this responsibility with care, diligence, and urgency.

To that end, Washington Township Public Schools has put in place many layers of safety. We work closely with the Township to provide School Resource Officers and Special Law Enforcement Officers in our schools. Our Chief of Security, George Hilbert, a retired Lieutenant of the Washington Township Police Department, leads these efforts and collaborates daily with local and county law enforcement to ensure we are fully prepared and coordinated. While some of our safety measures are visible to the public, many are intentionally kept confidential to protect the integrity of our protocols. Both the visible and the unseen measures are equally important to ensuring a secure learning environment. In addition, we have six state-certified School Safety Specialists across the district and continue to expand and monitor security camera systems in all of our schools. Families who have questions or concerns are always welcome to reach out to Chief Hilbert at ghilbert@wtps.org or 856-589-8500 x7512. For non-emergencies, the Washington Township Police Department can also be reached at 856-256-1212.

As part of our ongoing commitment, we spend time during the first days of school talking with students about the seriousness of making threats. It is important that students understand that our district has a zero-tolerance policy for threats in any form. Threats are classified as Tier 4 offenses in our Code of Conduct and can result in a formal threat assessment, long-term suspension, possible placement in an alternative school, police involvement, mandated mental health evaluations, and the requirement of a safety plan before returning to school. These are not minor disciplinary matters; they carry very real and lasting consequences.

We are asking for your help in reinforcing this message at home. Please take the time to talk with your child about the seriousness of threats, whether they are spoken, written, posted online, or sent through text or social media. Every threat must be treated as serious, regardless of context or intent, and even if the student claims it was only a joke. Our students must understand that these choices can quickly escalate into situations that affect not only their education, but also their future.

A threat can take many forms. It may be spoken, written, gestured, or shared digitally. It is still considered a threat even if the intended recipient never becomes aware of it. The National Center for School Safety defines a threat as a communication that goes beyond general aggression and instead conveys or implies an intent to commit violence. Even actions that suggest planning or preparing for violence may be considered implied threats.

When our district becomes aware of a possible threat, we take a proactive and structured approach. If there is any uncertainty, we treat the matter seriously and conduct an immediate screening. If needed, we carry out a formal threat assessment to evaluate intent and seriousness when no immediate danger is present. All staff members in our schools are mandated reporters, and they must notify a principal or designated administrator right away if they become aware of concerning behavior. We also strongly encourage students to speak up if they hear or see something troubling, whether it occurs in person, online, or through other means. By reporting concerns promptly, we can intervene early and take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of everyone in our schools.

We remain committed to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for every student. Your partnership is critical in helping us reinforce these expectations and in teaching our children the importance of making thoughtful, responsible decisions. Please take a few minutes to review this message with your child and remind them that safety is a shared responsibility.

Thank you, as always, for your trust and your support as we work together to keep Washington Township Public Schools safe.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eric M. Hibbs
Superintendent

