Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia Public Schools:

Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

(Fourth Edition 2022)

Revised: December 2022

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

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A Resource Provided by:

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Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

Revised: December 2022

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Gene Deisinger, Ph.D., ***President, Deisinger Consulting, LLC*** and
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **1**

OVERVIEW OF VIRGINIA LAWS RELATED TO THREAT ASSESSMENT **3**

Scope of School Threat Assessment Teams 3

Structure of School Threat Assessment Teams 4

Duties of School Threat Assessment Teams 5

Civil Immunity of School Staff 10

School Threat Assessment Teams: Access to Protected Information 10

Threat Assessment Records 11

OVERVIEW OF THE MODEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES **13**

MODEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES **15**

Model School Board Policy on School Threat Assessment 15

Model Procedures for School Threat Assessment Programs 16

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT **23**

Virginia C.A.R.E.S. for School and Campus Safety 23

Overview of Threat Assessment and Management 24

Threat Assessment Teams to Address All Threats 30

Identifying and Reporting Concerning, Aberrant or Threatening Behavior 38

Assessing and Classifying Threats 41

Managing Threatening Situations 57

RESOURCES **68**

Key References 69

Definitions 72

Comparison of Safe School Initiative (2002) and Protecting America's Schools (2019) 75

Virginia Resources 76

National Resources 78

Professional Associations 79

Resources Regarding School Climate and Safety 80

Data on School Violence, Crime, and Safety 82

Key Threat Assessment Resources 83

Checklist for Implementing School Threat Assessment Processes 84

Threat Assessment and Management Process Flowchart 89

Select Virginia Laws Related to Threat Assessment 90

Technical Assistance for Threat Assessment Teams 107

Sample Threat Assessment and Management Forms 109

Introduction

The model threat assessment policies, procedures, and guidelines contained herein were initially developed in response to legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 2013. In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, § 9.1-184, the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS), under the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), developed and provided model policies and procedures to help local school boards establish and operate threat assessment teams to support the safety and well-being of their schools. The primary focus was on providing schools with "a model policy for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including procedures for the assessment of and intervention with **students** whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students."

On July 1, 2016, the Virginia General Assembly enacted several updates and additions to the *Code of Virginia* related to threat assessment teams in Virginia public schools. These changes increased the consistency between Virginia laws regarding threat assessment teams in public schools, and those regarding threat assessment teams in public institutions of higher education. The changes served to broaden the legislative purview of school threat assessment teams (i.e., to include "procedures for the assessment of and intervention with **individuals** (rather than solely with students) whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students") and provided those teams with more of the tools and protections that previously had been available only to campus threat assessment teams.

Since 2016, the Virginia General Assembly has enacted other laws that relate to the safety and security of schools and communities in the Commonwealth. Further, state agencies have provided additional guidance on issues related to information-sharing, suicide prevention, and student conduct. Additionally, the field of threat assessment and management has seen significant developments that inform practice in school settings.

Most recently, ***HB 873*, effective July 1, 2022 amends and reenacts *§§ 9.1-184*, *22.1-79.4*, and *22.1-280.2:3*** *of the Code of Virginia* to require, in the case of any public elementary or secondary school in which a school resource officer is employed, the threat assessment team for such school to include at least one such school resource officer. The bill requires the chief local law-enforcement officer for any local school division in which a public elementary or secondary school does not employ a school resource officer to designate a law-enforcement officer to receive, either in-person or online, the school safety training for public school personnel conducted by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety in accordance with relevant law and requires such officer to serve as the law-enforcement liaison for the school administrator in such a school who has also received such training as prescribed by relevant law.

This document has been updated to reflect those statutory changes and standards of practice, and is provided as the current model policies, procedures, and guidelines for school threat assessment and management teams. In accordance with § 22.1-79.4, school division policies must be consistent with these model policies developed by the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety. The DCJS model adheres to legislative requirements and is a synthesis of best practices or standards of practice in threat assessment and management in school settings. The DCJS model is available for use, free of charge, for both public and private schools in Virginia.

