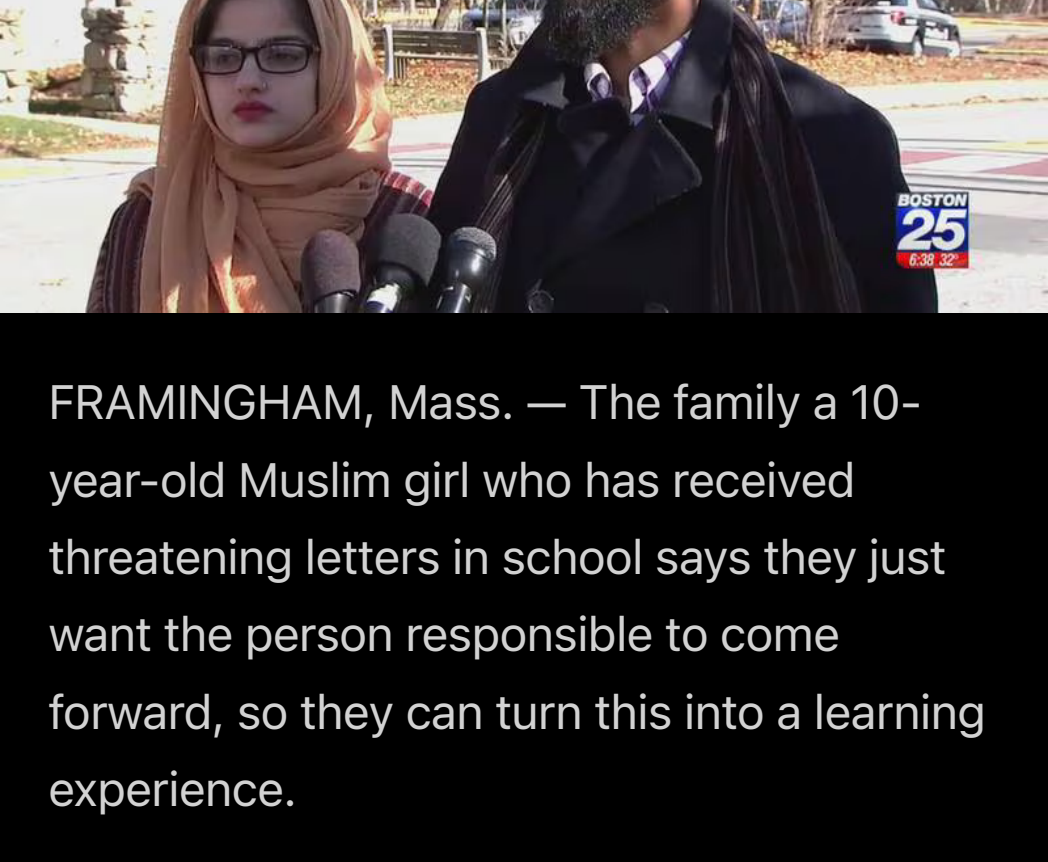


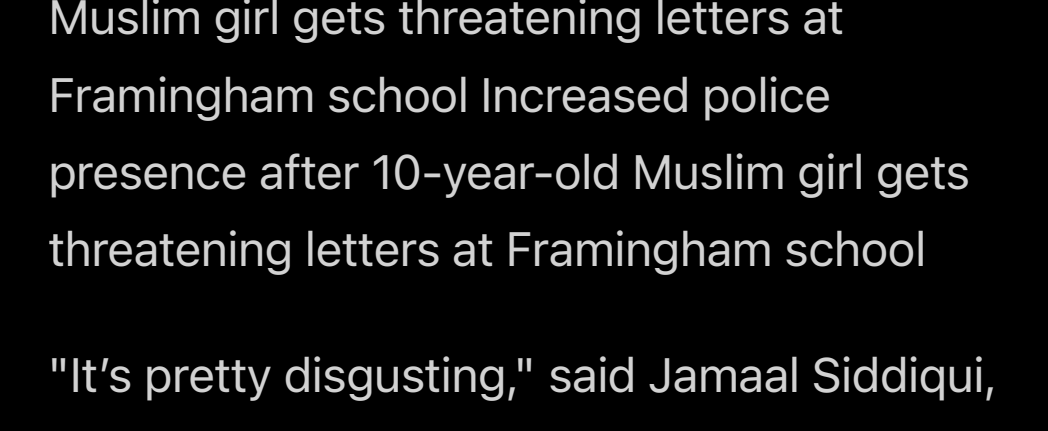
10-year-old Muslim girl threatened at Framingham school

November 15, 2018 at 10:57 am EST



FRAMINGHAM, Mass. — The family a 10-year-old Muslim girl who has received threatening letters in school says they just want the person responsible to come forward, so they can turn this into a learning experience.

