



2200 M Avenue | Anacortes, WA 98221 | Phone 360-503-1200 | Fax 360-503-1201 | www.asd103.org

Policy: 3225P
Section: 3000 - Students

Reporting Procedure - School Based Threat Assessment

A **threat** is an expression of an intent to cause physical harm to self/others. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party; and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat. Threats may be direct, such as “I am going to beat you up.” or indirect, such as, “I’m going to get him.”

A **threat may be imminent** when the person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward self/others that requires containment and action to protect identified or identifiable target(s); and may also exhibit other concerning behaviors that require intervention.

The threat assessment team may be, as resources dictate, multidisciplinary and multiagency, and persons with expertise in the following areas is contemplated by this policy and procedure:

- Counseling, such as a school counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker,
- Law enforcement, such as a school resource officer, or District security personnel,
- School administration, such as a principal or other senior administrator,
- Other district or school staff with relevant training or experience,
- Community resources advisors,
- Special education staff,
- Practicing educational staff member and a
- Mental health professional with specialized training in threat assessment.

Not every team member need participate in every threat assessment. When faced with a potential threat by, or directed towards, a student receiving special education services, the threat assessment team must include a team member who is a certified special education staff member, such as a teacher, school psychologist, or central office SPED administrator. If at all possible, where a specific school is the location of an incident meriting threat assessment, the threat assessment team must include an administrator from that school, although where their participation is not possible their absence should not delay the threat assessment process.

Although parents, guardians, or family members are often interviewed as part of the threat assessment process, neither the student nor the student’s family members are part of the threat assessment team. This does not diminish the district’s commitment that school personnel will make every reasonable attempt to involve parents and the student in the resolution of possible behavioral violations involving the student, consistent with Policy and Procedure 3241 – Student Discipline.

Function of Threat Assessment Team

Each threat assessment team member, whether a teacher, counselor, school administrator, other school staff, contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other individual, functions as a “school official with a legitimate educational interest” in educational records controlled and maintained by the district. The district provides the threat assessment team access to educational records as specified by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). No member of a threat assessment team, including district/school-based members and community resource/law enforcement members, shall use any student record beyond the prescribed purpose of the threat assessment team or re-disclose records obtained by being a member of the threat assessment team, except as permitted by FERPA.

The threat assessment team:

- Identifies and assesses the behavior of a student that is threatening, or potentially threatening, to self, other students, staff, school visitors, or school property. Threats of self-harm or suicide unaccompanied by threats of harm to others should be promptly evaluated according to Policy 2145 – Suicide Prevention.
- Gathers and analyzes information about the student’s behavior to determine a level of concern for the threat. The threat assessment team may conduct interviews of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or target(s) of the threat, other witnesses who have knowledge of the threat, and where reasonable, the individual(s) who allegedly engaged in the threatening behavior or communication. The purpose of the interviews is to evaluate the individual’s threat in context to determine the meaning of the threat and intent of the individual. The threat assessment team may request and obtain records in the district’s possession, including student education, health records, and criminal history record information. The purpose of obtaining information is to evaluate situational variables, rather than the student’s demographic or personal characteristics. As appropriate, the threat assessment team may secure professional assistance to complete a mental health evaluation of the individual alleged to have engaged in the threatening behavior or communication.
- Determines the nature, duration, and level of severity of the risk and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk. The threat assessment team will not base a determination of threat on generalizations or stereotypes. Rather, the threat assessment team makes an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, best available objective evidence, or current medical/mental health evidence as applicable;
- Communicates lawfully and ethically with each other, school administrators, and other school staff who have a need to know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, its students, and its staff; and
- Timely reports its determination to the superintendent or designee.

Depending on the level of concern determined, the threat assessment team develops and implements intervention strategies to help manage the student’s behavior in ways that promote a safe, supportive teaching, and learning environment, without excluding the student from instruction and related educational services.

Other tasks of threat assessment team

The threat assessment team may also participate in other tasks that manage or reduce threatening or potentially threatening behavior and increase physical and psychological safety. This may include:

- Providing guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of behavior that may represent a threat to students, staff, school, the community, or the individual;

- Providing informational resources for community services boards or health care providers for medical evaluation or treatment, as appropriate;
- Assessing individuals other than students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of students or staff and notify the superintendent or designee of such an individual.

Identifying and Reporting Threats

Timely reporting of expression to harm is crucial to an effective school-based threat assessment program.

Anyone, including students, families, and community members may report communication or behavior that appears to be threatening or potentially threatening to any school or district administrator.

All school district employees, volunteers, and contractors should report immediately to any school or district administrator any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence.

Anyone, including any school or district administrators, who believes that a person or situation poses an *imminent* threat of serious violence should notify school security and/or law enforcement as quickly as safely possible.

Assessing Threats

A School-based threat assessment is distinct from law enforcement investigation (if any). The goal of the threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment, to protect and support potential victims, and to provide assistance, as needed, to the individual being assessed. School-based threat assessment is also distinct from student discipline procedures. However, the functions of school-based threat assessment may run parallel to student discipline procedures.

Upon notification of threatening behavior or communications, the school administrator, or threat assessment team shall first determine if an imminent threat is believed to exist. If the individual appears to pose an imminent threat of serious violence to themselves or to others in the school, the administrator or assessment team shall notify law enforcement.

Where threat is not easily identified

If the administrator or threat assessment team cannot determine with a reasonable degree of confidence that the alleged threat is a not a threat, or is a low risk threat, then a more in-depth assessment to determine the nature and degree of any safety concerns and to develop strategies to prevent violence and reduce risk, as necessary, should occur.

Students with IEPs or 504 Plans

In cases where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, and imminent threat concerns are mitigated or addressed, it is intended that the threat assessment team aligns intervention strategies with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or the student's plan developed under section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973 (section 504 plan) by coordinating with the student's IEP team or section 504 plan team. Although some of the functions of a school-based threat assessment may run parallel to the functions of a student's IEP team or 504 plan team, school-based threat assessments remain distinct from those teams and processes.

No identifiable threat

If the administrator in consultation with members of the threat assessment team concludes that no further assessment is necessary to determine the reported possible threat is not identifiable or constitutes a low threat of violence or harm to self or others, the threat assessment team need not intervene or take further steps.

Data Collection, Review and Reporting

The superintendent shall establish a process for collecting and submitting data related to the school-based threat assessment program that comply with OSPI's monitoring requirements, processes, and guidelines.

Management Resources: 2019 - December 2019 - December Policy Issue
 2020 - December Issue

Adoption Date: 11/18/21
Classification: **Essential**
Revised Dates: ; **12.20**