

## Loudoun County Sheriff unveils social media initiatives to promote student safety

This school year Loudoun County, VA Sheriff Mike Chapman announced two initiatives to protect the safety and health of his community's youth.

In an effort to receive information on potential threats to local schools, Sheriff Chapman and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office introduced the Safe2Talk app at the beginning of the school year. The free downloadable app allows students, parents, teachers, and residents the ability to anonymously report safety concerns in our schools, including suspicious or threatening social media activity. Studies have shown that at least one other person had some type of prior knowledge of an attacker's plan of targeted violence in schools. "The Safe2Talk app empowers students to come forward and play a critical role in keeping schools safe without the fear of retaliation," said Loudoun County Sheriff Mike Chapman in a video introducing the app. Providing information through the app will enable Loudoun County Public School security personnel, School Resource Officers, and investigators to determine the validity of the information, help minimize the spread of false information, and allow for an appropriate follow-up.



All reports through the app are monitored 24 hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week by dispatchers in the Loudoun Sheriff's Office Emergency Communications Center. In cases of imminent threats, LCSO Patrol Deputies and School Resource Officers are immediately notified.

After the deadly Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, FL, Sheriff Chapman attended a Department of Homeland Security conference in Washington, D.C., where he learned of an app called Safe2Tell that was being used in Colorado. The app was developed by Anderson Software that produces tip management software for Crime Stoppers programs, law enforcement agencies, campus



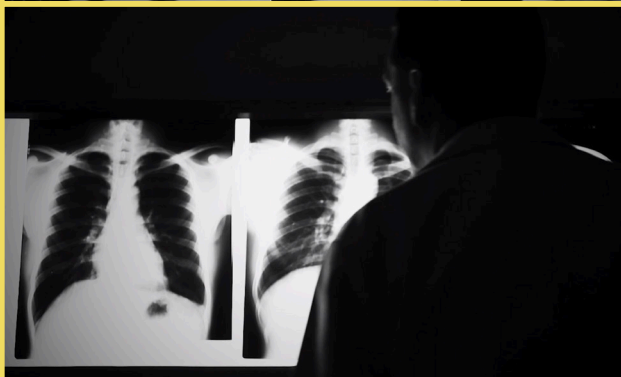
safety programs, and federal agency initiatives.

The LCSO worked with Anderson software to develop the Safe2Talk app in Loudoun County. The app is now available through the Apple Store and Google Play.

Also this school year, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office continued a campaign to bring awareness to the dangers of vaping. After finding vapes in the possession of students in both middle and high school, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office has been working to educate parents through forums held at local schools and providing information to students regarding vapes at an early age in the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program. D.A.R.E. is taught in Loudoun County at both the elementary and middle school level.

In light of recent headlines regarding a surge in vaping-related illnesses and deaths, a long-form educational video was also developed and released through the agency's social media platforms, including Nextdoor and YouTube. The video advises residents that the use of these devices among teenagers is at epidemic levels. The expanded outreach campaign comes





**IMPORTANT: Effective July 1, 2019!**

**YOU MUST BE AT LEAST 21 YEARS OF AGE\***

**to purchase tobacco products, nicotine vapor products or alternative nicotine products.**



as studies show that in just the past year high school-aged students using electronic cigarettes increased 78% nationwide. Studies also show that e-cigarettes contain potentially toxic substances and the inhalation of harmful chemicals can cause irreversible lung damage and lung disease. “Even more disconcerting is what else can be inhaled from these devices. Recently members of the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office uncovered vapes containing THC, a butane hash oil. The concentration in the vape cartridges was 95 percent THC. This is well over 10 times more potent than a typical marijuana plant seized during my days as an agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration,” said Sheriff Chapman in the informational video.

Efforts are being made at the federal and state levels to limit the access and promotion of vapor products to children. In July 2019, a new law took effect in Virginia prohibiting the purchase or possession of tobacco products, nicotine vapor products, and alternative nicotine products by a person under 21 years of age, or the sale of these products to persons under 21 years of age.

Sheriff Chapman and the Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office continue to make the safety of Loudoun students and its schools a top priority. By utilizing social media platforms and smartphone applications, the agency hopes to encourage all of Loudoun’s citizens to play an active role in the well-being of the county’s youth.

**VAPING WEBPAGE**

<https://sheriff.loudoun.gov/5194/Vaping>

**VAPING VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ccmtmkokqn8&t=18s>

**Safe2Talk WEBPAGE**

<https://sheriff.loudoun.gov/5235/Safe2Talk-App>

**Safe2Talk VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWTDWDO9yJQ>

**LCSO RECRUITMENT VIDEO**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-e17fKPuCo>

