

Student Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Team

The safety and security of Woodlawn USD #209 and community are very important. Our students, faculty/staff, and visitors should be able to pursue their education, work and other activities in a safe, non-threatening environment. Unfortunately, violence can occur. To educate and empower all members of the Woodlawn School District community, resources and procedures are in place to assist in the mitigation, prevention, deterrence, and response to concerns regarding acts of violence. Woodlawn USD #209 also offers workshops and orientations to assist students, staff and faculty in detecting indicators for concern and resources to protect themselves and their environments. Safety is the responsibility of everyone.

Definitions

A *threat* is an expression of intent of harm (including self-harm) or to act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be spoken, written, or gestured. An expression of intent to harm is considered a threat regardless of whether the actual victim or prospective victim is aware of the threat existing in any fashion, including orally, visually, in writing, or electronically.

A *student behavioral threat assessment* is a process to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, develop appropriate intervention strategies tailored to the subject of concern, and provide case management and follow-up.

Policy Statement

Violence will not be tolerated. Violence, threats or implied threats of violence, and intimidation (verbal or physical acts intended to frighten or coerce) impede the goal of providing a safe learning environment and will not be tolerated. All students, staff, faculty and visitors are covered by this policy. This policy applies to conduct "on campus", which includes all property owned or used by Woodlawn USD #209

Weapons – Weapons are not permitted on the campus except for purposes of law enforcement by sworn law enforcement officials in conduct of their official duties.

Enforcement – The Woodlawn USD #209 will pursue disciplinary, civil or criminal action as appropriate under the circumstances against any person who violates this policy by engaging in such violence, threats of violence, or intimidation.

Reporting – **Students, staff, faculty and visitors should address emergencies by calling 911, whether they are in any district school building, campus or on other property owned or used by the Woodlawn USD #209.**

For all other non-emergency concerns of violence, the students, staff, faculty and visitors should notify the building principal or designee. The main offices of Woodlawn Grade School and Woodlawn High School are the central locations for tracking concerns of violence - it is important that the building administrator or designee are made aware of concerns of violence even if they occur on property outside of district school buildings.

Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm

Staff, students, volunteers, and others involved in school activities have the responsibility to report any threats of violence or harm to designated school officials. Based on the significance and credibility of the threat, it shall be reported to law enforcement. Staff shall involve in-district multi-disciplinary professionals in evaluating the threat and the needs of the person making the threat. Consultation with or referrals to community-based professionals and services are encouraged where appropriate.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act the district may only release student records, including those involving threats of violence or harm, with parent or adult student permission, or under limited conditions. For that reason, the district will not identify students who have made threats of violence or harm when notifying the subjects of the threats, except under the following conditions:

1. The parent or adult student has given permission to disclose the student's identity or other information to the subject of the student's threat.
2. The identity of the student and the details of the threat are being disclosed to relevant district staff who have been determined to have legitimate educational interest in the information.
3. The identity of the student or the details of the threat are being released because the release of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. This exemption is to be strictly construed pursuant to federal regulations.
4. The district is responding to a court order or subpoena. Generally the district must make a reasonable effort to notify the parents of the student or adult student of the subpoena in advance of complying, so that the family can seek protective action.

Relevant information about the threat that does not improperly identify a student shall be provided to the subject of the threat, and the subject shall be advised that if law enforcement has been involved in the matter, the law enforcement agency may have more information that can be shared with the subject.

To ensure the safety of all concerned, the principal shall determine if classroom teachers, school staff, school security, and others working with the student(s) involved in the threat circumstance, should be notified. Subject to the confidentiality provisions cited above, principals shall consider all available information when determining the extent of information to be shared, including prior disciplinary records, official juvenile court records, and documented history of violence of the person who made the threat.

When considering the appropriate discipline for a student who has made a threat of violence or harm the student's prior disciplinary records shall be taken into account. Emergency expulsion shall be considered, based on the credibility and significance of the threat. Discipline shall only be imposed on students with disabilities consistent with policy and the legal requirements for special education.