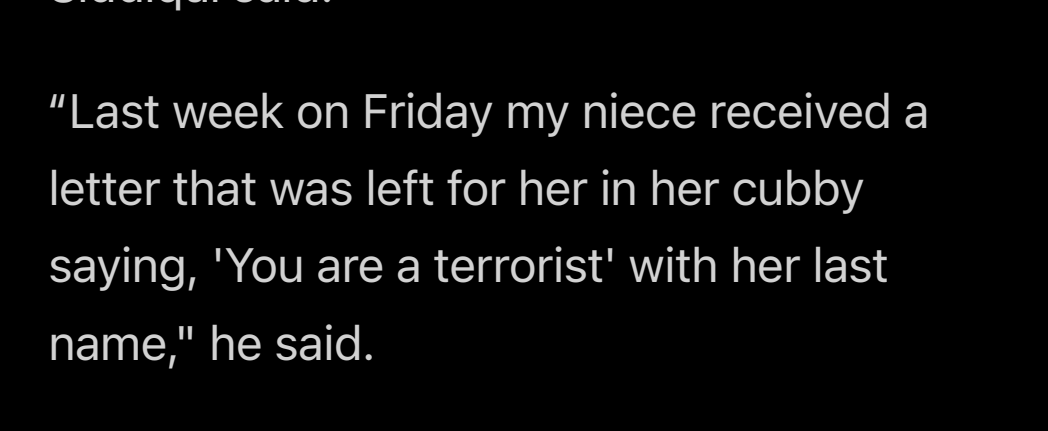
They're also asking that the school district does what it can to make sure she's safe at school.



Increased police presence after 10-year-old Muslim girl gets threatening letters at Framingham school

"It's pretty disgusting," said Jamaal Siddiqui, who is the girl's uncle. "Threatening a child for no apparent reason."

The girl, who is a fifth-grade student at Hemenway Elementary School, is being targeted for being Muslim, he said.



It all started with a hateful message, Siddiqui said.

"Last week on Friday my niece received a letter that was left for her in her cubby saying, 'You are a terrorist' with her last name," he said.

But then on Tuesday, it escalated.

10-year-old Muslim girl threatened at Framingham school

"When she came back to the classroom, there was a letter stating "I will kill you" and her name," he said.

He said that after the first note, a letter was sent to parents asking them to talk with their children.

Students were asked to be supportive and wrote "kind" letters to the girl, offering words of encouragement, he said.

But after the second note, police were called and a full investigation began.

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"We are told that the detective investigating is going through each student's backpack to see if there is anything that could be dangerous that could harm anyone in the school," Siddiqui said.

Nothing dangerous was found, but they still don't know who wrote the note.

"It could be anybody but they have to take measures because we don't want any incident to occur that could harm anybody," the girl's uncle said.

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In a second letter to parents, the principal said they're taking the incident seriously and, "This is a stressful time for our community; it is of the utmost importance that our students are, and feel, safe and respected at school."

The girl has the full support of her family, he said.

"We are standing right by her because whoever is threatening her or saying bad things to her has other things going on in their life we don't know about," he said.

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They have no plans to keep the girl from going to school.

"You can't fall for this because if you start showing that you're soft, you're going to let people who are mean (succeed). You have to stand up for yourself," Siddiqui said.

At a news conference Wednesday, Robert A. Tremblay, superintendent of schools, called the incident "a pervasive problem around hate that we have to address," and stressed that the safety of all students is a priority.

"Where does that hate come from?" he asked, noting that teachers and administrators are asking how they can make it a teachable moment in the classroom.

A noticeable police presence was also seen outside the school Wednesday.

The principal said in the letter to parents that they have set up a box inside the school so that students can leave anonymous messages if they know who wrote the letters.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the school district said students should feel safe in school: "The Framingham Public School district stands behind the mission to support our entire community - at the core of this that means understanding and valuing our diversity. This type of incident has no place in Framingham Schools or the Hemenway community and will not be tolerated. It is of the utmost importance that Framingham students are, and feel safe and respected at school."

The district also said it would be working with the Interfaith Advisory Council on "next steps," noting "this type of incident is bigger than a school issue - it affects the larger community."

To counteract the hateful message, CAIR-Massachusetts is asking that interfaith allies and people of conscience write supportive letters to the student and her family. They can be mailed to the CAIR-Massachusetts office at the address below, and will be delivered directly to the family.

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