

ASSESSING THREATS OF VIOLENCE

The following administrative regulation is intended to assist District personnel in evaluating whether a specific act or statement constitutes a true threat that requires intervention and possible disciplinary action.

I. Definitions:

- a. Behaviors that may pose a threat and be cause for concern: These include actions or plans to injure oneself or another person; weapon seeking behavior; and rehearsals of an ambush or attack.
- b. Communications that may pose a threat and be cause for concern: These include oral or written statements that suggest the author has a disturbing interest in violence, or that suggest the person is considering an attack, or that suggest the person is considering using violence to solve a problem.
- c. Inquiry: Initial examination of an alleged threat conducted by the school Threat Assessment Team.
- d. Investigation: Evaluation of an alleged threat conducted by local law enforcement authorities.
- e. Threat: An oral, written or symbolic expression of the intent to do harm or act our violently against someone or something.
- f. Threat Assessment Team (“TAT”): The TAT shall be responsible for determining whether the student poses a direct threat. The TAT will be composed of an administrator other than the Superintendent, and other school personnel familiar with the student such as the school counselor, a school resource officer (“SRO”), and when feasible a parent/guardian.
- g. Threat Assessment Team Leader: The Principal of a school or other administrator who is not the Superintendent.
- h. Violence: The threatened or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause injury and includes any threatening communication or behavior that gives another person reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury.

II. Identifying Threatening Behavior:

- a. Education Regarding Early Warning Signs. A concerted effort will be made by the District to educate students, staff, parents, and the community about the early warning signs of persons at risk of perpetuating targeted acts of violence.
- b. Reporting Acts or Threats of Violence. All staff members who become aware of any act or threat of violence directed to students, staff or District property, including threats/statements regarding self-harm or suicide, are to immediately report such acts or threat to the building Principal, who shall report these occurrences to the Superintendent. Law enforcement may be notified pursuant to Oklahoma law. The building Principal is also to report such acts or threats to the parents or guardians of any student victim and to the parent or guardian of the student who committed the violent act or made the threat as well as to inform the school psychologist and/or counselor and the Director of Special Education, if a special education student is

involved.

- c. Students Reporting Acts or Threats of Violence. Students are to report all acts and/or threats of violence, including threats/statements regarding self-harm or suicide, of which they are aware to a faculty member or the building Principal.

III. **Assessing Threatening Behavior:**

- a. Inquiry: The school's TAT will perform an initial inquiry into any alleged threat. The TAT will determine (1) the type of threat and (2) the level of risk that the act or statement poses to evaluate its credibility and seriousness, and the likelihood that the threatened conduct will be carried out. The inquiry should focus on the behavior(s) and communication(s) that are a cause for concern and examine the direct and indirect signals of violent intentions.
 - i. Assessing the Type of Threat:
 - 1. *Direct Threats* identify a specific act against a specific target and are communicated in an explicit manner.
 - 2. *Indirect Threats* are vague and ambiguous, and imply the use of violence or allude to an event that may occur.
 - 3. *Veiled Threats* do not explicitly threaten violence, but do contain a strong implication that violence will occur.
 - 4. *Conditional Threats* are equivalent to extortion and demand that terms be met in order to avoid violence.
 - ii. Assessing the Level of Risk:
 - 1. *Low Level Threat* – These are comments or acts that are vague and indirect where information is inconsistent and unlikely to occur.
 - 2. *Medium Level Threat* – These are indications that the threatened act could be carried out and has some thoughtful planning behind it. It may contain some indication of a time and place where targeted violence would occur, but lacks a strong indication of preparation.
 - 3. *High Level Threat* – These are direct, specific, and likely to occur. They pose an imminent and serious danger to school safety because of indicators that concrete steps have been taken. These require the assistance of outside law enforcement.
 - iii. Investigation: Other than any reporting requirements provided for by law, the police will be advised whenever it is determined that the threat is of a type and level that requires assistance of outside law enforcement personnel.

IV. **Factors to Consider when Evaluating a Threat:** All information regarding an alleged threat should be considered in light of the factors listed below. Ultimately, the goal is to determine whether the student's behavior is consistent with movement toward an attack, and whether the student's current situation inclines him or her toward or away from violence.

- a. Motive. What motivated the student to make the threatening statements or to act in a threatening manner? Is the student seeking revenge or attention, or attempting to solve a problem in a homicidal or suicidal manner?
- b. Communication with Others. Did the student tell other students or family or write in a diary or journal or on a website about his or her intentions?
- c. Inappropriate Interest in Guns and Violence. Evaluate the student's access to, use of, and communications about weapons. Is the student preoccupied with violence?
- d. Attack-related Behaviors. Has the student previously engaged in attack-related

behavior such as: evidence of a planned incident; development of an idea or plan to harm others; rehearsing attack scenarios; and attempting and/or acquiring weapons.

- e. Capacity to Carry Out Attack. Evaluate the student's ability to think and behave in an organized fashion as well as the student's access to the means to carry out his or her threat.
- f. Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Evaluate the student's mental health and substance abuse history. Does the student have difficulty coping with significant loss or personal failures? Has the student considered or attempted suicide?
- g. Life Circumstances. Evaluate the student's life circumstance, including relationships with parents and other family members, performance in school, and treatment of fellow students. Is the student disconnected from his parents and peers? Does the student feel bullied, persecuted, or injured by others? What life situations might increase the likelihood that the student will attempt violence or act on the threat?
- h. Views on Violence. Does the student view the use of violence as a viable resolution to a problem? Look at whether the student has communicated his or her views on violence to others and whether the student has dared others to use violence.
- i. Consistency of Actions. Examine the facts that initially drew attention to the student, the situation, and the recipient of the threat and determine whether the student's actions are consistent with his or her story. Does information gathered from other students support the threat maker's behavior and statements?
- j. Concern of Others. Are other students, teachers, parents, and members of the school community concerned about the threat maker's potential use of violence? Have other students, teachers, parents, and members of the community noticed any recent changes in the threat maker's behavior? What is the opinion of the alleged object of the threat?
- k. Reasonable Modifications. Evaluate whether any reasonable modifications of District's policies, practices, or procedures, or the provisions of auxiliary aids and services, might mitigate the risk.

V. **Managing Threatening Situations.** Upon initial inquiry, the Threat Assessment Team shall:

- a. Determine how much time the Team has to conduct an inquiry. If there is an imminent danger of targeted violence, 911 should be called immediately.
- b. Immediately intervene upon learning of an actual or potential threat and bring the student who is alleged to have made the threat in for questioning under adult supervision.
- c. Perform the Threat Assessment evaluation, and complete EP-F.
- d. Notify the parents or guardian of the student who allegedly made the threat.
- e. Determine whether the student should remain in school or be placed in an alternative educational environment.
- f. When deemed appropriate, provide supportive intervention and assist potential offenders to overcome underlying sources of anger and hopelessness by referring the student to appropriate mental health and social services.

VI. **Responding to Crisis:** The District will follow its current Emergency Response Plan policy and procedures when responding to a crisis of targeted school violence