

Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA)

The Board of The Swan Valley School Division is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in schools in which students, staff, parents and others feel safe. To this end, the Board shall establish a protocol for responding to student threats/high-risk behaviors.

Definitions:

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

High-risk behaviors include but are not limited to possession of weapons, bomb threats and threats to kill or injure others. Threats may be written, verbal, posted on the Internet or made by gesture. They may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled. High-risk behaviors are those of students twelve (12) 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 utter, convey or cause any person to receive a threat ... to cause death or bodily harm” has committed an offense. Although students under twelve (12) years of age cannot be charged under the Law, their actions shall be subject to assessment using this protocol.

Worrisome behaviors cause concern for members of the school system and may indicate that a student is moving toward a greater risk of violent behavior. This may include drawing pictures, writing stories or making vague statements that do not, of themselves, constitute “uttering threats” as defined by law but are causing concern for some members of the school community because of their violent content.

Threat Risk Assessment Team is composed of the Threat Risk Assessment Team Leader, the principal and a police officer. A larger team may be used in very serious cases and could include physicians, psychologists or psychiatrists, child welfare workers, mental health professionals or criminal profilers. (The Team Leader may be the principal or someone designated by the principal but must be an employee certified as a teacher. If the school has a school counselor that individual should be a member of the team.)

Student Threat Risk Protocol

1. Reporting

- a) Any person in a school having knowledge of high-risk student behavior or having reasonable grounds to believe there is a potential for high-risk behavior shall immediately report the information to the school principal and/or designate.
- b) No action shall be taken against a person who makes a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds.
- c) In cases where a report is made maliciously, the person shall be dealt with according to school division policy and the law.

2. Fair Notice

- a) All students, staff and parents shall be provided annually with information about the protocol and procedures so that “fair notice” is given that threat behavior will not be tolerated.
- b) It is the responsibility of the principal 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.
- c) Principals will review the Threat Risk Assessment Protocol with staff at the beginning of each school year.

3. Duty to Respond

- a) Schools shall respond to all high threat risk related behavior; all high-risk behaviors shall be taken seriously and assessed accordingly.
- b) School principals will designate a school-based Threat Assessment Team. Team members may include: principal, counselor, RCMP, Mental Health, teachers involved, Student Services Achievement Coordinator, Threat Assessment Advisor(s) and applicable members.

4. Immediate Risk Procedures

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

5. High Risk behaviors

High-risk behaviors include but are not limited to possession of weapons, bomb threats and threats to kill or injure others. Threats may be written, verbal, posted on the Internet or made by gesture. They may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled. The Criminal Code Section 264.1 (1) of Canada states that a person “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. Although students under twelve (12) years of age cannot be charged under the Law, their actions shall be subject to assessment using this protocol.

- a) These require immediate police intervention. The school principal or designate shall contact the police immediately and take steps to ensure the safety of all those in the school by activating established procedures such as school evacuation or school security (lock down).
- b) School principal shall notify the Student Services Achievement Coordinator as soon as possible, following initial policy contact.
- c) The school principal shall notify the parents of the student making the threat at the earliest opportunity and as well as the parents of those students against whom the threat was made. Parents become an integral part of the initial risk assessment process.
- d) Police action will determine whether a Division based TRA (Threat and Risk Assessment) is initiated.
- e) In order to protect others and /or the threat maker, students may be suspended from school by the principal during the assessment period.
- f) Following the completion of necessary assessments, team members will develop a re-entry plan involving the student and the parents.
- g) Duty to Victims and Others
 - i) if a threat is made against a staff member or student without their knowledge, the school principal will inform the individual at the earliest opportunity. Students, eighteen (18) years of age or older, shall be informed directly. If the student is under eighteen (18) years of age the decision about when the student is informed will be made by the principal in consultation with the parent/guardian.
 - ii) The Student Services Achievement Coordinator shall ensure the appropriate support is provided to those against whom threats have been made.

iii) 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 behavior.

6. Worrisome Behaviors

Worrisome behaviors cause concern for members of the school system and 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” as defined by law, but are causing concern for some members of the school community because of their violent content.

- a) The school principal shall communicate all worrisome behaviors to the Student Services Achievement Coordinator for consultation.
- b) The school principal shall consult with the Student Services Achievement Coordinator as to whether or not a threat assessment needs to be conducted.
- c) The policy may be consulted but it is generally not done as a formal complaint.
- d) The school principal shall contact the student’s parents notifying them of the worrisome behavior.

7. Threat Risk Assessment Incident Report

The principal will designate a team member to complete a Threat Risk Assessment Incident Report, which shall be kept in a confidential file in the Student Services Achievement department and to make a confidential report of the incident/behavior to the Superintendent/CEO within twenty-four (24) hours.



SWAN VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION

VIOLENT THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA)

WHAT IS A THREAT?

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the internet or made by gesture.

A VIOLENT THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT WILL BE INITIATED FOR THE FOLLOWING BEHAVIORS:

- Serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill
- Verbal/written threats to harm or kill others – clear, direct and plausible
- Online threats to harm or kill others
- Possession of weapons (including replicas) or use other objects as weapons
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices)
- Fire setting
- Sexual intimidation or assault
- Gang-related intimidation and violence
- Or any other incidence deemed serious enough to warrant a VTRA

DUTY TO REPORT

To keep our schools and communities safe, staff, parents, students and all community members must report all threat-related behaviors to the school principal.

ALL THREATS MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, INVESTIGATED AND RESPONDED TO

For more information go to: Swan Valley School Division/Administrative Procedure Manual/Safe Schools/Violent Threat Risk Assessment.

WHAT IS A VTRA TEAM?

Each School has a VTRA team which is a multidisciplinary team. School teams may include: Principal, Resource Teacher, School Division Psychologist/Counsellor/other staff, RCMP and community agencies.

THE PURPOSE OF THE VTRA IS.....

- to ensure the emotional and physical safety of students, staff, parents and others
- to ensure a full understanding of the context of the threat
- to understand the factors that contribute to the threat maker's behavior
- to be proactive in developing an intervention plan that addresses the emotional and physical safety of the threat maker

WHAT HAPPENS IN A VTRA?

All threat making behavior(s) will be reported to the principal who will activate the protocol for the initial response. Once the investigation team has been activated, interviews may be held with student(s), the threat maker, parents and staff to determine the risk and develop an appropriate response to the incident. Investigations can involve student services, RCMP and other community agencies; furthermore it can involve locker or personal property searches. Intervention plans will be developed and shared with appropriate people as required. Threatening behavior can result in disciplinary actions.