

VIOLENT THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT

Background

The District is committed to creating and maintaining safe working and learning environments at all District facilities.

Definitions

District Violent Risk Threat Assessment Team is comprised of the District Principal of Safe and Caring Schools, the District Counsellors of Safe and Caring Schools, and the Director of Instruction. The team may also, as appropriate, include the Director of Safe and Caring Schools and the Director of Enterprise Safety Management.

High-risk behaviours include, but are not limited to, possession of weapons, bomb threats, and threats to kill or injure others, or acts of hate as outlined in Administrative Procedure 350, District Code of Conduct. Threats may be written, verbal, posted online or in social media, or made by gesture. They may be direct, indirect, conditional, or veiled. High risk behaviours are those of individuals twelve years of age and older who are believed to have contravened Section 264.1 (1) of the Criminal Code of Canada which states that students “who in any manner, knowingly utters, conveys, or causes any person to receive a threat...to cause death or bodily harm” has committed an offense. Special consideration will be given to children under 12 years of age or with diverse needs.

Immediate risk situations are those situations involving high-risk behaviour that requires immediate police intervention, such as when a student is making a threat and is in possession of a weapon.

Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Team is composed of the Principal, Vice-Principal, Counsellor, and other staff as determined by the principal. Depending on severity of the perceived behaviour, this team may be expanded to also include police officers, physicians, psychologists or psychiatrists, child welfare workers, or mental health professionals, multicultural liaison workers, etc.

Worrisome behaviours are those that cause concern for members of the school system that may indicate that a student is moving toward a greater risk of violent behaviour. This may include drawing pictures, writing stories, or making vague statements that do not, of themselves, constitute “uttering threats” but cause concern for some members of the school community due to their violent content.

Procedures

1. Fair Notice

- 1.1 All students, staff, and parents shall be provided with information about the District protocol and procedures so that “fair notice” is given that threat making behaviour will not be tolerated.
- 1.2 The Principal shall take the lead to ensure that students, staff, and parents are aware of the protocol and that a consistent message is given regarding the use of the protocol.

2. Reporting and Response

- 2.1 Any person in a school, having knowledge of high risk student behaviour or having reasonable grounds to believe there is a potential for high risk behaviour shall immediately report the information to the Principal.
- 2.2 No action shall be taken against a person who makes a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds.
- 2.3 In cases where a report is made maliciously, the person shall be dealt with according to District policy and procedures, and the law, where applicable.
- 2.4 School staff shall respond to all “Worrisome” or “High Risk/Threat Related Behaviours”. All indications of threat to person or property within the school setting shall be taken seriously and assessed accordingly.

3. Immediate Risk

- 3.1 The principal shall contact the police through 9-11 police emergency line and take steps to ensure the safety of all those in the school by activating established procedures such as school evacuation or hold and secure.
- 3.2 The principal who is the VTRA Team leader shall notify the other District VTRA team members.
- 3.3 The Director of Instruction (Education Services) will be notified as soon as possible and will be kept informed/consulted at every stage of assessment/intervention. The Director of Instruction will involve the Director of Safe and Caring Schools as required.
- 3.4 The Director of Instruction, Safe and Caring Schools will contact Youth Services Sergeant to coordinate with the VPD Youth Justice Programs Coordinator, to assign resources.

4. High Risk Behaviours

- 4.1 Upon receiving a report of high-risk behaviour, the principal shall initiate the protocol for the response of the VTRA Team and police to assess the high-risk behaviour.
- 4.2 The principal will contact the Directors of Instruction (Education Services) who will involve the Director, Safe and Caring Schools as appropriate.
- 4.3 The Safe and Caring Schools Director will contact Youth Services Sergeant to coordinate with VPD Youth Justice Programs Coordinator to assign resources.
- 4.4 In cases where it is believed a Criminal Code violation has occurred, the police officer assigned to the VTRA Team may initiate a criminal investigation. The investigating police officer will likely be relying on judicial measures or a resolution process such as alternate measures under the Youth Justice Act. If the criminal investigation has been concluded and criminal charges have not been recommended to or approved by the

BC Prosecutions Service, the VTRA team shall continue to conduct a risk assessment and determine follow-up recommendations.

- 4.5 Although there is ongoing collaboration among VTRA Team members, each team member has his/her own “jurisdiction”.
- 4.6 The principal shall notify the parent(s) of a student making the threat at the earliest opportunity as well as the parents of those students against whom the threat was made.
- 4.7 When information suggests that a student who has displayed high-risk behaviour poses a significant threat, the VTRA team can request the involvement and support of the District Violent Threat Risk Assessment Team. The District VTRA team may also become involved at the direction of the District Principal of Safe and Caring Schools and/or Director of Safe and Caring Schools.
- 4.8 To protect others and/or the threat maker, students may be suspended from school by the principal during the assessment period.
 - 4.8.1 The isolation and disconnection felt by high risk students during a suspension may be exacerbated if steps are not taken to keep the student connected to healthy supports. Therefore, a suspension from access to school property and persons must not end the involvement of the VTRA Team and other key support services.
- 4.9 The VTRA Team and the District VTRA Team shall guide the process from initial assessment, to planning interventions to decrease risk, to plans for re-entry to school where a suspension has occurred, to monitoring to ensure that the issue has been addressed.
- 4.10 The principal shall ensure that appropriate support is provided to those against whom threats have been made.
- 4.11 The principal shall notify all school staff, and parents, if necessary, within a reasonable time period, when the protocol has been activated as a result of high- risk behaviour.

5. Elementary and Diverse Needs Students

- 5.1 When dealing with students under twelve (12) years of age and/or students with diverse needs, accountability/maturation issues and cognitive abilities shall be taken into consideration.
- 5.2 The principal shall determine if police involvement with students is appropriate.

6. Worrisome Behaviours

- 6.1 Members of the school community shall communicate all worrisome behaviours to the Principal for consultation.
- 6.2 The principal shall consult with the VTRA Team members as to whether a VTRA needs to be conducted.
- 6.3 Counsellors, school administrators in consultation with the Safe and Caring Schools Department can consult to determine next steps, which can include contacting the police to request involvement.

7. VTRA Incident Report

- 7.1 The principal is responsible for ensuring that a VTRA Report is completed and submitted to District Education Services with a copy provided to the Director of Instruction.

8. Communication Plan to the School Community

- 8.1 Any communication shall be done through the principal in consultation with the Director of Instruction. The Director of Instruction will consult the Director of Safe and Caring Schools and the Director of Communications, as appropriate.
- 8.2 Principals shall communicate to Parent Advisory Councils regularly regarding school safety.

9. Administrative Training

- 9.1 All school and District VTRA members shall have Threat Assessment Training.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
School Regulation 265/89
School Earthquake Safety Guidebook

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