The **Virginia C.A.R.E.S. for Schools and Campuses** framework was developed in 2016 to emphasize initiatives by the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety to support schools and campuses in enhancing the safety and well-being of educational settings across the Commonwealth. The **Virginia C.A.R.E.S.** framework recognizes that threat assessment and management is one part of a larger and on-going approach to support and enhance school and campus safety. The health, safety and well-being of schools are sustained and enhanced through a comprehensive approach. **Virginia C.A.R.E.S.** stands for:

- **C**: Caring and connection to build a positive school/campus climate
- **A**: Awareness of concerns, resources, and reporting options
- **R**: Recognition of, and response to, threatening, aberrant, or concerning behaviors
- **E**: Engagement with the community and with persons (within the school or campus) for whom there is concern
- **S**: Support for all members of the school/campus community

Schools are encouraged to develop and sustain efforts toward all these goals, as meets the needs, resources, and abilities of the school community.

This document and other resources to support school and campus safety are available on the DCJS website at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/k-12-resources-and-curriculum

Overview of Virginia Laws Related to Threat Assessment

There are several statutes within the *Code of Virginia* that relate to or may impact school threat assessment teams. This section provides an overview of key statutes related to threat assessment in Virginia schools. Members of threat assessment teams and other school administrators should be familiar with these statutes and ensure the school's compliance. See the Resource section of this document for the full text of the statutes referenced below.

The primary statute governing threat assessment and management processes in Virginia public schools is § 22.1-79.4. *Threat assessment teams and oversight committees*, which has several elements that impact the scope, structure, duties, and operations of such teams.

Scope of School Threat Assessment Teams

Section A of § 22.1-79.4 outlines the duties of school boards for implementing policies regarding threat assessment teams as well as the scope, authority, and responsibility of such teams:

> *Each local school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students consistent with the model policies developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (the Center) in accordance with § 9.1-184*. Such policies shall include procedures for referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatm*ent, when appropriate.*

Virginia public schools are required to adopt policies that establish threat assessment teams whose functions include the assessment of and intervention with **individuals** whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school, staff, or students. This reflects the understanding that it is not only students who may pose a threat of violence or harm to the school community, but a range of others including (but not limited to):

- Students: current and former (and potentially prospective)
- Employees: current and former (and potentially prospective)
- Parents, guardians, or other family members of students
- Persons who are (or have been) in relationships with staff or students
- Contractors, vendors, or other visitors
- Persons unaffiliated with the school.

School threat assessment teams shall adopt policies and practices to assess and intervene with potential or developing threatening or concerning behaviors exhibited not only by students, but from a broad range of persons who may pose a threat to either school staff or students. While students will likely represent the largest number of potential subjects of concern, schools must implement a process for identifying, assessing, and managing all threats that may reasonably be posed to the school community.

Further, Virginia schools must enact threat assessment and management policies that are consistent with the *Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines* promulgated by the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, per § 9.1-184, the authorizing statute for VCSCS. This document contains the model policies and procedures developed and provided by VCSCS.

Finally, Section A of the school threat assessment statute requires schools to develop policies that include procedures for referrals to relevant community resources such as community service boards or health care providers in circumstances when those resources are appropriate to provide further evaluation or treatment of persons who are involved in threat assessment

and management cases. Schools should establish memoranda of understanding/agreement regarding such referral relationships and review them annually to ensure that they are up to date.

Structure of School Threat Assessment Teams

School Threat Assessment Team(s)

The *Code of Virginia (Code)* § 22.1-79.4 notes the minimum required membership and structure of threat assessment teams established by the school and was updated on July 1, 2022 to reflect the following change for law enforcement, specifically regarding School Resource Officers (underlined below):

> C. *Each division superintendent shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team that shall include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer. Threat assessment teams may be established to serve one or more schools as determined by the division superintendent.*

The division must establish a structure in which each school within the division is served by a threat assessment team. The superintendent has the authority and discretion to establish a team structure that meets the needs, resources, and staffing of the school division so long as each school is served by a threat assessment team. A given threat assessment team may serve one or more schools. Further, individuals with relevant areas of expertise (e.g., school psychologists or school resource officers) may serve on more than one threat assessment team.

