

Tips to Colorado's Safe2Tell hotline hit another record as new school year begins

Tips to school safety hotline also increased in July

By **MEG WINGERTER** | mwingert@denverpost.com | The Denver Post
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Assistant Principal Jason Campbell, left, and Dana Gerber, a School Resource Officer at Pomona High School, work together on a tip the came in over-night on the Safe2Tell anonymous tip line on April 11, 2018 in Arvada. Gerber is an officer with Arvada Police Department, but primarily works out of the school.

Students and concerned adults made about 4,400 more tips to [Colorado's Safe2Tell reporting line](#) in the school year that ended July 31 than they did in the previous year, continuing an upward trend since 2004.

The Colorado Attorney General's Office reported **19,861 "actionable" tips in the 2018-2019 school year**, not including duplicate tips and prank messages. About 2.4% were believed to be intentionally false reports.

Attorney General Phil Weiser said the raw number of tips was higher because the system received more duplicate reports than in previous years. The increase suggests students are breaking a “code of silence,” he said in a news release.

July was a relatively slow period for tips, but the system — created to allow students to anonymously report threats following the Columbine massacre in 1999 — still recorded a major increase over the same time last year.

Safe2Tell received 551 tips this July, compared to 304 tips in July 2018. The most common reason was suicide threats, which accounted for one in five tips. Other top reasons were concerns about drug use, requests for information and reports of cyberbullying and sexting.

Cyberbullying wasn’t in the top five concerns for the year as a whole, and Safe2Tell Director Essi Ellis speculated it accounted for a greater percentage of tips in the summer because students were interacting on social media instead of in person at school. General bullying, not specifically linked to electronic media, was the third-leading concern for the full year, behind suicide threats and drug use.

Ellis urged parents to talk to their children about how to interact online.

“Using online platforms to bully or harass another individual is a serious issue that carries legal consequences,” she said in a news release. “When it comes to your online activities, always think about what you post before doing so.”

Students and others can report concerns by calling 877-542-7233, visiting [Safe2Tell.org](https://www.Safe2Tell.org) or using the Safe2Tell mobile app.

Safe2Tell tips, August 2018-July 2019

Suicide threats: 3,668

Drugs: 2,164

Bullying: 1,871

Self-harm: 1,206

School complaints: 1,066

Depression: 988

Smoking/tobacco: 775

Threats: 729
Welfare checks: 634
Child abuse: 615
Total: 19,861

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

- **Colorado Crisis Line:** 1-844-493-8255, coloradocrisiservices.org. Chat online or text TALK to 38255.
 - **Mental Health First Aid:** mhfacolorado.org. Get trained to recognize the signs and how to respond.
 - **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:** afsp.org. Join one of their upcoming walks for awareness in Colorado.
 - **Crisis Text Line:** crisistextline.org. Text 741741 from anywhere in the nation to reach a counselor.
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- **Second Wind Fund:** thesecondwindfund.org. Links students to mental health professionals and pays for up to 12 counseling sessions.