5.19 Fair Notice – Student Threat Assessment Protocol

1. What behaviours initiate a student threat assessment?

A student threat assessment will be initiated when behaviours include, but are not limited to, serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill, verbal/written threats to harm/kill others, Internet /online threats to harm/kill others, possession of weapons (including replicas), bomb threats and fire setting.

2. Duty to report

To keep school communities safe and caring, staff, parents, students and community members must report all threat-related behaviour to the principal and/or the appropriate authority such as police or RCMP. Threats will be taken seriously investigated and responded to.

3. What is a threat?

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the Internet or made by gesture. Threats must be taken seriously, investigated and responded to.

4. What is a Violence Threat / Risk Assessment?

When the situations above become known, a multi-disciplinary Violence Threat/Risk Assessment will be conducted. Typically, this will include principal, vice-principal, counsellor, safe school coordinator and police. Sometimes this includes other professionals such as Child and Youth Mental Health, the Ministry for Children and Family Development, or others.

5. What is the purpose of a student threat assessment?

5.1. To ensure the safety of students, staff, parents and others.
5.2. To ensure a full understanding of the context of the threat.
5.3. To understand factors contributing to the threat makers' behaviour.
5.4. To be proactive in developing an intervention plan that addresses the emotional and physical safety of the threat maker.
5.5. To promote the emotional and physical safety of all.

6. What happens in a student threat assessment?

All threat making behaviour by a student shall be reported to the Principal who will activate the protocol for the initial response. Once the team has been activated, interviews may be held with the student(s), the threat maker, parents and staff to determine the level of risk and develop an appropriate response to the incident. Intervention plans will be developed and shared with parents, staff and students as required.

7. Can I refuse to participate in a threat assessment process?

It is important for all parties to engage in the process. However, if for some reason there is a reluctance to participate in the process by the threat maker or parent / guardian, the threat assessment process will continue in order to promote a safe and caring learning environment.

Definitions:

Community Threat Assessment Categorizations: *Low level of concern*: Risk to the target(s), students, staff and school safety appears minimal.

Medium level of concern: The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear realistic. Violent action is possible.

High level of concern: The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.

High Risk Behaviours: High risk behaviours express intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. High risk behaviours include but are not limited to: possession of weapon/replica, bomb threat plan, verbal written or Internet threats to kill/injure self or others, fire setting, threatening violence and hate motivated violence.

Note: Do not be deceived when traditional risk behaviours do not exist. There is no profile or checklist for the high-risk student. Some students who actually pose a threat display very few traits of the traditional high-risk student. Identify when homicidal and suicidal domains exist together. This is critical to the development of a response to the incident, including the creation of a student support plan.

Immediate Threat: In the case of immediate threat, staff will **CALL 911** and take the appropriate emergency response measures. The principal will contact the Safe Schools Coordinator.

Risk Assessment: A risk assessment is typically a lengthier process that involves a number of measures that go beyond the scope of the school-based multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Team (TAT) assessment. After the "initial level of risk" is assessed and "immediate risk reducing intervention" has occurred, a further risk assessment may be required. Therefore, risk assessment is the process of determining if a student of concern may pose a further risk to some known or unknown target(s) at some unknown period in time. The student may be evidencing increasing violent ideation or behaviours that suggest that the frequency or intensity of his/her violence or violence potential may be escalating. Unlike the immediate intervention, the risk assessment is meant to be a more comprehensive evaluation of all risk reducing and risk enhancing factors affecting the student's functioning and to use that data to guide longer term intervention and treatment goals.

Threat: A threat is any expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be spoken, written, drawn, symbolic, posted on the internet (e.g. Facebook, etc.) or made by gesture only. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.

Threat Assessment: Threat assessment is the process of determining if a threat maker (someone who utters, writes, emails, etc., a threat to kill a target or targets) actually poses a risk to the target(s) being threatened. Although many students, and others, engage in threat-making behaviour, research indicates that few actually pose a risk to harm the target being threatened. Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Teams (TATs) engage in a data collection process, through semi-structured interviews, to determine "initial levels of risk" that may be posed and plan necessary risk- reducing interventions. Although a student of concern may be assessed as low risk, there may be data that indicates a more comprehensive risk assessment is required.

Worrisome Behaviour: Worrisome behaviour is defined as those behaviours that cause concern and may indicate that a student is moving toward a greater risk of violent behaviour. (The majority of behaviours from pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 fall into this category.) Worrisome behaviours include but are not limited to violent content in drawings and stories/journals, making vague threatening statements, unusual interest in fire, significant change in anti-social behaviour and significant change in baseline behaviour. Worrisome behaviours may be an early warning sign of the development of more serious high-risk behaviours. All worrisome behaviours should be addressed in a timely manner. These situations may involve activation of the School TAT and consultation with division staff.

Violence: Violence is a continuing process of thoughts and behaviours that is dependent on the interaction between a person who is inclined to violence; a stimulus that causes the violence; and a setting that allows for violence or does nothing to prevent a violent act from occurring. Violence is dynamic and multidimensional. It is a process that is developed over time.

8. Privacy Statement

The Principal is responsible for the safety and security of students while they are in attendance at school. This responsibility sometimes extends to identifying, preventing and responding to violence. In recent years, there have been a number of highly publicized examples of situations where the perpetrators of violent acts have made their intentions publicly known on social media or online long before the incident occurs. Such information when brought to the attention of law enforcement or school authorities can be vital to preventing incidents before they occur.

In order to better equip the School to protect the safety and students of staff, the Principal may in appropriate circumstances conduct a student threat assessment. This process involves the monitoring and gathering of information where there is reason to believe that a risk of violence may exist, including by conducting limited monitoring of online activity to identify threats before violence occurs.

The School is subject to personal information privacy laws and will undertake the collection of this information in compliance with the requirements of such laws, including by limiting collection to information that is relevant and necessary to address a risk or threat. The School will not collect information as part of a threat assessment unless there is reason to believe that a risk exists.