If the threat by a student was significant and credible enough to warrant expulsion, the student may only be re-admitted to the district through the readmission application process provided for in district policy. The readmission application process shall include meeting district re-admission criteria established at the time of expulsion and should include completion of a threat assessment by an appropriate professional, with a report to the district, when the district determines such an assessment is necessary.

Discipline against district staff for making threats of violence or harm shall be consistent with district policy and procedure regarding staff discipline, and any relevant collective bargaining requirements.

Core Membership of Student Threat Assessment Team

The Woodlawn USD #209 Student Threat Assessment Team shall consist of the following members:

- District Superintendent (Eric Helbig)
- Both building administrators (Brian Gamber, Sandra Kabat)
- Local law enforcement officer
- Guidance counselor (Leslie Witzel)
- District social workers (Mallory Johnston, Hailey Whisenant)
- A teacher from each building (Erin Berry, Neesa Hayse)
- Special education case manager (if applicable)
- Legal counsel (as needed)

STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT PROCESS

This process will be initiated when a “person of concern” has been identified. A “person of concern” is one who has threatened violence or become involved in violent or dangerous circumstances.

Step 1: Conduct Initial Screening

First, determine whether there is an imminent danger or emergency situation. Imminent danger means that the person of concern is, or is very close to, behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous to self or others. Examples include: detailed threats of lethal violence, suicide threats, possession and/or use of firearms or other weapons, serious physical fighting, etc.

If imminent danger exists, call 911. The principal or designee should do the following:

- Immediately contact the school resource officer or local law enforcement agency to initiate steps to: contain the person of concern, effect an arrest or take into custody, get emergency psychiatric evaluation (if circumstances allow)

Step 2: Conduct Triage

The Student Threat Assessment Team should gather initial information from several key sources, including:

- School counselors/teachers
- Local law enforcement
- Online search of the person’s name, the name of the school, and the name(s) of anyone that may have been threatened, harassed, pursued, or scared.

Questions to address during this step:

1. Has there been any mention of suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts?
2. Has there been any mention of thoughts or plans for violence?
3. Have there been any behaviors that cause concern for violence or the person's well-being?
4. Does the person have access or are they trying to gain access to weapons?
5. Are there behaviors that are significantly disruptive to the school environment?

A "yes" response to any of the above five questions requires a "full inquiry" to be conducted.

Step 3: Conduct Full Inquiry

A full inquiry is conducted to determine if the person of concern poses a threat. Think broadly and creatively about those who might have information:

- Faculty/staff
- Friends
- Family
- Online friends, web sites, etc.
- Previous schools
- Employers

Document information and use it to answer the key investigative questions contained in the Threat Assessment Analysis Protocol document for Step 3.

Step 4: Make Assessment

In making the assessment, the information gathered during the inquiry should be reviewed and reflected upon. Through discussion, the Student Threat Assessment Team should consider two key questions:

Question 1: Does the person pose a threat of harm to himself or others or both? Does the person's behavior suggest that he/she is on a pathway to violence?

- If the answer is NO, the team documents its response and reasoning then proceeds to Question 2.
- If the answer is YES, the team documents its response and rationale, and proceeds to "STEP 5: Develop & Implement Management Plan".

Question 2: If the person does not pose a threat of harm, does the person show a need for help or intervention, such as mental health care?

- If the answer is NO, the team documents the response and provides appropriate discipline, intervention or referral services as needed.
- If the answer is YES, the team proceeds to "STEP 5: Develop Referral & Assistance Plan".

Step 5: Develop & Implement Management Plan

Persons posing a threat – Options for individualized threat management plans include, but are not limited to:

- Law enforcement/juvenile court intervention
- Alternative education program
- Behavioral contract
- Intensive individual interventions
- Mandated psychological assessment or hospitalization

For additional options for developing and implementing a management plan, refer to the Threat Assessment Analysis Protocol document relating to STEP 5.

