

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 78 (FRASER-CASCADE)**

**POLICY**

NO: 7008

DATE: 2004-08-24

REVISED: 2011-11-01

REVISED: 2015-10-27

SUBJECT: **STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT**

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The Board of Education requires that all threats be treated seriously. This means that all threats will be assessed, and that appropriate interventions and disciplinary actions taken in accordance with the Policy 7008R - *Student Threat Assessment Regulations*; Policy 7007 - *Student Code of Conduct*; and Policy 7200 - *Student Suspensions*.

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### REGULATIONS

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### Definitions:

**Assault:** Any willful action that inflicts injury upon another student or staff member.

**Violence:** Is not limited to physical injuries or fatalities. It is recognized that any intentional words or actions meant to provoke another or to retaliate can escalate and result in injury. Threats of suicide are considered acts of violence.

**Zero Tolerance:** All assaults, threats and or forms of violence will be addressed through the threat assessment processes as out-lined below.

**Risk:** A direct threat has not been made, but there has been increasing violent ideation or behaviors that suggest the frequency or intensity of violence or violence potential may be escalating.

**Threat:** A statement suggesting intent to inflict harm or injury on a student or staff member. Threats also include words or actions used to intimidate, harass or bully other persons.

**Threat Assessment:** The process of determining if a threat maker (someone who utters, writes, emails, etc, a threat to kill a target or targets) actually poses a risk to the target or targets they have threatened. Many students, and others, engage in threat-making behavior but research indicates that few pose a risk to harm the target they have threatened. Multidisciplinary teams engage in a data collection process, through structured interviews, to determine "initial levels of risk" that may be posed and plan necessary risk-reducing interventions. Although a student of concern may be assessed as low risk there may be data that indicates a more comprehensive risk assessment is required.

### **1. Procedures:**

- a) Trained multidisciplinary teams at both the school and district level will use the *Assessing Violence Potentials: Protocol for Dealing with high-Risk Student Behaviours* when responding to threats;

- b) Each school is to review this threat assessment policy with all staff and students at the beginning of each school year as well as with the school PAC, and with parents/guardians through the school newsletter in order to provide “Fair Notice” that each threat will be taken seriously;
- c) Students and staff who become aware of a threat are to inform the school administration immediately;
- d) Administration is expected to secure the school environment by detaining students involved in a threatening or violent situation, notifying parents/guardians, implementing the school discipline policy as appropriate to the situation or by taking any other immediate action deemed necessary to ensure student and staff safety;
- e) The school threat assessment coordinator is to be notified of all threats or violent situations and will coordinate the school’s threat assessment procedures;
- f) The suspension of students for engaging in threatening or violent acts is not to be a substitute for a thorough threat assessment and intervention plan; however, suspension may be used as an interim intervention as the threat assessment is conducted and within the guidelines of the suspension policy until such time as an adequate intervention plan can be implemented as appropriate;
- g) School threat assessment teams may be formed to assess intervention needs, based on the level of the threat (low, medium, high as per the *Threat Assessment Training Guide*, pages 75 to 78), consult with outside experts, and provide intervention recommendations to the school coordinator and to the school principal as per the attached intervention planning document;
- h) When the threat assessment protocol is activated, a designated Threat Assessment Team member will notify parents/guardians. Whenever possible, parents should be an integral part of the risk assessment process;
- i) For serious threats requiring significant interventions and protection of students and/or staff, the district threat assessment team consisting of the district threat assessment coordinator, the Aboriginal education coordinator, the Child and Youth Mental Health Psychologist, a trained RCMP liaison officer and a school-based principal other than the principal of the school where the threat occurred is to be notified;
- j) The RCMP Officer in charge of the local Community Police Office should be contacted prior to requesting a police investigation;
- k) The district threat assessment team will meet with the school threat assessment coordinator and one other member of the school threat assessment team to review the incident, assess the threat intervention needs, and make recommendations for intervention planning to the school principal for action and the superintendent of schools for information;
- l) The resulting assessment report and recommendations represent the collective opinion of the whole team rather than any one individual member of the team;

- m) If students are suspended for threat containment purposes for up to and including 10 school days as per policy 7200R *Student Suspensions* until the threat assessment is completed, then interim counselling and support services are to be provided as appropriate when students are suspended for up to and including 10 days to ensure student safety and well-being. Any recommended suspensions over 10 school days will be referred to the School Board as per Policy 7200R;
- n) Schools are to report all threats involving threat assessment procedures to the school-based Health and Safety Committees, the District Health and Safety Committee, and the School Board outlining the incident, the assessed threat level, actions and interventions taken and planned;
- o) Communication with the media will be done solely through the superintendent's office.

