



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Joint Press Release

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Police, Schools Warn Against Playing Assassin Game

It is the time of year when the annual high school game “Assassin” begins and, locally, there have been reports of this game being played among Foothill and Amador Valley High School students. The game, typically played during the first several months of the second semester, often involves several calls to police and has the potential to end in tragedy.

The game involves teams of students who are assigned “targets” whom they have to “assassinate” using toy Nerf type guns that fire foam darts. The last person “alive” is the winner, who collects the large sum of cash entry fees. The collection and custody of this money can create liability for the game organizer as participants often make accusations of mishandling of funds. There are many specific rules in the game; some define the type of weapon that can be used, others regulate times and locations for game play, and so on.

Unfortunately, our youth are engaging in behavior that could have dire consequences. We want parents, students and participants to be aware of the pitfalls and potential consequences of taking part in this game. A major concern for parents, school staff and police is that the thrill of the game often overrides good judgement. Participants do not think about how their behavior may be viewed by community members who see individuals with potentially dangerous weapons, often chasing others on foot or in vehicles, and surprising their “targets” in public places.

When viewed through a non-participant’s eyes, these behaviors look as though an actual threatening or violent event is unfolding. These “assassinations” often prompt multiple calls to 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, but it also jeopardizes the safety of our community when actual threats cannot be addressed in a timely manner. Furthermore, non-participants can feel frightened or threatened because they are



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not aware a game is being played. When a frightened or threatened community member feels they need to protect his or her family, a violent response to a player is quite possible.

This game is not sanctioned, supported, or approved by the Pleasanton Unified School District. The Pleasanton Police Department and school district are collectively concerned about the safety of our youth, so we are urging students to consider the potential ramifications of their behavior and to avoid playing this game.

Some examples of dangerous behavior among participants include:

1. Painting or disguising weapons to make them look more realistic
2. Reaching for concealed weapons in public places
3. Lying in wait behind bushes, trash cans, vehicles or fences
4. Accessing or hiding on the property of another, often late at night; waiting for a target while dressed in all black or camouflaged clothing
5. Reckless driving to avoid being targeted or driving around “stalking” or “hunting” targets
6. Jumping out of moving vehicles to attack or flee from other participants
7. Conducting a “drive by” shooting of a target in a parking lot or public street

Students can face serious disciplinary action if any weapons, including imitation guns, are brought to school or if the game is being played on campus. 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. Do not assume your “target” has educated their family about their participation in the assassin game.

The Pleasanton Police Department along with the Pleasanton Unified School District hope that deterring participation in the “Assassin” game prevents unnecessary tragedy in the community.

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