The team(s) **shall** include persons with "expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer". The *Code of Virginia* states that persons must have expertise in those areas, but do not necessarily have to be currently serving in those roles. The intent is to support a multi-disciplinary approach to maximize the effectiveness of threat assessment and management processes. Persons with an expertise in counseling may include school psychologists, counselors, or social workers. Persons with expertise in instruction may be teachers, administrators with teaching experience, or special education staff. Those with expertise in school administration are typically principals or assistant principals. As of July 1, 2022, those with expertise in law enforcement **shall** be school resource officers if employed at a school. Furthermore, as of July 1, 2022, the *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-280.2:3 states, *The chief local law-enforcement officer for any local school division in which a public elementary or secondary school does not employ a school resource officer, as defined in § 9.1-101, shall designate a law-enforcement officer to receive, either in-person or online, the training set forth in subsection E of § 22.1-279.8. Such officer shall serve as the law-enforcement liaison for the school administrator described in subsection E of § 22.1-279.8 in each public elementary or secondary school that does not employ a school resource officer.* The *Information Sharing Guide for K-12 Public Schools* available through DCJS provides further guidance regarding law enforcement officers serving on school threat assessment teams. School administrators and team members should obtain and be familiar with that guide.

Note that the *Code* only specifies the minimum expertise required but does not limit schools from including persons with other areas of expertise (e.g., human resources, special education, nursing, etc.) as core members of the team. Further, the team, in its discretion, may involve other staff members (or community resources) to assist with a particular case or issues specific to certain cases, even when that staff member is not named as a core member of the team. Team members should be selected to fulfill the obligations of the *Code*, and to help the team maximize its capabilities for early identification with developing concerns, comprehensive assessment of situations, and effective management and monitoring to resolve the concerns to the degree possible.

Schools should (as resources allow) identify back-up/secondary team members to fulfill responsibilities if the primary team member is not available. Ideally, each core member would have at least one back-up, typically from the same area of expertise.

Each team should have a designated leader to facilitate the team process and ensure compliance with legal requirements and standards of practice. This is typically a school administrator with oversight of the threat assessment team process for the school(s) covered by the team but may be any staff member appointed by school administration.

Oversight Committee

The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-79.4 provides an option to establish a divisional committee to provide oversight of all threat assessment and management processes and states:

B. The superintendent of each school division may establish a committee charged with oversight of the threat assessment teams operating within the division, which may be an existing committee established by the division. The committee shall include individuals with expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement.

The Code provides latitude in this section in that schools are **not required** to establish an oversight committee within the school division but **may** do so if they choose. If the superintendent chooses to establish a committee with that responsibility, the oversight committee may either be a new committee established to provide such oversight, **or** the superintendent may assign the oversight responsibilities to an existing committee.

In either case, **if** the division has such an oversight committee, it **must** include persons with "expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement". Note that expertise in human resources is a required aspect of oversight teams, while it was optional (though desirable) for school threat assessment teams. As referenced above, the *Code* states that persons must have expertise in those areas, but do not necessarily have to be currently serving in those roles. The intent is to support a multi-disciplinary approach to maximize oversight and effectiveness of threat assessment and management processes. The *Code* only specifies the minimum expertise required, but does not limit schools from including persons with other areas of expertise (e.g., special education, nursing, etc.)

Oversight responsibilities may include, but not be limited to such functions as ensuring:

- Compliance with state statutes, model policy, procedures, and guidelines for standards of practice
- Consistency of policies and procedures for threat assessment and management processes across the division
- Training and continuing education of threat assessment team members
- Education and awareness of school staff, students, and parents/guardians
- Notification of senior school administrators and/or parents/guardians
- Fulfillment of reporting requirements regarding threat assessment practices.

In addition to the oversight responsibilities, schools may also utilize a central division threat assessment team to assess and manage those threat cases that impact across schools within the division, and/or are of a sufficient magnitude that they may be better managed at the division level rather than at the school level. While not a requirement of the statute, it is important to consider how to best manage those cases that may be beyond the capability of an individual school to deal with, or that impact across multiple schools or operations within the division, or schools or other entities outside of the division.

Duties of School Threat Assessment Teams

Sections C, D and E of § 22.1-79.4 outline the duties and responsibilities of threat assessment and management team members.

Core Duties of Threat Assessment Teams.

§ 22.1-79.4, section C states:

…Each team shall (i) provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self; (ii) identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; and (iii) implement policies adopted by the local school board pursuant to subsection A.

