

BERTRAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL

"Honor Tradition. Inspire the Future."

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September 9, 2026

Dear Bertrand Families and Community Members,

I want to make our families aware of a situation that occurred involving several students and social media. While I do not want to give unnecessary attention to the specific messages or actions involved, I do want to provide some context, reassure our community about the district's response, and use this as an important reminder for our students and families.

The situation began with what students described as a social media trend sometimes referred to as the "Cat in the Hat" trend, involving fake accounts, pictures, messages, and attempts to frighten or provoke other students. What may have started in the minds of students as a joke quickly escalated when messages were interpreted as threats to personal and school safety.

Once the situation came to the district's attention, school administration immediately began investigating and contacted law enforcement. The individuals involved were identified, parents were contacted, information and screenshots were preserved and shared as appropriate, and disciplinary action was taken in accordance with district policy. We have continued communicating with law enforcement and reviewing the circumstances to ensure that any potential safety concern has been appropriately addressed.

At this time, we want to emphasize that our students are safe and school is operating normally. We also want our families to know that we take any statement, message, image, or social media post involving threats of violence seriously, even when the person responsible claims afterward that it was intended as a joke.

This incident is an important example of how quickly something seemingly harmless can become something much more serious. Creating a fake account, sending an intimidating picture, participating in an online prank, or attempting to scare another student may seem funny for a few minutes. Once another person reasonably believes that his or her safety, or the safety of the school, is being threatened, however, it is no longer simply a joke.

We encourage parents to talk with their children about their social media activity and remind them that online actions have real-world consequences. Students should never create fake accounts to impersonate or intimidate others, send threatening

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content, participate in social media challenges that target other people, or repeat and circulate threatening messages. If a student receives something concerning, the best response is to save it, do not engage or retaliate, and immediately show it to a trusted adult.

I also want to thank the students and families who brought information forward rather than ignoring it. That is exactly what we ask our students to do: if you see something or hear something that concerns you, tell an adult. We would much rather investigate something and determine there is no ongoing danger than fail to respond to something that could become serious.

Student safety remains our highest priority. Situations such as this provide an opportunity to reinforce our safety procedures, our partnership with local law enforcement, and our expectations for responsible student behavior both inside and outside of school.

Thank you to our families, staff, students, and local law enforcement for continuing to work together to keep Bertrand Community School a safe place to learn.

In Service,

Nicole LeClaire
Superintendent