

Administrative Procedure 356

VIOLENCE THREAT/RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA)

Background

All students and staff are entitled to work and learn in environments that are caring, respectful and safe. Black Gold Regional Division No. 18 is committed to maintaining an acceptable standard of student behavior and decorum in the school, creating an environment where educators can teach and students can learn. To this end, the following protocol will be used for responding to student threats/high-risk behaviors.

Definitions

High-Risk Behaviors: Behaviors which express a plausible intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something.

Immediate Risk Situations: Situations involving high-risk that require immediate police interventions and a protective school response.

Risk Assessment: The process of determining if a child/youth of concern may pose a risk to some unknown target(s) at some unknown time.

Threat Assessment: The process of determining if a threat maker poses a risk to the target he/she has threatened.

Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA), Stage 1: The primary purpose of the Stage 1 VTRA is data collection and initiation of immediate risk-reduction interventions. A Stage 1 VTRA typically includes the Principal or designate, the school counselor and a police officer. Input from other community partners will be gathered as part of the process.

Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA), Stage 2: A Stage 2 VTRA may be requested by the Stage 1 VTRA team when a more comprehensive response including risk evaluation, long-term intervention and treatment planning are needed. The Director of Student Services will convene the Stage 2 VTRA team which may include mental health services professional(s), physician(s), child protection staff and other community organizations who are members of the VTRA protocol.

Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol: A formal agreement signed by each of the participating partners which is representative of their commitment to the VTRA process as well as their participation and support.

Worrisome Behaviors: Behaviors which cause concern and may indicate that a child/youth, who is not overly threatening or violent, may be moving towards a greater risk of violent behavior.

Procedures

1. Any person in a school having knowledge of high-risk student behavior or having reasonable grounds to believe there is a potential for high-risk behavior will immediately report the information to the Principal or designate.
2. No action will be taken against a person who makes a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds. In cases where a report is made maliciously, the person will be dealt with according to Division procedures and the police where applicable.
3. At the start of every school year, students, parents and staff will be provided with information about the protocol and procedures so that “fair notice” is given that high-risk/threatening/violent behaviors will not be tolerated.
4. Schools will respond to high-risk/threat related behaviors. High-risk behaviors will be taken seriously, assessed accordingly and responded to appropriately.
5. When a student exhibits immediate risk behaviors, the Principal or designate will contact the police without delay and take steps to ensure the safety of all those in the school by activating established Hour Zero Emergency Response Plan procedures. The Principal will notify the Superintendent or designate and the Director of Student Services as soon as possible following contact with police.
6. In situations where a possible threat was present but violence has not occurred (e.g. the person of concern was found to have a weapon or replica but didn’t use it), the VTRA protocol will **not** be immediately activated. Instead this will be a police matter (criminal and public safety) and the subject will generally be taken into custody, remanded and initial evaluations will be conducted within the criminal justice system. However, prior to release the VTRA protocol should be activated where the police lead, in consultation with the Principal and other protocol partners, determines that a data driven Threat/Risk Assessment is appropriate.
7. Violence Threat/Risk Assessments (VTRA) will be initiated for the following:
 - Serious violence or violence with the intent to harm or kill
 - Verbal/written threats to kill others (“Clear direct and plausible”)
 - The use of technology (e.g.: computer, mobile phone) to communicate threats to harm/kill others or cause serious property damage (e.g. “burn this office down”)
 - Possession of weapons (including replicas)
 - Bomb threats (making and or detonating explosives devices)
 - Fire Setting
 - Sexual intimidation or assault
 - Ongoing issues with bullying and/or harassment
 - Gang related intimidation and violence
 - Hate incidents motivated by factors including, but not limited to: race, culture, religion, and/or sexual orientation
8. The Principal will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student making a threat at the earliest opportunity.

9. When a student exhibits high-risk behaviors the Principal or designate will:
 - 9.1. Initiate Stage 1 of the Violence Threat/Risk Assessment using the 'Grab and Go' package. Refer to Appendix – VTRA 'Grab and Go' Package. Stage 1 involves data collection only; determining the facts of the incident, who was involved and any mitigating factors.
 - 9.2. Upon completing Stage 1, the Principal or designate will contact the Director of Student Services to review the findings of Stage 1 and decide if it is necessary to proceed to Stage 2 of the protocol. Stage 2 involves engaging the support of the appropriate participating protocol partners and conducting a comprehensive risk evaluation by a multi-disciplinary team. The Director of Student Services will convene the Stage 2 Team.
10. The Principal or designate will submit the completed Stage 1 VTRA form to the Director of Student Services to be kept on file. If a Stage 2 VTRA is called, any further recommendations from the Stage 2 team will be added to the Stage 1 VTRA form during the Stage 2 meeting.
11. The Violence Threat/Risk Assessment Notice/Letter is completed by the Principal and placed in the student's cumulative record.
12. The Director of Student Services will initiate the Threat Assessment Debriefing/Reflections process.
13. When dealing with students who exhibit worrisome behaviours, staff will consult with the counselor, inform the Principal, and contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Student Services staff are routinely called on to provide advice and support regarding worrisome student behaviours.
14. The Director of Student Services is responsible to ensure the effective implementation of Violence Threat/Risk Assessment Protocol in the Division.

Reference: Section 12, 24, 45 School Act
Leduc and Area RCSD Violence Threat Risk Assessment Community Protocol
Section 264.1(1) Criminal Code of Canada
VTRA Grab and Go Package