PRESS RELEASE

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PUTNAM COUNTY, TN **– Cookeville High School Student Apprehended with Weapon**

Earlier today, Putnam County School Resource Officers and the Cookeville High School Administration apprehended a student who brought an unloaded handgun onto the school campus inside his backpack. The gun was discovered after an alert teacher reported the student's unusual behavior.

After questioning the student and a thorough investigation of the student's statements, it was determined that this was an isolated event involving only the student who brought the unloaded gun onto the school campus. The gun was confiscated and the student was placed into custody by a School Resource Officer and transported to the Putnam County Juvenile Detention Center. School officials are working with local law enforcement officials to handle the situation. Since there were no other students involved in this situation, Cookeville High School continued with a regular school day without further incident.

"We are always concerned when the safety of our children is in question," said Sheriff Eddie Farris. "I would like to commend the swift action of the teacher and administration at Cookeville High School as well as the dedication of our school resource officers who worked quickly to investigate this case and prevent any harm."

According to school officials, the student brought the handgun onto the school campus inside his backpack. There were no threats made toward any students, teachers, or CHS staff members. The student allegedly brought the gun for his personal protection due to some general threatening statements made on Twitter.

The gun was discovered in his backpack after the student had been overly protective of the backpack and acting nervous while in the presence of a Cookeville High School teacher. The teacher notified CHS administration and the School Resource Officer to report the unusual behavior. The CHS administrator and SRO went to the student's classroom and asked him to accompany them to the SRO's office. Once in the SRO office, the SRO asked the student if there was anything in his backpack that he should not have at school. The student responded that he did have a pocketknife in his backpack. When the SRO opened the backpack to retrieve the pocketknife, he discovered the unloaded handgun.

Lane Ward, Principal of Cookeville High School comments, "We would like to thank the Putnam County Sheriff's Department School Resource Officers, the Cookeville High School administration, and especially the Cookeville High School teacher who made the first observation to this student's unusual behavior for their quick and professional responses to this situation. The alertness of the teacher and the fast attention from the CHS administration identified and isolated this potential threat without alarming the CHS campus.

Corby King, Public Information Officer for the Putnam County School System, responds, "It is through the cooperation and training provided to our school system by all of the Putnam County local emergency agencies that assisted the identification and isolation of this potential threat."

The investigation into this matter is ongoing. Anyone with information on this case is asked to please contact Putnam County Sheriff's Department at (931) 528-8484.

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