



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\*Joint Press Release\*

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### **Pleasanton Police Department and Pleasanton Unified School District caution students and parents about the Assassin Game**

The annual game “Assassin” is now being played by students from Foothill High School and Amador Valley High School. This game is not sanctioned, supported, or approved by the Pleasanton Unified School District. The Pleasanton Police Department and the school district are collectively concerned about the safety of our youth, thus we are reaching out to parents and students with important information about this dangerous activity.

The game involves teams of seniors who are assigned “targets” whom they have to “assassinate” using toy Nerf type guns that fire foam darts. Each participant pays an entry fee and after several rounds and several months of play, the winner is the last person standing. The winner collects a large pot of cash, the collection and custody of which can create liability for the game organizer as participants often make accusations of mishandling or gouging of funds. There are specific rules concerning the type of weapon used, which cannot be altered or painted in any fashion. There are also rules regarding times and locations the subjects may be “assassinated,” and so on.

A major concern for parents, school staff, and Pleasanton police is that the thrill of the game overrides common sense in many instances. Participants do not think about how their behavior is being viewed or interpreted by community members who see individuals with potentially dangerous weapons, often chasing others on foot or in vehicles, and surprising their “targets” in convenience stores. Non-



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participants can feel frightened or threatened as only participants are aware at the time that the behavior is not real but rather a game being played.

Unfortunately, our students and your children are engaging in behavior that has possible dire consequences. We want you as parents, students, and participants to be aware of the pitfalls, dangers, and consequences of taking part in the game.

Some examples of dangerous behavior among participants include: painting or disguising weapons to make them look more realistic; reaching for concealed weapons in public places; lying in wait behind bushes, trash cans, vehicles or fences; accessing or hiding on the property of another, often late at night; waiting for a target while dressed in all black or camouflaged clothing; reckless driving to avoid being targeted; car loads of teens driving around “stalking” or “hunting” their targets; jumping out of moving vehicles to attack or flee from other participants; and conducting a “drive by” shooting of a target in a parking lot or public street.

When viewed through a non-participant’s eyes, the behaviors look and have all the elements of an actual threatening or violent event unfolding. They often prompt multiple calls to the police who respond to what they believe is a violent incident in progress. Not only does this consume significant time and resources of emergency personnel, it also jeopardizes the safety of our community when actual threats cannot be responded to in a timely manner. Furthermore, in the eyes of a startled homeowner protecting his or her family or property, a violent response to a player is quite possible.

The Pleasanton Police Department and the Pleasanton Unified School District urge students to consider the potential ramifications of their behavior and to avoid playing this game. Students will face suspension if any weapons, even imitation guns, are brought to school. If evidence is discovered of the game being played on campus, students will face disciplinary action. To the parents of participants and high school aged children: please have a serious and candid conversation with your children about the very real dangers of this behavior. To participants: please recognize that the only people who know this is a game are those directly involved; others who see your behavior likely believe a real threatening situation is unfolding. To juniors and underclassmen, consider the dangers and problems with this game and do not participate when you become a senior.

Thank you all for your contributions to making Pleasanton a secure and pleasant place to live, work, and attend school. Please take the appropriate steps so that we all can prevent a tragedy and students can enjoy a safe and enjoyable final year of high school.