## THREAT ASSESSMENT SCREENING AND REPORTING LEVEL 1

The School Threat Assessment Team should initiate a Level 1 Threat Assessment Screening when a *student makes a threat, or if there is concern that a student may be about to act out violently, or has acted out violently.* Information should be shared amongst all members of the Building Team, as this is essential to the effectiveness of the Threat Assessment Screening and to the development of an Intervention Plan. The School Threat Assessment Team is directed by the School's Threat Assessment Coordinator and consists of:

- Administrator (Principal, Vice-Principal)
- Child Care Counsellor
- School Counsellor
- Teacher of other person who knows the student

This Threat Assessment Screening will guide your inquiry, document concerns, and help you develop an Intervention Plan to maximize student safety. Contact administrative offices as necessary for guidance. Actively seek information from:

- Current and *previous* school/discipline records
- Law Enforcement, Probation, Diversion, etc.
- Interviews with school staff, students, parents, the target of the threat, the student of concern
- Searches of the student(s), lockers, and cars
- Other agencies: mental health, human services, etc.
- Activities: internet histories, diaries, notebooks
- Parent/Guardian interview: offer support, seek their help in understanding, clarify interest in/access to weapons

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Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 1: Make Sure All Students Are Safe

- Appropriately detain the student(s).
- If there is imminent danger call the RCMP Liaison Officer
- Do not allow access to coats backpacks, or lockers.

### Step 2: Notify the Student's Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

- Parents/guardians have been notified of the situation and this screening.
- Parents/guardians have NOT been notified because:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Step 3: Interview witnesses including all participants directly and indirectly involved.

### Step 4: Initiate the Level 1 Threat Assessment Screening

The following warning signs are offered to guide the threat assessment process. The purpose of this process is to determine whether a student *poses* a threat to the safety of others. Does the student appear to have the resources, intent, and motivation to carry out the threat? Is there evidence of attack-related behaviours that suggest movement from thought to violent action? Document and discuss all warning signs that apply.

Who are the Targets of the threat? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident or concern. Who was present? Where did the incident occur? What happened?

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**Assess and Discuss All Areas**

**Notes**

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- Is there evidence of a plan to hurt *self* or *others*? Is the threat vague, or specific, plausible and detailed? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Violent ideation or threats conveyed in stories, diary entries, essays, letters, songs, drawings, or videos? Subtle threats, boasts, innuendos, or predictions? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Homicidal ideation? Suicidal ideation? Obsessive thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Motives* for the student's threat or behaviour? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Has the student engaged in behaviours relevant to carrying out the threat? "Practice sessions"? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Interest in weapons or acts of violence? Weapon-seeking? Access to firearms? At home or friends? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Violence seen as a way to solve problems? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Difficulty controlling impulses or emotions? Are emotional reactions extreme or disproportionate to the situation? \_\_\_\_\_
  - History of disruptive behaviour? Aggressive behaviour? Suspension? Expulsion? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Nature of the student's achievement/academic progress? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Irrational beliefs or ideas? Mental health concerns? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student accepts responsibility for actions? Denials? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Are peers fearful of the student? Staff fearful of the student? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Drug or alcohol concerns? Nature of substance use/abuse? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Initiator or victim of harassment or bullying? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student experiencing hopelessness, personal failure, desperation, depression? \_\_\_\_\_
  - History of violence toward others, objects or property (e.g., fights, vandalism, fire setting)? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student feels treated unfairly? Grievances, grudges? Against whom? Result of attempts to solve these problems? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Recent loss or emotional trauma? Loss of status: Shame, rejection, humiliation, failed love relationship? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Member of a closed peer group? Does the student's peer group reinforce antisocial attitudes? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Quality of support? Quality of the student's relationships with peers/adults at school? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What support will parents provide? Lack of supervision? \_\_\_\_\_
  - How will the student react to discipline in the current situation? Student's reaction to recent or past disciplinary incidents? \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 5: Review Findings with the School Threat Assessment Team

Convene the School Threat Assessment Team and discuss all relevant information regarding the student. As a team, ask the question: “*To what extent does the student pose a threat to school/student safety?*”

#### ❑ **Low Level of Concern**

Risk to the target(s), students, staff, and school safety is minimal.

