

**BEHAVIOR THREAT ASSESSMENT – AR**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this administrative regulation is to establish procedures for the assessment and intervention with students, staff, and other non-affiliated individuals whose behaviors pose a threat to the safety of the school environment.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Threat – an expression of an intent to cause physical harm to someone. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by 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. Threats may be direct (“I am going to beat up up.”) or indirect (“I’m going to get him.”)
- B. Threat Assessment – a comprehensive process emphasizing an appraisal of observed (or reasonably observable) behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them, and to manage/address them.
- C. Threat Assessment Team – select staff to conduct the threat assessment process. This team should include, but is not limited to: school administrator, school psychologist or social worker, school counselor, teacher of the student, mental health care provider of student if available.
- D. Low Risk Threat – a threat in which it is determined that the individual/situation does not appear to pose a threat of serious harm to self/others, and any exhibited issues/concerns can be resolved easily. A low risk threat may be handled by the ordinary school disciplinary process at the discretion of the school administrator.
- E. Moderate Risk Threat – a threat in which the person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of serious harm to self/others, at this time; but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent and potential for future violence or serious harm to self/others; and/or exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention. A moderate risk threat may also involve a parallel school disciplinary process.
- F. High Risk Threat – a threat in which the person/situation appears to pose a threat of serious harm, exhibiting behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm and efforts to acquire the capacity to carry out the plan; and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that requires intervention. A high-risk threat may also involve a parallel school disciplinary process.
- G. Imminent Threat – a threat that 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 or identifiable target(s); and may also exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention.

- H. Behavioral Threat Assessment – a structured group process used to identify, assess, and manage the risk of threats of targeted violence posed by an individual or group.
- I. Non-Affiliated Person – a person who is not an employee, student, contractor, family member or friend of a student or staff.

### III. PROCEDURES

#### A. Identifying and Reporting Threats

When an individual makes a threat or engages in concerning communications or behaviors that suggest the likelihood of a threatening situation, the Behavioral Threat Assessment Policy shall 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 individual being assessed. Regardless of the threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement must occur when required by TCPS policy or as otherwise established in Maryland law or regulations.

1. All TCPS employees, volunteers, and contractors should report immediately to the designated school administrator any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence.
2. Anyone who believes that a person or situation posed an imminent threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify school security and/or law enforcement, and a school administrator.
3. The school administrator shall 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 law enforcement. The school administrator shall inform the parents and/or guardians that they may contact law enforcement for further information, if they so desire.
4. The school administrator shall notify the parents/guardians of the intended victim of a threat regarding any information deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of the intended victim.
5. The school administrator may report other threats to local law enforcement agencies as determined to be necessary and appropriate by the administrator.

#### B. Assessing Threats

1. When a threat is reported, the school administrator and/or threat assessment team leader shall initiate an initial inquiry/triage and, in consultation with the threat assessment team, make a determination of the seriousness of the threat as expeditiously as possible. *The threat assessment process provides a degree of risk, not any prediction that a student will or will not perpetrate a violent act.*

Upon notification of threatening behavior or communications, the school administrator and threat assessment team shall determine if an imminent threat is believed to exist. If the individual appears to pose an imminent threat of serious violence to themselves or to others in the school, the administrator or assessment team shall notify law enforcement.

**NOTE:** In accordance with the Maryland State Department of Education’s “Emergency Planning Guidelines for Local School Systems and Schools” (October 2017), school responses may include actions such as evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place.

2. If there is no imminent threat present, or once such an imminent threat is contained, the school administrator or threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the situation is screened/triaged to determine if the full threat assessment team needs to be involved. This triage may include (as necessary and appropriate):
  - a. Review of the threatening behavior or communication.
  - b. Review of school and other records for any prior history or interventions with the individual(s) involved.
  - c. Conducting timely and thorough interviews (as necessary) of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or target(s) of the threat, other witnesses who have knowledge of the threat, and where reasonable, the individual(s) who allegedly engaged in the threatening behavior or communication. The purpose of the interviews is to evaluate the individual’s threat in context, so that the meaning of the threat and intent of the individual can be determined.
3. If it is determined that the threat is not identifiable or a low threat of violence or harm to self or others, and the threat assessment team determines that no further assessment, intervention, or monitoring is required at the time to prevent violence:
  - a. The threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the incident and review is adequately documented using the CARE-2 protocol. The completed protocol shall be stored in a separate location from the cumulative student file.
  - b. If the individual (about whom the report was made) does not pose a threat but could benefit from or is in need of some additional assistance, the threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the individual is referred to the appropriate school or community-based resources.
  - c. If the individual (about whom the report was made) has an IEP or 504 Plan, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) should be conducted. Based upon the FBA, a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) should be developed, if warranted.
4. If it cannot be determined with a reasonable degree of confidence that the alleged threat is a not a threat, or is a low risk threat, then a more in-depth assessment is to be undertaken by the threat assessment team to determine the nature and degree of any

- safety concerns and to develop strategies to prevent violence and reduce risk, as necessary. The assessment may include but not be limited to: reviews of records; interviews and consultations with staff, students, family members, or community members who know the individual; and interviews of the individual and the target/recipient of the threat(s).
5. Based on the information collected, the school threat assessment team shall determine strategies to mitigate the threat and provide intervention and assistance to those involved, as needed.
  6. Upon a 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.
  7. In instances where the threat is deemed moderate risk or high risk, or requires further intervention to prevent violence or serious harm, the school administrator **shall** notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who is the target/recipient of a threat as well as the parent and/or guardian of any student who made the threat.
  8. In cases involving unsubstantiated/low risk threats, the school administrator **may** notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who is the target/recipient of a threat and/or shall notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who made the threat.

#### C. Intervening, Monitoring, and Resolving Threats

1. If it is determined that an individual poses a threat of violence, the threat assessment team shall develop, implement, and monitor an individualized plan to intervene with, address and reduce the threat. The assessment shall be maintained in a location other than the student's cumulative file.
2. The threat assessment team shall assist individual(s) within the school who engaged in threatening behavior or communication, and any impacted staff or students, in accessing appropriate school and community-based resources for support and/or further intervention.
3. For each case, the school's MLIP team shall monitor the status of the individual(s) of concern (in that case) and to notify the threat assessment team of any change in status, response to intervention/referrals, or additional information that would be cause for a re-assessment and changes in intervention strategies. Updates regarding the case are to be documented in accordance with school system policy. These updates are to be submitted regularly (e.g., at least every 30 days) until the case is resolved and is no longer assessed to pose a threat to the school or its staff or students.
4. Resolution and closure of the case is to be documented through the MLIP process.

#### D. Threats of Violence Accompanied by Threats of Self-Harm

When a threat assessment team is investigating someone who is threatening to harm others, the threat assessment team shall also screen for risk of self-harm and suicidal ideation. Threats of self-harm or suicide unaccompanied by threats of harm to others should be promptly evaluated pursuant to TCPS protocols on suicide prevention and intervention using

the RISK 2. The threat assessment team shall work collaboratively with other entities involved in the case.



