

Watauga High School receives potential threat of violence; deemed not credible
By: Sophia Hughes



BOONE, N.C.— On Sunday, Sept. 14, the Watauga County Sheriff’s Department responded to a report from Watauga County Schools, which received an anonymous tip concerning a potential threat of violence.

Sierra Lee, the administrative assistant at Watauga High School said that the threat was “not credible”.

The sheriff’s department has stated that the tip was submitted through a platform called [Say Something](#), which was created after the Sandy Hook shooting, and allows students in grades 4-12 to to share school safety concerns anonymously. This tip in particular was submitted by an I.P. address pinging off campus at a local business, and was intended to disrupt school activities.

Following the threat, school was held on Monday with the implementation of Watauga High School’s SECURE protocol, which according to staff and students, involved increased police and security presence, monitored entry using a buzzer system where visitors are screened before entry, and temporary installation of metal detectors at the school entryway.

On the day of the report, students recall receiving an alert via phone prior to an alert over the intercom.

“It came across on my phone and I was scared until I remembered it had happened last year too.” said Kennedy Thompson, a senior at the high school. “My mom was freaking out, and when we heard they were taking it more seriously this year with the metal detectors we were even more worried.”

There are no official records showing that a threat was reported against the high school in 2024, however, in April 2023, a threat of mass violence was made against Watauga High School via Snapchat. The threat was not deemed credible, [according to WBTV](#).

An email was sent to students and family members on the email list for the high school, which read as follows:

“On Sunday afternoon, September 14, 2025, Watauga County Schools received an anonymous tip regarding a potential threat of violence, specific to Watauga High School for Monday, September 15, 2025. At this time, we have no knowledge that the threat is credible. Therefore, out of an abundance of caution, we will hold school under our SECURE protocols with monitored entry/exit and enhanced safety protocols, including metal detector usage. All those entering or exiting the building will need to enter through either the bus lot entrance (for those riding a school bus) or the main entrance (for all others). The Sheriff’s Department is still investigating the report. If anyone has additional information, please call the non-emergency line of the Sheriff’s Department at 828-264-3761, option two (for dispatch)”

Watauga High School also posted to their Facebook page warning families about the report, and urging anyone with more information to contact the Sheriff’s Department.

Alice Harmon, whose daughter is in her senior year at Watauga High School, recalls receiving emails from the school, as well as from the board of education, even before her daughter was notified.

“They lock their phones up at the front office, so I must have known even before she did.” said Harmon. “Like any mother, I was terrified and wanted to immediately get in contact with her, but the school did everything they could to make sure she was safe and I was notified, so for that I’m so thankful.”

SECURE protocol ended the following school day, Tuesday September 16, 2025, however, additional officers from the Watauga County Sheriff’s office remained at the school for the rest of the week.

The Watauga County Board of Education declined to comment on the particular incident as a whole, but board member Bailey Little stated that it is important for students to understand the gravity of making false reports. She hopes to speak more on the matter after consultation with her supervisor.

According to the [Associated Press](#), around 50 college campuses across the country have been receiving hoax calls about violence as of early September. Their report mentions the close

proximity in time to the gun violence on Utah University Valley's campus which resulted in the [death of conservative activist Charlie Kirk](#).

Sources:

Watauga County Sheriff's Department (Major Redmond)
(828) 264-3761

Bailey Little, Watauga County Board of Education
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Kennedy Thompson, student at Watauga High School
(336) 302-9825

Alice Harmon, parent of Watauga High School student
(828) 262-1492

Sierra Lee, administrative assistant
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