

## THREAT ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

### Background

The Division is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in schools where students, staff, parents and others feel safe. To this end, the following protocol shall be used for responding to student threats / high-risk behaviours.

### DEFINITIONS

1. *High-risk behaviours* include, but are not limited to, possession of weapons, bomb threats, threats to kill or injure others and fire setting. Threats may be written, verbal, posted on the internet or made by gesture. They may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled. All high-risk student behaviours, as defined, shall be reported to the Principal, who will activate the Chinook Country Regional VTRA Protocol for the Stage 1 assessment. High-risk behaviours are those of students who are believed to have contravened Section 264.1(1) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*, which states that a person “who in any manner, knowingly utters, conveys or causes any person to receive a threat to cause death or bodily harm” has committed an offense.
2. *Immediate risk situations* are those situations involving high risk that require immediate police intervention and a protective school response. An example would be when a student is making a threat and is in possession of a weapon.
3. *Worrisome behaviours* are those that cause concern for members of the school system indicating that a student is moving toward a greater risk of violent behaviour. This may include drawing pictures, writing stories or making vague statements that do not, of themselves, constitute “uttering threats” as defined by law but are causing concern for some members of the school community because of their violent content.
4. The *Threat Assessment Team, Stage I (TAT-1)* is composed of the Principal, the Family Liaison Counsellor and a Police Officer and may also include the classroom teacher and other staff as needed. The primary purpose of the Stage 1 is data collection and immediate risk reduction interventions.
5. A *Threat Assessment Team, Stage II (TAT-2)* is recommended by TAT-1 when a more comprehensive response including risk evaluation, long-term intervention and treatment planning are needed. The Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) will be contacted to initiate expansion of the team to include mental health services professionals, physicians, child protection staff and others.

## PROCEDURES

1. Reporting
  - a. Any person in a school having knowledge of high-risk student behaviour, or having reasonable grounds to believe there is a potential for high-risk behaviour, shall immediately report the information to the Principal and/or designate.
  - b. No action shall be taken against a person who makes a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds.
  - c. In cases where a report is made maliciously, the person shall be dealt with according to division procedure and the law, where applicable.
  
2. Fair Notice
  - a. Prior to any threat assessment protocol being implemented, all students, staff and parents / guardians shall be provided with information about the protocol and procedure so that "fair notice" is given that threat making behaviour will not be tolerated.
  - b. The Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) shall take the lead to ensure that students, staff and parents are aware of the protocol and that a consistent message is given regarding the use of the protocol.
  
3. Duty of Respond
  - a. Schools shall respond to all high-risk / threat-related behaviours. All high-risk behaviours shall be taken seriously and assessed accordingly.
  - b. Each school shall designate a threat assessment team leader, who shall be either a School Administrator or Family School Liaison Counsellor.
  
4. Immediate Risk Procedures
  - a. These are those matters for immediate police intervention.
  - b. The Principal or designate shall contact the police immediately and take steps to ensure the safety of all those in the school by activating established procedures such as school evacuation or school security (lockdown).
  - c. The Principal, or designate, shall notify the Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) as soon as possible following initial police contact.
  
5. High-Risk Behaviours
  - a. Upon receiving a report of high-risk behaviour, the Principal or designate shall initiate the protocol for the Stage I response of the TAT composed of the Principal, Family School Liaison Counsellor and police in order to assess the high-risk behaviour.
  - b. In cases where it is believed a Criminal Code violation has occurred, the Police Officer assigned to the TAT will determine whether or not charges will be laid.
  - c. If the police choose not to lay initial charges, the TAT shall continue to conduct a risk assessment and determine follow-up recommendations.
  - d. Although there is ongoing collaboration among TAT members, each team member has his/her own "jurisdiction".
  - e. The Principal shall notify the parents / guardians of the student making the threat at the earliest opportunity, as well as the parents / guardians of those students

against whom the threat was made. Parents become an integral part of the initial risk assessment process.

- f. When information collected as part of the Stage I response suggests that a student who has displayed high-risk behaviour poses a significant risk / threat, the TAT-II membership would be requested through the office of the Associate Superintendent (Learning Services).
- g. In order to protect others and/or the threat maker, students may be suspended from school by the Principal during the assessment period. (A suspension may create the necessary context for the high-risk student who is already struggling with suicidal or homicidal ideation. When a suspension occurs, a key question beyond “when to suspend” is “where to suspend”. The isolation and disconnection felt by high-risk students during a suspension may be exacerbated if steps are not taken to keep the student connected to healthy supports.)
- h. The TAT (Stage I and/or Stage II) shall guide the process from initial assessment to planning interventions to decrease risk, to plans for re-entry to school where a suspension has occurred.
- i. If circumstances warrant, and following the completion of necessary assessments, team members may work with the student and their parents (guardians) to develop a re-entry plan for school that becomes a signed contract by all parties.

#### 6. Duty to Victims and Others

- a. The Family School Liaison Counsellor shall ensure that appropriate support is provided to those against whom threats have been made.
- b. The Principal, or designate, shall notify all school staff and parents, if necessary, within a reasonable time period when the protocol has been activated as a result of high-risk behaviour.

#### 7. Students Requiring Special Consideration

- a. When dealing with students under 12 years of age, students with special needs or other exceptional students, accountability / maturation issues and cognitive abilities shall be taken into consideration.
- b. Since these students can still pose a risk, the Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) shall be consulted.
- c. The Principal and the Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) shall determine police involvement. (Some of these students may benefit from police involvement as a way to provide a “teachable moment” for the child.)

#### 8. Worrisome Behaviours

- a. School staff shall communicate all worrisome behaviour to the Family School Liaison Counsellor for consultation.
- b. School staff, subsequent to consultation with the Family School Liaison Counsellor, shall contact parents when worrisome behaviour is observed.
- c. The Principal shall consult with the Family School Liaison Counsellor and other appropriate staff as to whether or not a risk assessment needs to be conducted. The Associate Superintendent (Learning Services) may be a member of the team, as necessary.
- d. The police may be consulted but it is generally not done as a formal complaint.

#### 9. Threat Assessment Incident Report

- a. The Principal shall be responsible for signing off on a Threat Assessment Incident Report completed by the Family School Liaison Counsellor and shall keep a copy on file.
- b. The notification of a completed Threat Assessment Incident Report will be placed in the student's cumulative file.

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July, 2012

Updates: June 2013, January 2020

**References**

Section 31,33,52,53,196,197,222 Education Act, Section  
Criminal Code of Canada, Section 264.1(1)

Cross Reference: Crisis Response Manual

Forms: [Threat Assessment Fair Notice Letter](#)  
[Notice of Risk Assessment](#)