Step 6: Develop Referral & Assistance Plan

Student in need of help – Options for developing a referral and assistance plan include, but are not limited to:

- Engage with the student
- Identify an ally, trusted person, advocate or mentor
- Involve family/guardian
- Referral for assistance (i.e. counseling, conflict resolution, anger management)

Step 7: Monitor the Plan

After a plan is put in place, it will be monitored frequently to assess progress. If the student continues to pose a threat, the plan will be modified and other intervention strategies will be considered. When appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken.

THREAT ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

The following is designed for use with students who are engaged in circumstances that suggest the potential for aggression or violence directed at other people. It is not designed for use with students who are suicidal, acting out sexually or who are setting fires, unless they are doing so as an act of violence intended to seriously or lethally injure other people. The results of this survey do not predict future violence nor are they a foolproof method of assessing an individual's or group's risk of harm to others. This survey is not a checklist that can be quantified. It is a guide designed to assist in the investigation of potential danger (to identify circumstances and variables that may increase risk for potential youth aggression or violence) and to assist the campus staff in the development of a safety and management plan. Furthermore, as circumstances change, so too does risk potential; therefore, if you are reviewing this survey at a date after the screening completion, do so while being mindful of supervision, intervention, and the passage of time.

Complete this screening using a multidisciplinary approach. The building administrator (as case manager), should lead a discussion using the following questions as an investigative guide.

STEP 3: Conduct Full Inquiry

Each question is a prompt for exploration of circumstances that may involve the escalation of aggression. Please note concerns by each item or under "other concerns" (item # 15).

1. Note the location of the threat, behavior or dangerous situation on the following continuum:

This question asks for a clarification of the threat. Note the location of the threat, behavior or dangerous situation on the following continuum: Place the threat on the continuum illustrated within the question and define your concerns. Note that there is a change within the continuum from aggression (non-serious or non-lethal injury) to extreme aggression or what is sometimes referred to as violence (serious or lethal injury). Also, while there is a suggested progression of behavior from mild to extreme, the listed examples serve only as illustration and are not necessarily locked into their position within the continuum. In other words, hitting can be a mild, moderate or even extreme form of aggression, depending upon the intention or the outcome of harm.



Bite; Kick; Hit; Hit with object; Fight; Strangulation; Stab; Shoot; Bomb

Describe details of behavior, threat or dangerous situation:

2. Have there been communications suggesting a potential attack or act of aggression (such as direct threats, specific references, veiled threats or vague warnings)? Threats are sometimes made directly in verbal communication, art, email, internet use, writing assignments and any other medium of communication. They can also be made by indirect, veiled or casual references to possible harmful events, ominous warnings, or references to previously occurring violent events such as school shootings. A threat does not have to be specifically stated to be of concern, nor does it have to be stated or implied within the school setting.

Describe:

3. Are there indications of a plan, feasible process or clear intention to harm others? This question addresses attack-related behavior. Threatening language is just language without related behavior or intent. Many threats are not stated with language but are indicated by vague references combined with behavior. Attack related behavior may be, but is not limited to, the following:

- A plan (complex or simple) to carry out a targeted act of violence against a specific individual, group or student body. Such a plan would have a sequence of actions necessary for its success and almost always requires a motive. The more plausible and detailed the plan, the greater the risk.
- The acquisition of a weapon, the attempted acquisition of a weapon or research about how to acquire a weapon. (If the threat is the use of physical force to the point of serious or lethal injury, then the physical force is the weapon).
- The rehearsal of the event or a similar event. Rehearsal is like simulation or practice. Rehearsal or simulation is often necessary before a targeted event can be completely planned and carried out. Rehearsal can be indicated through art, fantasy games, writing or film projects, the use of movies or internet sites that have themes and sequences of targeted violence that allow the simulation of targeted and violent acts or through first person shooter video games that also allow for simulation of sequential and violent acts. However, the use of such games or movies as entertainment does not lead students to act out violently. Their use is only attack-related behavior when it becomes rehearsal or simulation and practice.
- Scheduling an attack. Scheduling the act is sometime indicated through communication or actually noted in clear detail. Sometimes the schedule is flexible, awaiting a triggering event (teasing, rejection, loss) that further justifies the violence and locks it in as the only solution.