Provide Guidance

The statute recognizes the importance of community awareness and engagement regarding recognizing and reporting situations involving threatening or aberrant behavior that may impact the school community. Threat assessment team

members have a responsibility to provide guidance and build awareness to support recognition of concerning, aberrant or threatening behaviors.

Guidance should address recognition and reporting of behavior that is concerning or aberrant, or that may represent a threat to the community outside of the school (e.g., a staff member known to be threatening and cyber-stalking a former spouse while at work), the school (e.g., a student threatening another student or staff member at school), or to the subject of concern themselves (e.g., a student expressing thoughts of self-harm or suicidal behavior).

It is important to integrate approaches for recognizing and reporting concerns of threatening or aberrant behavior with those related to other concerns such as bias, bullying, harassment, mental health, substance abuse, and suicide. Note that several other statutes impose responsibilities related to recognizing and addressing concerning behaviors, such as mental health concerns (see § 22.1-298.6).

Threat assessment teams providing guidance to students about recognizing and reporting concerns related to suicidal behavior must operate in accordance with *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-207.2:1, which states:

> *Each school board shall develop and implement policies that ensure that parents have the right to review any audio-visual materials that contain graphic sexual or violent content used in any anti-bullying or suicide prevention program. Such policies shall require that prior to using any such material, the parent of the child participating in such a program shall be provided written notice of his right to review the material and his right to excuse his child from participating in the part of such program utilizing such material.*

Identify Mechanisms for Reporting

The threat assessment team must identify to whom concerning, aberrant or threatening situations are to be reported. Schools should establish clear protocols for staff, students, parents/guardians, and others who have such concerns to report their concerns in a timely and confidential or anonymous manner.

Implement Threat Assessment Policies

Section A of *§ 22.1-79.4* requires school board policies establishing threat assessment teams that include:

> *…[T}he assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or student consistent with the model policies developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (the Center) in accordance with § 9.1-184. Such policies shall include procedures for referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment, when appropriate.*

This section of the *Code* authorizes members of school threat assessment teams to fulfill the threat assessment policies established by the school board and establishes the authority to assess and intervene as a central duty of threat assessment team members.

Notifications to Senior Administration, Law Enforcement, and/or Parent/Guardian

Notifications Regarding Criminal Acts

1. The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-279.3:1.(Updated July 1, 2022) outlines reports of certain acts in which school staff (including threat assessment team members) are required to notify the division superintendent and to the principal or his designee. . § 22.1-279.3:1., Section A, 1–8, requires that reports shall be made to the division superintendent and to the principal or his designee on all incidents involving: Alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, an imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, including the theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications;
2. The assault and battery that results in bodily injury of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;

3. The sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person, abduction of any person as described in § 18.2-47 or § 18.2-48, or stalking of any person as described in § 18.2-60.3, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
4. Any written threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
5. The illegal carrying of a firearm, as defined in § 22.1-277.07, onto school property;
6. Any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, as defined in § 18.2-85, or explosive or incendiary devices, as defined in § 18.2-433.1, or chemical bombs, as described in § 18.2-87.1, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
7. Any threats or false threats to bomb, as described in § 18.2-83, made against school personnel or involving school property or school buses; or
8. The arrest of any student for an incident occurring on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, including the charge therefor.

When aware of any of those incidents, school staff must notify senior school administration (the division superintendent and to the principal or his designee) of the nature of the incident and the person(s) involved, and any relevant details regarding the incident such as date, time, location, etc.

Note that if a student commits any reportable incident outlined above, the student shall be required to participate in prevention and intervention activities as deemed appropriate by the superintendent or designee. Such prevention and intervention activities shall be identified in the school division's drug and violence prevention plans.

Section B of § 22.1-279.3:1 **states that except as may otherwise be required by federal law, regulation or jurisprudence, each principal:**

1. Shall immediately report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in subdivision A 1 that may constitute a felony offense;
2. Shall immediately report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in subdivisions A 3 through 7, except that a principal is not required to but may report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in subdivision A 4 committed by a student who has a disability;
3. May report to the local law-enforcement agency any other incident described in subsection A that is not required to be reported pursuant to subdivision 1 or 2; and
4. Shall immediately report any act enumerated in subdivisions A 1 through 5 that may constitute a criminal offense to the parents of any minor student who is the specific object of such act. Further, the principal shall report whether the incident has been reported to local law enforcement pursuant to this subsection and, if the incident has been so reported, that the parents may contact local law enforcement for further information, if they so desire.

