

Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team and Guidelines

Team Tasks: The Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will be assigned the following tasks, but may not necessarily be limited to these tasks.

1. Receive reports about concerning students and situations;
2. Gather additional information related to the situation;
3. Assess the risk posed to the school community;
4. Develop interventions and management strategies to mitigate any risk of harm.

Team Members: The Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will be a multi-disciplinary team consisting of the following professionals:

1. A school administrator and/or special education cooperative serving the district;
2. A teacher employed by the district;
3. A school counselor employed by the district;
4. A school psychologist employed by the district or cooperative;
5. A school social worker;
6. At least one law enforcement official.

Tri-Valley ES Team- Led by Tyler Swearingen (Principal)

Tri-Valley MS Team: Led by Sara Burnett (Principal)

Tri-Valley HS Team- Led by Frank Arnolts (Principal)

Team Protocols and Procedures: When a threat has been reported or perceived by Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will assign the following roles, but may not necessarily be limited to these specific tasks.

1. Determine who will interview the student of concern;
2. Determine who will interview classmates, teachers, or parents;
3. Determine who will be responsible for any social media searches related to school used equipment;
4. Determine who will be responsible for documenting the team's efforts.

Transient Threats vs. Substantive Threats: Research shows that most threats (75%) are transient and much fewer threats (10%) are serious substantive threats. A threat is a communication of intent to harm someone that may be spoken, written, gestured, or expressed in some other form, such as via text messaging, email, or other digital means. An expression of intent to harm someone 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. When in doubt, treat the communication or behavior as a threat and conduct a threat assessment. Threats that are not easily recognized as harmless (e.g., an obvious joke that worries no one) should be reported to the school administrator or other team members. The administrator or another team member makes a preliminary determination of the seriousness of the threat. The student, targets of the threat, and other witnesses should be interviewed to obtain information using this protocol. A *transient* threat means there is no sustained intent to harm and a *substantive* threat means the intent is present (or not clear) and therefore requires protective action. This form is a guide for conducting a threat assessment, but each case may have unique features that require some modification.

A threat assessment is not a crisis response. If there is an indication that violence is imminent (e.g., a person has a firearm at school or is on the way to school to attack someone), a crisis response is appropriate. Take immediate action such as calling 911 and follow the school crisis response plan.

Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team Mitigation Responses

STEP 1: Evaluate the treat.

Obtain a detailed account of the threat, usually by interviewing the person who made the threat, the intended victim, and other witnesses. Write the exact content of the threat and key observations by each party. Consider the circumstances in which the threat was made and the student's intentions. Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm?

If the team's investigation related to step one indicates a transient threat was made because of the person's expression of anger, interventions need to be created to better assist the student in expressing themselves appropriately.

If there is intent to harm themselves or others, move to STEP 2.

STEP 2: Attempt to resolve the threat as transient.

Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be easily resolved so that there is no intent to harm? Does the person retract the threat or offer an explanation and/or apology that indicates no future intent to harm anyone?

If the team's investigation related to step two indicates the threat was transient appropriate services should be provided to the family. If outside resources (Project Oz, SASS, DCFS, Court Services, etc.) need to be provided Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will provide information.

If the team perceives the threat is substantive, move to STEP 3.

STEP 3: Respond to a substantive threat.

Take precautions to protect potential victims. Warn intended victim and parents. Look for ways to resolve conflict. Discipline student, when appropriate.

When a serious case is resolved as a serious substantive threat; add services as needed. Serious means a threat to hit, fight, or beat up whereas very serious means a threat to kill, rape, or cause very serious injury with a weapon.

If a very serious substantive threat is indicated, move to STEP 4.

STEP 4: Conduct a safety evaluation.

In addition to the above, the student may be briefly placed elsewhere or suspended pending completion of the following: Screen student for mental health services and counseling; refer as needed. Law enforcement investigation for evidence of planning and preparation, criminal activity. Develop a safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of Individual Educational Plan if already receiving special education services and further assessment if possible disability.

STEP 5: Implement and monitor the safety plan.

Document the plan. Maintain contact with the student. Monitor whether the plan is working and revise as needed.

Team Threat Report(s)

A threat is an expression of intent to harm someone that may be spoken, written, gestured, or communicated in some other form, such as via text message or email. Threats may be explicit or implied, directed at the intended target or communicated to a third party. Behavior that suggests a threat such as weapon carrying, fighting, or menacing actions should be investigated to determine whether a threat is present.

The process is designed for assessment of threats to harm others and is not necessarily intended for individuals who have only threatened to harm themselves. Only a small percentage of cases require both threat assessment and suicide assessment, and in those cases, the team should refer the person for a standard suicide assessment.

The threat report provided may be completed by any team member and team members may work collectively on certain portions of the report. In some instances the attached forms may or may not need to be filled out completely.

Team Meetings: The Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will meet whenever a concerning student/situation has been brought to the schools attention. Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will also meet on a regular basis, but not less than quarterly.

Team Training: The Tri-Valley CUSD #3 Schools Threat Assessment Team will at a minimum conduct training once a year. These trainings may consist of, but not necessarily be limited to: When/then scenarios, Community Resource presentations, and/or professional development courses presented through the ROE.

Outside Resources to Consider: Depending on the assessment outside agencies may be required to assist in getting the family the assistance they need. The following is a list of current resources. This list shall be updated on a yearly basis.

Department of Children and Family Services = 1-800-252-2873

Illinois Human Resources = 815-844-6109

Screening, Assessment and Support Services (SASS) via CARES = 800-345-9049

Project Oz = 309-827-0377