Describe:

4. Are there indications of suicidal ideation?

This question examines the presence or history of suicidal ideas, gestures, references and intent. The wish to die, be killed or commit suicide combined with a threat to harm others increases risk, especially if the self-destructive behavior is the last part of a plan to harm others and carry out revenge or justice.

Describe:

5. Are there indications of a specific target or a focus of aggressive or violent ideation? This question examines the focus of the aggressive ideation. Is there an ongoing consideration or focus on a particular person, group or student body? If the situation is absent a known target, it is likely a situation that revolves around reactive aggression, used as a means to bully, intimidate, confront or defend interests and wants.

Describe:

6. Are there indications of a weapons choice and/or availability?

This question examines the obvious; however, it is important to remember that even if weapons are not available within the home, they are frequently available within the community.

Describe:

7. Are there indications of a focused or unusual interest in acts of violence, previous school/community attacks or attackers, weaponry or anti-social characters, notorious criminals, murderers, or gangs (historical or fictional)?

This question is somewhat complicated. What may be inappropriate to some may still be within the normal range, given the individual's age, developmental level or cultural background. The question is similar to #3 as it examines whether the interest is a curiosity, a fascination or if the interest is a sort of admiration for the anti-social character as role model and example of how to justify violence as problem solving.

Describe:

8. Are there indications of a motive, goal or justification for aggressive behavior or a lethal attack?

This question pairs with #5. If there is a focus on a specific target or targets, then there is very likely a motive. While there can certainly be many motives for acting out violently, the most common is the need to establish or re-establish control as indicated by revenge or vendetta for lost love or humiliation and the desire to prove bravery after making a threat or taking a dare. If the situation is absent a motive, then it may be a situation that revolves around reactive aggression or the affectation of rage. Reactive aggressive talk often has triggers that agitate the situation rapidly. Such triggers are usually not motives but should still be identified in order to avoid or eliminate them in the future.

Describe:

9. Are there indications of hopeless, stressfully overwhelming or desperate situations (either real or perceived)?

This question examines the obvious. As students lose hope of resolving stressful or overwhelming situations through acceptable social or coping skills, they are more likely to engage desperate solutions and last-ditch efforts to take control. It is important to note that the point of this question is to examine the perception of the person or party you are concerned with, not necessarily what is realistically observed or known by others (staff, parents, other students or the community).

Describe:

10. Are there indications of a capacity or ability to plan and carry out an act of targeted violence?

This question examines the feasibility or possibility of a planned and carried out threat, based upon the organizational, cognitive or adaptive capacity of the person or party of concern. If someone is making fairly exaggerated or complex threats but is unable to organize and execute them due to supervision, cognitive ability or overall functioning, then the feasibility drops.

Describe:

11. Are beliefs or ideas irrational, or a feature of a mental health disorder (paranoid, obsessive, a feature of a disability)? Are values, beliefs or ideas socially maladjusted (sees aggression as justifiable method of problem solving and accepts consequences)?

Are beliefs or ideas a feature of a mental health disorder? Threatening talk as a feature of mental illness such as Psychosis, Tourette's Syndrome or Autism is often grandiose or implausible and is usually disconnected from attack-related behavior (see question #3), targeted behavior (see question #5) and even clear motive (see question #8). Attack-related behavior, if it exists, is more quickly determined. Typically, threats that are made and are features of disabilities are less concerning than those that are made or implied with thoughtful and sober consideration that follows a process of reason and justification.

Describe:

12. Are actions and behaviors consistent with communications?

This question examines the relationship between communicated threats or implications of threat and the behavior that accompanies the communication. If threats are made but there are no attack-related behaviors, motives, or a specific target(s), consistent with that threat, then risk decreases. Many threats that lack attack-related behavior are likely to be a means of communicating dissatisfaction, attention seeking, expressing anger, releasing stress or even an affectation of strength or power (bravado).

