



STUDENTS WHO POSE A THREAT TO OTHERS

Background

The *Education Act (section 33-1)* requires that students and staff are provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment. The Division is committed to ensuring the use of evidence-based practice in the development of protocols to respond to critical incidents. This Administrative Procedure is based on the *Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (Dewey Cornell, Ph. D., 2018)*. When students and staff are placed 'at risk' due to dangerous physical, emotional, or psychological situations, school administration shall follow a protocol for responding to these potential crises.

A threat assessment is not a critical incident response. If there is an indication that violence is imminent (e.g., a person has a firearm at school or is on the way to school to attack someone), a critical incident response is appropriate. Take immediate action, such as calling 911, and follow the school Critical Incident Response Plan.

Definitions

1. A *threat assessment* is a problem-solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and intervention with students who have threatened violence in some way.
2. The *school threat assessment decision tree (Appendix 340-A Threat Assessment Decision Tree)* is an evaluation tool used by school administration to assess and make judgments about a student's risk for violence.
3. *Not a threat* is an expression of anger that merits attention.
4. A *transient threat* is a threat that does not express a lasting intent to harm someone. There is no longer a threat.
5. A serious *substantive threat* usually means a threat to hit, fight, or other violent action.
6. A *very serious substantive threat* typically involves a threat to kill or a threat to use a lethal weapon or rape.

Procedure

1. A threat assessment should be conducted if a student makes an explicit or implicit threat, or if that student's behaviour indicates that a threat is reasonably likely. The goal of the threat assessment is to provide assistance to the student being assessed, to support targets or potential targets, and to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment.
 - 1.1. A threat assessment is not a disciplinary action and is not a prerequisite to disciplinary action. Documents completed as part of a threat assessment may or may not be used in a disciplinary proceeding.
2. The *school threat assessment decision tree (Appendix 340-A Threat Assessment Decision Tree)* is used to evaluate a threat by interviewing witnesses. Form 340-1: School threat assessment protocol report is used to record the exact content of the threat, and to gather information on the circumstances in which the threat was made.
 - 2.1. In most circumstances, the student who has made the threat is interviewed (**Form 340-1 Threat Assessment Summary**) and given an opportunity to explain what they meant by the threatening statement or behaviour.
3. Student threats shall be reported to the school administrator (principal, assistant principal, or principal designee) if they cannot be easily and readily resolved by other staff. Criteria for reporting threats should include the age of the child and the context of the threat or remark.

4. When a threat is reported to the principal, the principal makes a preliminary determination of the seriousness of the threat, using the *school threat assessment decision tree* (**Appendix 340-A Threat Assessment Decision Tree**).
 - 4.1. Following the *school threat assessment decision tree* (**Appendix 340-A Threat Assessment Decision Tree**) principals are able to determine if the threat is a not a threat at all, or if it is transient, additional information can be gathered and a resolution can be determined.
 - 4.2. If it can be determined if the threat is not a threat at all or if it is transient and has been resolved, the *school threat assessment protocol report* (**Form 340-1 Threat Assessment Summary**) may be completed at the principal's discretion. If documentation is completed, a copy should be kept at the school for the duration of the school year.
 - 4.3. If not transient, the seriousness of the threat will need to be further investigated. The student who communicated the threat, the recipient(s) of the threat, and witnesses shall be interviewed to obtain specific information regarding the threat, in accordance with the *school threat assessment protocol report* (**Form 340-1 Threat Assessment Summary**). In cases where weapons or drugs are included in the threat, then a search procedure may be required following **AP 357: Inspections and Searches of Persons or Property**.
 - 4.4. If it is determined that the threat is substantive (serious or very serious), the principal shall:
 - 4.4.1. Take precautions to protect potential target(s).
 - 4.4.2. Notify the parents/guardians of any identifiable target(s), and the individual(s) when appropriate.
 - 4.4.3. Inform senior administration (very serious threats only).
 - 4.4.4. Notify the parent/guardian of the student who made the threat.
 - 4.4.5. Take appropriate disciplinary actions.
 - 4.4.6. Contact the educational consultant to complete a violence risk assessment (very serious threats only).
 - 4.4.7. Complete the *school threat assessment protocol report* and store it at the school for the duration of the school year.
 - 4.4.8. Complete the *crisis response summary of actions* (**Form 340-2 Crisis Response Summary of Action**) and upload it into the subject's student record and retain it on file for 1 to 3 years at the discretion of the Principal.
 - 4.4.9. Implement and monitor the safety plan. Revise as needed.
5. Threat assessment and disciplinary procedures are separate processes. Regardless of whether a threat is determined to be transient, serious substantive, or very serious substantive, appropriate disciplinary procedures shall be followed.

References:

- [Education Act, S.A. 2012, E. O.3.](#) S-3
- Appendix 170-A: Critical Incident Manual
- AP 357: Inspections and Searches of Persons or Property
- Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (Dewey Cornell, Ph. D., 2018)