

Operational Services

Administrative Procedure – District-wide Threat/Risk Assessment Team, Process and Procedure

Definition of Threat/Risk

A threat is a communication of intent to harm oneself or someone else that may be spoken, written, gestured, or expressed in any form, such as via text messaging, email, or other digital means. An expression of intent to harm another is considered a threat regardless of whether it is communicated to the intended target(s) and regardless of whether the intended target is aware of the threat. Threats may be implied by behavior that an observer would reasonably regard as threatening, planning, or preparing to commit a violent act.

A threat assessment is not a crisis response. If there is an indication that violence is imminent, a crisis response is appropriate. Take immediate action such as calling 911 and follow the school crisis response plan.

Principles of Threat/Risk Assessment

Threat/Risk Assessment is a systematic process that is designed to:

- 1) Identify individual(s)/situation(s) whose behavior causes concern for violence or harm. (Reporting)
- 2) Gather additional relevant information in a lawful and ethical manner. (Interviewing)
- 3) Assess the individual(s)/situation(s) in context based on the totality of the information available. (Assessment)
- 4) Manage the individual situation to prevent violence/harm and mitigate impact. (Response)

Research related to targeted violence occurring in or related to educational settings include data that supports the fact that most individuals engaged in pre-incident planning and preparation, and frequently shared their intentions, plans and preparations with others and that targeted violence is the end result of a process of thinking and behavior that begins with an idea, progresses to the development of a plan, moves on to preparation, and culminates in an attack. Research also suggests that based on what is known regarding targeted violence, information is likely to be uncovered through a sound threat assessment process.

Identification – Methods of Reporting

Identifying a threat or risk of harm is the responsibility of the entire school community and methods to report will be communicated regularly to students, staff and parents. Students will be encouraged to come forward regardless of the amount of information they have and will be informed that their reports are taken seriously and may stay anonymous. Methods to report will include in-person, digital or paper form. Staff and parents will receive, through ongoing training and parent education opportunities, resources to assist in identifying evidence of behavior and conditions that may suggest an individual is planning and/or preparing for an act of violence or to cause harm to self or others.

Categories of Threats/Risk – (Exhibit: Risk Assessment and Response Protocol Decision Tree)

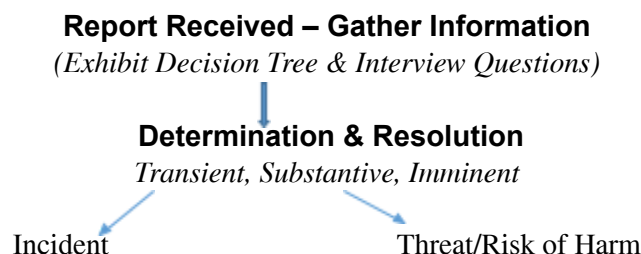
Transient – behavior indicates no sustained intent to harm

Substantive – behavior indicates the intent to harm is present (or not clear) and requires protective action

Imminent – behavior indicates violence or intent to harm self or others is in place

Incident - behavior not been deemed substantive/imminent threat to harm self or others.

Threat/Risk Assessment & Response Decision Tree



Resources: Exhibit: Key Observations, Threat Response

Threat/Risk Assessment Team (TAT)

TAT members are professional educators, mental health professionals, law enforcement professionals, and professionals from other disciplines as necessary who are trained in behavioral threat assessment. 105 ILCS 128/45(a). TAT members are represented on Building safety teams, taking direction from the District-level Threat Assessment Team members, Director of Safety and Security and District Crisis Team Members. They identify, inquire, assess, and manage a range of threats that may be posed to the school community. Threats may be posed from a broad range of individuals affecting the District environment, including:

- Students: current and former (and potentially prospective)
- Employees: current and former (and potentially prospective)
- Parents/guardians or other family members of students
- Persons who are (or have been) in relationships with staff or students
- Contractors, vendors, or other visitors
- Persons unaffiliated with the District

Law Enforcement

At its August 26, 2019, meeting, The Winnetka Public Schools Board of Education entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Winnetka for Reciprocal Reporting and Digital Image Access. This Agreement establishes procedures for effective information sharing between the District and The Winnetka Police Department including defining the threshold for law enforcement intervention.

Parent Communication:

Notification to parents shall occur upon determination that a communication of intent to harm oneself or someone else that may be spoken, written, gestured, or expressed in any form, such as via text messaging, email, or other digital means has been recorded.