

### 384 STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT

The Canadian Rockies School Division is committed to creating and maintaining school environments in which all students, staff, parents and others feel safe. The following protocol is intended for use in assessing and responding to student threats and/or high-risk behavior.

#### Definitions

##### Threat assessment

The process of determining if a threat maker (someone who utters, writes, emails, etc. a threat to harm a target or targets) actually poses a risk to the target(s) they have identified. A multidisciplinary team engages in a data collection process, through structured interviews, to determine initial levels of risk that may be posed and to plan necessary risk-reducing interventions.

##### Threat Assessment Team (TAT)

A trained, multidisciplinary team may be composed of the following Threat Assessment Team members; the principal or assistant principal, school counsellor, district counsellors, RCMP, mental health professionals and others as required.

##### High risk situations

Students are considered to be engaging in high risk behaviors if they are believed to have contravened Section 264.1 (1) of the Criminal Code of Canada, which states that it is a criminal offense for an individual to, in any manner, knowingly utter, convey, or cause any person to receive a threat to cause death or bodily harm. High risk behaviors include, but are not limited to: possession of weapons, bomb threats, and threats to kill or injure others. Threats may be written, verbal, posted on the internet, or made by gesture. They may be direct, indirect, conditional, or veiled.

##### Immediate risk situations

Those situations involving high-risk behaviors that require immediate police intervention, such as when a student is making a threat and is in possession of a weapon.

##### Worrisome behaviors

Those that cause concern for members of the school system that may indicate that a student is moving toward a greater risk of violent behavior. This may include drawing pictures, writing stories, behavioural changes, or making vague statements that do not, of themselves, constitute “uttering threats” as defined by law but are causing concern for some member(s) of the school community because of their violent content.

## Procedures

### 1. Reporting

- a. Any person in a school having knowledge of high risk, immediate risk and worrisome student behavior, or having reasonable grounds to believe there is potential for such behavior, shall immediately report the information to the school 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 issue will be addressed according to school division policy and the law, where applicable.

### 2. Fair Notice

- a. Each school is to review and/or provide the CRPS Student Threat Assessment Protocol (*Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Parent Notification* letter and the [\(Violence Threat Risk Assessment CRPS Protocol brochure\)](#), with all staff at the beginning of each school year, as well as with students and their parents/guardians, to provide for fair notice and due process.
- b. On an annual basis, administrators and the Threat Assessment Team 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 to Respond

- a. Schools shall respond to all threat related behaviors: all high-risk, immediate risk and, worrisome behaviors shall be taken seriously and assessed accordingly.

### 4. Immediate Risk Behavior Procedures

- a. These matters are for immediate police intervention.
- b. The school 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 lockdown.
- c. The school principal shall notify the superintendent or designate as soon as possible following initial police contact.

### 5. High Risk Behavior Procedures

- a. All high-risk student behaviors shall be reported to the principal . Upon receiving a

report of high-risk behavior, the principal or designate shall initiate the CRPS Student Threat Assessment Protocol, in order to assess the high risk behavior.

- b. In cases where it is believed a Criminal Code violation has occurred, the RCMP has the "first call" as to whether or not charges will be laid.
- c. If the RCMP chooses not to lay initial charges, the TAT shall continue to conduct a risk assessment and determine follow-up recommendations.
- d. The school principal shall notify the parent(s) of the student(s) making the threat at the earliest opportunity, as well as the parent(s) of those students against whom the threat was made. Parents become an integral part of the initial risk assessment process.
- e. In order to protect others and/or the threat maker(s), students may be suspended from school by the principal during the assessment period.
  - i. (Note: A suspension may create the necessary context for the high-risk student(s) 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.)
- f. The TAT shall guide the process from initial assessment, to planning interventions in order to decrease risk, and/or develop plans for re-entry to school when a suspension has occurred. The resulting assessment report represents a "moment in time" and the recommendations are the collective opinions of the principal/designate and TAT.
- g. Following the completion of initial assessments and if circumstances warrant, the school team may work with the student(s) and their parent(s) to develop a re-entry plan for school that becomes a signed contract by all participants.

## 6. Worrisome Behavior Procedures

- a. The school staff shall communicate all worrisome behaviors to the principal for consultation.
- b. The school principal shall communicate all worrisome behavior to the TAT leader for consultation.
- c. The school principal shall consult with the TAT, the superintendent or designate and other appropriate staff as to whether or not a threat assessment needs to be conducted.

- d. The police may be consulted, but it is generally not done as a formal complaint. Some students may benefit from RCMP involvement as a way to provide a "teachable moment" for the student.

#### 7. Duty to Victims and Others

- a. The TAT shall make recommendations for the provision of appropriate support to those against whom threats have been made.
- b. The principal 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 behavior.

#### 8. Students Requiring Special Consideration

- a. When supporting students under 12 years of age, with exceptional needs, accountability or maturation issues, these special needs shall be taken into consideration. For example, if the conduct of a student with exceptional needs is consistent with their diagnosis and how the diagnosis has been known to manifest, the TAT may not conduct an assessment.
- b. When supporting students who are members of any minority group it is vital to take into consideration potential bias and language barriers that may influence how behavior is assessed.

#### 9. Threat Assessment Incident Report

- a. The TAT shall be responsible for completing a Threat Assessment Incident Report.
- b. The report will be forwarded to the superintendent's or designate's office to be kept on file.
- c. A Threat Assessment Team summary shall be placed in the school counsellor file with a copy provided to the District Family School Liaison Counsellor.

### References

Section 8,11,31,32,33,36,37,41,42,43,44,52,53,196,197,222 Education Act  
Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act  
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act  
Controlled Drugs and Substances Act  
Youth Criminal Justice Act  
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms  
Community Protocol for Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and Intervention, (9<sup>th</sup> ed.)  
J. Kevin Cameron, Executive Director Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response  
Criminal Code of Canada, Section 264.1(1)

## History

Developed: August 2003  
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