



## Autistic student in Conroe ISD arrested for playing with 'imaginary rifle'

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**CONROE, Texas (FOX 26)** - Handcuffed and hauled away. It happened Monday to a 5th grade autistic student at Conroe Independent School District's Bozman Intermediate school. The offense alleged against 12-year-old David Sims is brandishing an "imaginary" rifle at his art teacher, an educator who apparently felt threatened.

"She (CISD Police Officer) just put handcuffs on me and told me I need to go with her," said David Sims. "They just said, 'We don't tolerate that. We take it as a threat.' A threat? He didn't threaten anyone. He didn't do anything but play," said Amy Sims, David's mother.



Amy Sims says she wasn't notified of the classroom incident until after her son was in custody. Like many students challenged with autism, Amy says her son simply didn't understand "make believe" gunplay on campus has become inappropriate behavior.

"Being put in handcuffs, not knowing what he did wrong, I could have had a talk with him and told him look, I know you like to play guns, but you can't do it in school," said Amy Sims.

David spent two hours and eleven minutes at the Juvenile Detention Center. Montgomery County Attorney J.D. Lambright says given his age and disability it's likely criminal charges can be avoided.

"We want to get them turned around and on the right path," said Lambright.

Lambright says the imaginary rifle fire from David Simms was reportedly preceded by a verbal threat and had happened in class before. He called the incident at Bozeman just the latest in a slew of troubling outbursts from students in schools across his jurisdiction.

"Right after the Florida incident we were getting two a day, three a day and it wasn't isolated to any particular school. We have six school districts in Montgomery County and they were coming in across the County," said Lambright.

Conroe ISD would not comment on the specifics of David's arrest, but did say in a statement to FOX 26, "Situations involving students with special needs are responded to with consideration for each unique need."

For her part, Amy Sims believes her son is certainly getting special treatment -- the discriminatory kind.

"Because he's disabled, they automatically think he's got something mental, so he might go shoot up a school," said Amy Sims.

The Sim's family tells FOX 26 Conroe ISD has informed them David must attend an alternative disciplinary school for the remainder of the Spring semester.