



# Pearl River School District

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**Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

October 12, 2023

Dear Pearl River Families,

Misinformation about the Israel-Hamas war is flooding social media, where users around the world are sharing false and misleading claims about the conflict. As with any situation that concerns safety we are in communication with local law enforcement and are also connected to regional and County level agencies. Although there are no specific threats to safety in our area, we should expect a visible increase in police presence around our schools and in the community.

For more information from the FBI on this matter please click [HERE](#).

We ask for your assistance in addressing this issue within our school community. We encourage you to have open and honest conversations with your child(ren) about the dangers of misinformation on social media and its potential impact. Stress the importance of reporting any concerns related to school safety to the school principal or law enforcement officials. Additionally, we urge you to discuss with them the consequences of sharing unverified information through social media channels.

Below please find links to sources that may be of support to you in talking with children about this sensitive and difficult subject.

1. [Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Families and Educators \(nasponline.org\)](#)  
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2. [Proactive and Positive Parenting in the Aftermath of a Tragedy - Cognitive Behavior Institute \(papsychotherapy.org\)](#)

Below please find information below from a message issued today by the New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services to the Threat Assessment Management (TAM) Team Community:

*What to look for:*

- *Explicit calls for violence or harm towards any group or individual;*
- *Open dialogue that appears to glorify violence or harm towards any group or individual;*
- *Attempts to recruit or radicalize individuals using the conflict as a driver;*
- *Suspicious activities that might suggest planning or preparing for violent actions;*
- *Misinformation campaigns designed to incite hatred and violence; and*
- *Behavior changes in individuals, such as sudden radicalization or increased affinity with extremist ideologies.*

*What (Not) to do:*

- *Do Not Engage Online: If you come across extremist content or recruitment attempts online, avoid engaging or confronting the individuals directly.*
- *Report: Document and report any terrorist activity to local law enforcement.*
- *Stay Informed: Ensure information is from reputable sources that prioritize facts and credible sources over sensationalist claims. Encourage others to do the same.*
- *Educate: Share knowledge about the dangers of misinformation, the importance of critical thinking and using credible sources for news and information.*

*Although there are currently no active, credible threats to New York State, there is an increasing concern that individuals and groups, particularly those ascribing to violent extremist ideologies, may attempt to exploit the current situation to further their agendas. These groups may manipulate or twist narratives to incite hatred, recruit followers or mobilize acts of violence.*

Any threat to our schools and district is treated seriously. We participate in ongoing safety and emergency response training which includes threat assessment protocols. Our actions to address such potential threats are taken in close consultation with law enforcement.

Thank you for supporting our shared commitment to the safety of our Pearl River School District community.

Sincerely,

Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed. D