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## **ALERT**

### **Local Kidnapping Ransom Scam**

ALBUQUERQUE – Wednesday, November 9, 2022 – IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The Archdiocese of Santa Fe’s Catholic Schools has become aware of a recent scam of wrongdoers contacting parents or guardians demanding ransom in the form of credit card payment for the safe return of their child who was taken off school property. They sometimes have the name of the child and the school, which makes this call extremely worrisome. Please know the local authorities are aware of this and have indicated it is a recent scam, and there is no reason to panic or remit payment.

If this occurs, authorities have advised doing the following:

- Stay calm. Scammers feed off panic and uncertainty.
- Do not give out personal information or payment.
- Demand to speak with your loved one.
- Ask questions only your loved one would know the answers.
- If another phone is accessible, call the local police department; they can provide guidance in real-time.
- Contact the local authorities to file a police report and try to gather as much information as possible (the phone number, any distinguishing sounds (accents, background noise), or phrases they use).

Tips to help prevent virtual kidnapping scams:

- Never post news of upcoming travel dates and locations online.
- Discuss virtual kidnapping with family members prior to any travel.
- Have a “password” that family members can ask for in an emergency to confirm that a loved one is really in trouble.
- Be wary of providing financial information to strangers over the phone.

Should your family become the target of these scam ransom calls, contact your local police department and file a report. This information will be given to the FBI as many of these scams are generated from other states or countries.

The Archdiocese of Santa Fe is fully committed to the protection of all children and the vulnerable. Never hesitate to contact the authorities and, in this case, the school, and/or the Archdiocese of Santa Fe’s Catholic Schools Office 505.831.8214. -- END