

STUDENTS

Threat Assessment Procedures

I. Purpose

The purpose of this regulation is to establish procedures for the assessment and intervention with students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students.

II. Definitions

- A. A threat is a concerning communication or behavior that suggests a person may intend to harm someone else. The threat may be spoken, written, or gestured and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat existing in any fashion, whether orally, visually, in writing, or electronically.
- B. A threat assessment is a fact-based process relying primarily on an appraisal of behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations and address them.
- C. A low risk threat is one in which the person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence and any underlying issues can be resolved easily.
- D. A moderate risk threat is one in which the person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence at this time but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent to harm and potential for future violence.
- E. A high risk threat is one in which the person/situation appears to pose a threat of violence, exhibiting behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm and efforts to acquire the capacity to carry out the plan.
- F. An imminent threat exists when the person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward others that requires containment and action to protect identified target(s).

III. Threat Assessment Team

- A. School threat assessment teams shall be headed by the principal or administrative designee and include at least one guidance counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker, a law enforcement representative who is typically a school resource officer, and a member with expertise in instruction. Other school and division level staff may serve on the team and/or be consulted during the threat assessment process, as appropriate, or as determined by the principal. Team

composition and roles shall follow Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Student Threat Assessment Guidelines.

- B. The school threat assessment team, consisting of at least one guidance counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker, a law enforcement representative who is typically a school resource officer (if assigned to the school), and a member with expertise in instruction will meet at least quarterly for case management, needs identification, and consultation. Other school and Division level staff may participate, as appropriate, or as determined by the principal.
- C. The school threat assessment team members will attend formal training per the PWCS Student Threat Assessment Guidelines and participate in yearly training updates.
- D. In fulfilling statutory responsibilities, school threat assessment teams shall:
 - 1. Conduct the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school staff or students;
 - 2. Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of behavior that may represent a threat by conducting presentations, broadly disseminating relevant information, and ensuring access to consultation from teams;
 - 3. Clearly identify the person(s) to whom members of the school community are to report threatening behavior; and
 - 4. Implement School Board policies in an effective manner for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior poses a threat, including, in appropriate cases, referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment.

IV. Procedures

- A. Identifying and Reporting Threats
 - 1. When a student makes a threat or engages in concerning communications or behaviors that suggest the likelihood of a threatening situation, the PWCS Student Threat Assessment Guidelines should be followed. The goal of the threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment, to protect and support potential victims, and to provide assistance, as needed, to the student being assessed.

2. Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement are to occur when required by the School Board policy or the Virginia Code.
3. Threats of self harm require compliance with Virginia Code § 22.1-272.1 and with applicable School Board policies and regulations. When threats of self harm are accompanied by threats to harm others, or investigation suggests the existence of a threat to others, the threat assessment team shall be notified and take appropriate action to prevent acts of violence.
4. All School Division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report immediately to the designated school administrator an expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest a student may intend to commit an act of violence.
5. Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify school security and law enforcement in accordance with the School Board policies on crisis management.
6. In accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-279.3:1, certain types of threats require immediate notification to law enforcement. The school administrator shall immediately report to the local law enforcement agency:
 - a. A threat that involves stalking of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
 - b. Threat to bomb, burn, kill, or harm school personnel;
 - c. Threats of death or bodily injury to a person or members of his or her family, and/or threats to commit serious bodily harm to persons on school property.
7. The school administrator shall also immediately report any act noted above that may constitute a criminal offense to the parents and/or guardians of any minor student who is alleged to have committed the act and shall report that the incident has been reported to local law enforcement, as required by law. The school administrator shall inform the parents and/or guardians that they may contact local law enforcement for further information, if they so desire. In addition, the school administrator may report other threats to the local law enforcement agency, as necessary and appropriate.

B. Assessing Threats

1. When a threat is reported, the school administrator shall initiate an investigative process and, in consultation with the threat assessment team, make a determination of the seriousness of the threats as expeditiously as possible in accordance with PWCS Student Threat Assessment Guidelines.
2. The initial phase of the threat assessment process typically follows a standard discipline investigation process. As soon as the threat is reported, the school administrator is to conduct timely interviews of the student who made the threat, the recipients of the threat, and other witnesses who have knowledge of the threat. The purpose of the interviews is to evaluate the student's threat in context, so that the meaning of the threat and intent of the student can be determined. The school administrator, in consultation with at least one member of the threat assessment team shall make an initial determination of the seriousness of the threat.
3. Imminent threat. If the student appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence, the administrator shall notify law enforcement in accordance with School Board policies on Critical Incident Response. In accordance with Virginia's Crisis Management and Emergency Response Resource Guide responses may include actions such as evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place.
4. Low risk threat. If it is determined that the threat is a low risk threat and the threat assessment team determines no further assessment or monitoring is required at this time, the administrator shall complete the Student Threat Assessment and Response Form and retain a copy with the student's disciplinary records. If the student appears to be in need of assistance, the threat assessment team shall refer the student for assistance from the appropriate school or community-based resources and assign a case manager to monitor progress.
5. If it cannot be determined with a reasonable degree of confidence that the threat is low risk, then a more in-depth investigation is to be undertaken by the full threat assessment team to determine the nature and degree of any safety concerns and to develop strategies to reduce risk, as necessary. The investigation may include but is not limited to reviews of records, consultation with staff who know the student, and interviews of the subject student and threat recipient(s), or parent interview. The student shall be placed on out-of-school suspension until the threat assessment and any other disciplinary determinations are assigned and completed.
6. Based on information collected, the school threat assessment team is to determine strategies to mitigate the threat and provide assistance, as

needed. As a step in this process, the threat assessment team is to classify threats and respond in accordance with the level of threat in accordance with the PWCS Student Threat Assessment Guidelines.

7. Upon determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, a threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the Superintendent or designee. The school administrator shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian.
8. In instances where the threat is deemed of moderate risk or high risk, or requires further action, the school administrator shall notify the parent and/or guardian of the student who is the recipient of the threat and the parent and/or guardian of the student who made the threat. In cases involving low risk threats, the parent or guardian of the threat recipient may be notified at the discretion of the threat assessment team.
9. Findings from assessment and classification of the threat are to be documented in writing by submitting the Student Threat Assessment and Response Report to the Office of Student Services within 72 hours of the initial receipt of the threat. Documents are maintained in the discipline file. Interviews are maintained in the personal files of those who conducted them.

C. Intervening, Monitoring, and Resolving

1. If it is determined that the student poses a threat of violence, the threat assessment team shall develop, implement, and monitor an individualized plan to intervene and reduce the threat.
2. The student who made the threat and any impacted students are to be assisted in accessing appropriate school and community-based resources for support and/or assistance.
3. A member of the threat assessment team shall be designated case manager to monitor the status of the student and to notify the threat assessment team of any change in status or additional information that would be cause for a re-assessment. Documentation of case monitoring and resolution is to be maintained according to the PWCS Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. Updates are to be submitted at least every 30 days until the case is resolved.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for reviewing this regulation in 2017.

Legal reference:

Regulation 701-1, “Code of Behavior”

Regulation 744-1, “Short- and Long-Term Suspensions”

Regulation 745-1, “Student Expulsions, Readmissions, and Exclusions”

Virginia Code § 22.1-79.4.