- Threat is vague and indirect.
- Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail; threat lacks realism.
- Available information suggests that the person is unlikely to carry out the threat or become violent.

#### ❑ **Medium Level of Concern**

The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible.

- Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat. Wording in the threat and information gathered suggests that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (e.g., possible place and time).
- No clear indication that the student of concern has taken preparatory steps (e.g., weapon, seeking), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive references pointing to that possibility. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: “I’m serious!”
- Moderate or lingering concerns about the student’s potential to act violently.

#### ❑ **High Level of Concern**

The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.

- Threat is specific and *plausible*. There is an identified target. Student has the *capacity* to act on the threat.
- Information suggests concrete steps have been taken toward acting on threat. For example, information indicates that the student has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance.
- Information suggests strong concern about the student’s potential to act violently.

### Step 6: Decide on a Course of Action

With the input of all School Threat Assessment Team members, decide on a course of action. If there is a low to medium level of concern, the student can likely be managed at school with appropriate (increased) supervision.

#### ❑ **Low to Medium Level of Concern**

- Implement the attached Intervention Plan. (*Most students can be managed at school with interventions.*)

#### ❑ **Medium to High Level of Concern**

- The School Threat Assessment Team has determined that a Level II Threat Assessment is needed and that Law Enforcement investigation is needed. Immediately notify the District Threat Assessment Team (DTAT) Coordinator at (604) 869-2411.
- *If there is imminent danger, call the RCMP Liaison Officer or 911 (e.g., a gun is found).*
- While awaiting contact from the Level II, District Threat Assessment Team (DTAT), complete the Intervention Plan below and use it to provide for student safety. Document all interim steps taken by the School Threat Assessment Team (STAT).

The results of this screening do not predict specific episodes of violence, nor are they a foolproof method of assessing an individual’s potential to harm others. The purpose of this screening is to identify circumstances that may increase the risk for potential violence and to assist school staff in developing a safety and intervention plan.

**Step 7: Develop an Intervention Plan**

Use the following Intervention Plan to address all concerns identified during the Level I screening.

**SCHOOL (attach additional pages as needed)**

- Disciplinary action taken:** \_\_\_\_\_
- If suspended, student will return on:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Intended victim warned and/or parents or guardians notified.
- Suicide assessment initiated on: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_
- Contract not to harm self or others created (please attach).
- Alert staff and teachers on a need-to-know basis.
- Daily or  Weekly check-in with (Title/Name): \_\_\_\_\_
- Travel card to hold accountable for whereabouts and on-time arrival to destinations.
- Backpack, coat, and other belongings check-in and check-out by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Late Arrival and/or Early Dismissal.
- Increased supervision in these settings: \_\_\_\_\_
- Modify daily schedule by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Behaviour plan (attach a copy to this Threat Assessment Screening).
- Intervention by support staff (Psychologist, Social Worker, Counsellor).
- Identify precipitating/aggravating circumstances, and intervene to alleviate tension. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Drug and/or alcohol intervention with:
- Referral to IEP team to consider possible Special Education Assessment.*
- If Special Education student, review IEP goals and placement options.*
- Review community-based resources and interventions with parents or caretakers.
- Maintain permission to share information with community partners such as counselors and therapists.
- Other action:

**PARENT/GUARDIANS (attach additional pages as needed)**

- Parents/Guardians will provide the following supervision and/or intervention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Parents/Guardians will: \_\_\_\_\_

**Monitor this Intervention Plan regularly and modify it as appropriate.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Plan Supervisor  
(Maintains responsibility until reassigned or modified)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Counsellor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

**Step 8: FAX this completed screening to the District Threat Assessment Coordinator, (604) 869-7400**

- File this copy in the student's discipline folder. Do not destroy this copy.