



Violence Threat Risk Assessment and Intervention

Board Received: _____ Review Date: _____

Policy Statement

The Grand Erie District School Board's mission is to engage, support and inspire all learners to achieve and succeed. Safety in schools is fundamental to learning and well-being for all students. The Grand Erie District School Board is committed to creating and maintaining safe, caring, and accepting school environments.

As a result, the Grand Erie District School Board will respond to all student behaviours that pose a potential risk to other students, staff, and members of the school community through the process of violence threat risk assessment (VTRA)

Accountability

1. Frequency of Reports – as needed
2. Criteria for Success –
 - Threat/risk assessments are completed promptly
 - Early intervention supports are in place for students posing risks to others
 - School safety is enhanced.

Definitions

Baseline Behaviours refer to an individual's typical behaviours. Baseline behaviours serve as a means for future reference and comparison, to be used in identifying an evolution in behaviour.

High-Risk Behaviours are words or actions that express a potential intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. "High-Risk" behaviours include, but are not limited to: interest in violent content; unusual interest in setting fires; an escalation of physical aggression; significant change in anti-social behaviour; unusual interest in or possession of a weapon or replica; bomb threats; threatened violence; electronic threat to be violent or kill or cause injury to self and/or others. These behaviours must always be communicated to the Principal.

Threat is the expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats can be spoken, written or symbolic and can be classified as direct, indirect, veiled or conditional. An immediate threat always results in a 911 call and activation of a VTRA assessment. Threats must always be communicated to the Principal.

VTRA Procedure

The process of implementing a threat and risk assessment protocol ensures that potentially high-risk behaviour of students is properly assessed and supportive intervention plans put in place.

Step 1: Make Sure All Students Are Safe and Call the Police (911)

- Monitor and/or detain the student(s) of concern until the police arrive.
- Do not allow access to coats, backpacks, desks or lockers.
- Contact Superintendent(s) of Safe Schools and Family of Schools.
- Contact school Social Worker and Threat Assessment Team.
- Contact Resource Officer at Secondary School; if not available, keep them informed.

Step 2: Determine if the threat maker has access to the means (knife, gun, etc) of the threat.

- School personnel are to check the threat maker's locker, backpack, clothing, work area, and/or desk to look for possible weapon(s).
- If there is any evidence of bombs or traps, discontinue the search and inform the police.

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

Step 4: Notify the threat-maker's parent(s) or guardian(s), unless the student is 18 (or is 16 or 17 and has withdrawn from parental control).

- If possible, parents/guardians should be notified of the situation and the threat/risk assessment.

WORDING:

"Your son/daughter has been involved in an incident today whereby we are concerned for their safety and the safety of others in our school. It has come to our attention that they have made a clear and plausible threat (share nature of the threat). What I can share with you so far is _____ (share the facts that are known and confirmed). Your son/daughter is currently with _____ and is safe. Our Threat Assessment Team is now involved and we will be assessing the situation and determining the best way to proceed. Are you able to come to the school at this time?"

- Ask parent if the student has access to weapons. Ask them to do a bedroom check.

Step 5: Initiate Data Collection with Team Members.

- Sources of immediate data may be obtained from multiple sources including:
 - Target(s)
 - Witness(es)
 - Teachers and other school staff (secretaries, teacher assistants, bus drivers, etc)
 - Friends, classmates, acquaintances
 - Parents/caregivers
 - Current and previous school records.
 - Police record check
- Determine who will interview which parties and who will be responsible for which tasks. Ensure team members have a copy of the Threat Assessment Form to record information.

- Community agencies may be involved in the process as consultants to the school/police Threat Assessment Team. Agencies may be sources of initial data relevant to the case at hand, based on past or current involvement.
- Determine which team member will contact community agencies. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Children’s Aid Society (Child Protection) for record check relevant to the case at hand
 - Family doctor/specialist
 - St. Leonard’s’ Community Services
 - Youth Probation Services
 - Haldimand Norfolk REACH
 - Woodview Children’s Centre
 - Contact Agencies (i.e., Contact Haldimand-Norfolk, Contact Brant)
 - Hospitals, Public Health Units
 - Domestic violence agencies
- The questions in the Threat Assessment Profile 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 are present.

Step 6: Review Findings with the Threat Assessment Team

- * Convene the 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? “Does the student pose a threat to themselves or someone outside the school (e.g., family)?*

Low Level of Concern:

- * Risk to the safety of target(s), students, staff, and school 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.
 - Typical baseline behaviour.

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. 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 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!”*
- There are moderate or lingering concerns about the student’s potential to act violently.
- Increase in baseline behaviour.

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.
- Concrete steps have been taken toward acting on threat (e.g., the student has acquired or practised with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance).
- Information suggests legitimate concern about the student's potential to act violently.
- Significant increase in baseline behaviour.

Step 7: Decide on a Course of Action**Low to Medium Level of Concern**

- The student can likely be managed at school with appropriate (increased) supervision.

Variable to Medium Level of Concern

- The student can likely be managed at school with interventions.
- Implement the Intervention Plan.

Medium to High Level of Concern

- Medical/psychiatric/family assessment is needed.
- If there is imminent danger, call 911 (e.g., a gun is found).

Step 8: Develop an Intervention Plan

Use the Intervention Plan to address all concerns identified during the VTRA. To reflect the level of risk and corresponding intervention plan, a summary report form will be completed by the school Social Worker and/or the school administrator. This report will be signed by both the author of the report and the school administrator. A copy of the summary report will be provided to parents. The summary report will also be stored in the student's Ontario Student Record and a copy sent to Safe Schools for tracking purposes.

Reference

School and Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment and Intervention Protocol (2018)