

## Conroe mother questions arrest of autistic son, 12, for alleged threat at school

By Catherine Dominguez, cdominguez@hcnonline.com Updated 8:53 am, Wednesday, May 9, 2018



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A Conroe mother is taking aim at the Conroe Independent School District after her autistic 12-year-old son was arrested for allegedly pretending to fire an imaginary rifle at his teacher during class Monday.

While the boy denies this recent allegation, his mother said there have been other incidents involving her son, including the creation of a "Death Note" listing certain classmates' names with a manner of death for each one.

The mother, whose name is being withheld to protect the identity of the juvenile, said she believes her son is being targeted by his teacher at Bozman Intermediate in Conroe. The boy, she explained, has been diagnosed with autism and with oppositional defiant disorder but is in mainstream classes at the school. ODD usually begins before a child is 8 years old. Symptoms include irritable mood, argumentative and defiant behavior, aggression and vindictiveness, according to the Mayo Clinic website.

"He is autistic, high functioning, but he shuts down, won't talk," the mother told The Courier, adding that she does not believe the situation rose to the level of a valid threat. "He doesn't understand." The boy, the mother said, is undergoing treatment that includes medication.

County Attorney J D Lambright, whose office handles juvenile cases, said the boy was arrested and booked into the Montgomery County Juvenile Detention Center and later

released to his family. He said the boy was at the detention center for two to three hours before being released.

"I got a call from the school saying (my son) was arrested because he pretended to hold a rifle and said, 'This is how you do it,'" the mother, who has been hospitalized for several days for an unrelated health issue, said. "I asked the school if he was still there; and they said 'No, we already took him.' I immediately got mad because I thought a parent was supposed to be there before police took him at 12 years old. "I felt the school should have called me first."

While officials with CISD could not speak specifically about the incident, the district provided a statement on how it handles any threats made.

"... any actions or statements that are threatening in nature are taken seriously. Campus administrators work with Conroe ISD Police to investigate and address all matters in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and the laws of the State of Texas. Actions or statements containing specific elements are responded to in a manner that will initiate access to the appropriate support resources, and situations involving students with special needs are responded to with consideration for each unique need. Conroe ISD administrators along with the Conroe ISD Police Department do everything possible to make Conroe ISD a safe place for all of our employees and students," the statement read.

Marc Brumberger, chief of the Juvenile Section for the county, said he was aware of the incident but as of Tuesday afternoon had not received the offense report. He said his office has not decided whether to pursue formal charges or try to resolve the issue with counseling due to the age of the boy.

"He is relatively young," Brumberger said. "I tend to lean toward not filing a charge when I can, but there is some school history. There are some mental health concerns, so it may be a case where despite his age, I may consider (formal charges). I will just have to see the totality of the information."

### **Student history**

According to the mother, she has asked the school on several occasions to move her son to another class setting outside of regular classes that would be better for him.

While the mother described her son as "a sweet boy," she said this is not his first incident at school. The boy has been suspended for creating a list of classmates' names with a manner of death for each of them and an unrelated incident where she said he defended himself against another student who was bullying him and his friend.

As for the list of names and manner of death, the mother said he got the idea from the movie "Death Note," which she was unaware he had watched. In the movie, a student is visited by a "death God" who claims he can cause the death of anyone by writing it in a book.

The boy was admitted to a hospital for an evaluation but it was determined, the mother said, that he had no intentions of hurting anyone. "They asked him, 'Do you want to hurt these kids?' He said, 'No, I just don't like them; they are bullying me and the teachers won't do anything,'" the mother said.

However, both the CISD and Lambright said they take all threats seriously. Since the tragic Feb. 14 Parkland High School shooting in Florida that left 17 dead allegedly at the hands of a former student, Lambright's office has handled more than 30 cases of threats made against schools, students and teachers across Montgomery County. Half of those, he said, have resulted in formal charges filed. Many of those cases have not been resolved.