Describe:

13. Are caregivers, peers, and/or campus staff concerned about a potential for acting out in a violent or aggressive way?

This question examines the perception of others regarding the person or party of concern and the concerning situation that exists. Concerns may range from an odd discomfort to a complete list of reasons why caution should be taken. If violence is being considered or planned, it is difficult to hide the indicators. In fact, sometimes little care is actually taken to hide the intentions and, while there may be little to no documentation of past behavioral issues, there may likely be several people who have been or are currently concerned.

Describe:

14. Are there trusting and successful relationships with one or more responsible adults either on campus or within the community?

This question examines the depth of relationships with pro-social adults. The greater and healthier the connection with teachers, coaches, parents, administrators, church leaders, etc, the less chance there is of wanting to disappoint or hurt them. The situation involving a marginalized student who lacks any connection to adults is often one of greater risk, as there is less to lose by acting out. This is one of the most important questions and indicators of need on the Level 1 protocol. If a student or group of

students lack connection to pro-social adults and are also marginalized within the student population, then intervention and connection is strongly indicated!

Describe:

15. Other Concerns:

This is an open question. Remember that the Level 1 is not a quantifiable questionnaire or a fixed checklist. It is intended as a set of pertinent questions that outline an examination of concerns and potential risk.

Describe:

THREAT ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

STEP 5: Possible options for threat management plan, referral & assistance plan, and supervision:

Use the following list of recommendations or other team recommendations to develop a plan that will address the identified safety concerns and decrease the chances of aggression.

(CHECK IF IMPLEMENTED)

Disciplinary action taken:

If suspended, student will be returning on:

Referred to alternative education program

Intended victim warned – parent / guardian notified.

Protective Response initiated by _____

Suicide Assessment initiated through report to parent and / or law enforcement or mental health provider.)

Behavior Contract

Daily (Random timing) check of backpack, locker, pocket, purse, etc. by: Parents/Guardians will provide the following supervision / intervention:

Tracking and time accountability program.

Late arrival / Early dismissal.

Other modifications of daily schedule:

Alert staff and teachers on need-to-know basis.

Behavioral Modification Plan (attach copy of this report).

Decrease or eliminate pass time or unsupervised time. Increased supervision in following settings:

Drug / Alcohol intervention initiated through report to parent or mental health provider:


Daily / Weekly Check with: Administrator Teacher Counselor Police Other: _____

Review of counseling and community interventions with parents.

School, mental health, behavioral intervention including:

Referral to community threat assessment system, law-enforcement or other collaboration / agency that addresses youth violence and risk:

Sign as Team Members:

 _____

Name/Title

 _____

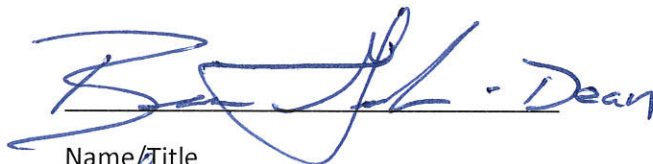
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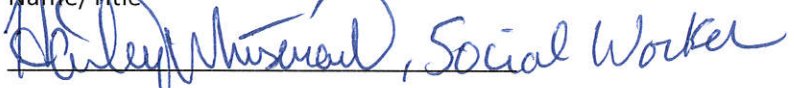
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The following resources were utilized to develop the policies and procedures:

DuQuoin High School Threat Assessment and Management Team

Ellis, R. & Ellis, S. (2013, May). Student Behavioral Threat Assessment. Illinois Administrators' Academy Course presented at the Regional Office of Education #30, Murphysboro, IL.

Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., Pollack, W., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W. & Reddy, M. (2002). Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Van Dreal, J. (2011). Assessing Student Threats: A Handbook for Implementing the Salem-Keizer System. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.