Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Cordillera Administrative Region
Schools Division of Benguet

DepEd-Benguet Division
OCT 2 7 2026
RELEASED

26 October 2026

DIVISION MEMORANDUM
No. 450, s2026

PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL MEDIA USE AND AWARENESS OF THE LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF PRANKS, THREATS, AND OTHER POSTS AFFECTING SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

To: Assistant Schools Division Superintendent
Chief Education Supervisors
Public Schools District Supervisors
Public Schools District In-charge
All Public Elementary and Secondary School Heads
All Private Elementary and Secondary School Heads
All Others Concerned

1. In line with the Department of Education's continuing commitment to ensuring safe, secure, and learner-friendly learning environments, all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the Schools Division of Benguet are encouraged to strengthen learners' awareness of responsible social media use, digital citizenship, and the serious consequences of online content that may compromise school safety and security.

2. In this regard, teachers are encouraged to integrate age-appropriate discussions and learning activities into their respective subjects, homeroom guidance sessions, and other appropriate learning engagements. These discussions may emphasize that social media posts, comments, videos, memes, and other online content involving alleged school threats, bomb scares, shooting incidents, planned acts of violence, unauthorized security alerts, or other similar pranks are not harmless jokes. Such content may cause unnecessary fear and panic among learners, parents, teachers, and the wider community; disrupt classes and school operations; and divert the resources of school personnel and emergency responders from their essential duties.

3. Learners shall be guided to understand that **claiming that a post was merely a joke or a prank does not automatically excuse the act from legal or disciplinary consequences.** Depending on the nature, content, circumstances, and intent of the act, the following laws may apply:

a. **Republic Act No. 10175, or the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012**, which provides a legal framework for addressing offenses committed through information and communications technology, including applicable offenses under existing laws committed using computer systems;

b. **Act No. 3815, or the Revised Penal Code, as amended**, particularly the provisions on threats and other offenses, where the elements of the applicable offense are present;

c. **Republic Act No. 9516**, which amended Presidential Decree No. 1866, as amended, and provides penalties for specified unlawful acts involving explosives and incendiary devices. Posts involving bomb threats or explosive-related incidents may warrant investigation under applicable laws, depending on the facts and circumstances; and

d. **Republic Act No. 10627, or the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013**, and its applicable implementing rules and regulations, where online conduct constitutes bullying or cyberbullying within the scope of the law and applicable school policies.

The foregoing references are not exhaustive. Other applicable laws, regulations, and school policies may also be considered, as warranted by the circumstances. The determination of possible violations and corresponding liabilities rests with the appropriate authorities in accordance with law and due process.

4. To reinforce these principles, teachers may discuss the following reminders with learners:

a. Think before posting, sharing, commenting on, or forwarding content that may create fear, confusion, or concern about school safety and security.
b. Never fabricate, stage, or circulate false or misleading information about threats, weapons, bomb scares, violent incidents, or emergencies in schools.
c. Do not participate in online challenges, pranks, or group activities that encourage violence, threaten the safety of others, or interfere with school operations.
d. Report suspicious, threatening, or alarming online content to a trusted adult, teacher, school head, or the appropriate authorities instead of amplifying or spreading it.
e. Practice responsible digital citizenship by respecting others, verifying information, and understanding that online actions may have real-world consequences.

5. All school heads and school management teams are reminded to report promptly to the Schools Division Office through the appropriate channels, particularly the Division Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Coordinator or Division DRRM Operations Center, any social media post or online content that suggests a possible threat to the safety and security of learners, personnel, school facilities, or school operations.

6. Depending on the nature and urgency of the reported content, the school shall likewise coordinate immediately with the appropriate authorities and partner agencies, such as the Philippine National Police (PNP), including its appropriate investigative or cybercrime unit when warranted, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and other concerned emergency response or security agencies.

7. For the proper handling of such reports, school heads and designated personnel are encouraged to:

a. Preserve available evidence, including screenshots, links, account names, dates, timestamps, and other relevant details, without unnecessarily circulating the content;

b. Immediately relay the information to the appropriate school and division authorities and concerned response agencies, particularly when the post indicates an imminent or credible threat;

c. Follow established school safety, emergency response, and incident reporting protocols, including precautionary measures as advised by competent authorities;

d. Avoid publicly confirming, dismissing, or speculating about the credibility of the post before proper assessment by the appropriate authorities; and

e. Maintain confidentiality, protect the privacy of learners and other individuals involved, and refrain from making premature accusations or taking actions that may compromise an investigation.

8. **In cases involving an immediate or imminent threat, the school shall not wait for the completion of internal documentation before notifying the appropriate emergency response or law enforcement authorities.** The safety of learners and personnel must remain the primary consideration.

9. School heads are further encouraged to promote collaboration among teachers, learners, parents, guidance personnel, child protection committees, DRRM coordinators, and community partners in fostering a culture of safety, accountability, and responsible online behavior. These efforts should be educational and preventive in nature, with appropriate guidance and support for learners, while ensuring that serious incidents are referred to the proper authorities and that applicable due process and child protection safeguards are observed.

10. This Memorandum serves as a preventive and awareness-raising measure to help learners appreciate that responsible social media use is an important part of maintaining safe schools and resilient communities. All concerned are encouraged to approach these discussions with care, understanding, and professionalism, emphasizing not only the possible consequences of irresponsible online behavior but also the shared responsibility of every member of the school community to protect one another.

11. For information, guidance, and appropriate action.

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OIC - Schools Division Superintendent

For the OIC-SDS:

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