Principals should be well versed in application of the criminal code and consult with the School Resource Officer (SRO) or local law enforcement to determine whether incidents are felonies or misdemeanors. Importantly, the *Code* does **not** require delinquency charges to be filed or prevent schools from dealing with school-based offenses through appropriate sanctions or educational programming before a delinquency charge is filed.

The principal (or designee) shall also notify the parent/guardian of any student involved in such incident, regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken against the student or the nature of the disciplinary action. Such notification shall relate only to that student's involvement and shall not include information concerning other students.

Law enforcement authorities are also generally required to notify school administrators when students enrolled in the school are charged in criminal incidents (wherever committed) if the offense would be a felony if committed by an adult or was a violation of the *Drug Control Act*, or for any of the above offenses occurring on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity.

Notifications Regarding Students Who Pose a Threat of Violence/Harm to Self or Others

The *Code* outlines circumstances in which threat assessment team members are required to notify senior administration of students who pose a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others. Section D of § 22.1-79.4 states:

> *Upon a preliminary 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 division superintendent or his designee. The division superintendent or his designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude school division personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.*

This section outlines a duty that only applies when the subject of concern is a currently enrolled student and meets the specified criteria. In circumstances in which the threat assessment team is dealing with a case in which the subject of concern is a student **and** makes a preliminary determination that the student **poses** a threat of violence or physical harm to themselves **or** to others, the team has a statutory responsibility to notify the division superintendent (or designee) of that determination. This allows the superintendent (or designee) to fulfill their duties (under this statute and as imposed by others) to notify the student's parent or guardian. School staff are required to report, and the superintendent or designee may also be required to notify law enforcement if felony-level crimes may have been committed or if a physical threat of harm needs to be addressed. The statute imposes the duty to notify the superintendent (designee) as soon as the team has determined that the student **poses** such a threat, that is, has the capability of acting on a threat, whether they have communicated/stated a threat or are engaging in behavior that would lead a responsible person to perceive that the student had, or was developing, the capacity to cause harm.

In practice, it is likely to be the school administrator, threat assessment team leader, or other member of the threat assessment team that functions as the Superintendent's designee to make the required determinations and notifications.

The team's duty under this section is fulfilled upon a timely and good faith effort to notify the superintendent or designee and the team should take timely and reasonable steps to address the threat posed and is **not** required to wait (nor should they wait) for the notification(s) to be completed before taking appropriate actions.

Threat Assessment and Suicide Risk Assessment/Intervention

Note that § 22.1-79.4, Section D does not require that all cases be handled by the threat assessment team when they involve students who may pose a threat to self. Rather, the statute imposes a duty on threat assessment team members when they, in the course of their duties on the threat assessment team, make a determination (even at a preliminary level) that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self (or others). This is similar to the duty that any school administrative or instructional staff have when they have reason to believe that a student is at imminent risk for suicide (per § 22.1-272.1, see next section).

The goal of the threat assessment and management process is to take appropriate preventive and intervening measures to maintain the health, safety, and well-being of the school community. This is done through systematic processes facilitating early identification, comprehensive assessment, and holistic case management. These goals are consistent with those of suicide prevention and intervention processes.

Virginia law (e.g., § 22.1-79.4) imposes certain duties on school threat assessment teams related to individuals who may pose a threat to the community, school **or self**. These duties include providing guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of aberrant or threatening behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, **or self**. Further, upon a threat assessment team making a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat to self or others, the threat assessment team has a statutory responsibility to notify senior school administration.

Notifications for Students at Imminent Risk of Suicide

The *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-272.1. *Responsibility to contact parent of student at imminent risk of suicide* further requires that:

> *A. Any person licensed as administrative or instructional personnel by the Board of Education and employed by a local school board who, in the scope of his employment, has reason to believe, as a result of direct communication from a student, that such student is at imminent risk of suicide, shall, as soon as practicable, contact at least one of such*

> *student's parents to ask whether such parent is aware of the student's mental state and whether the parent wishes to obtain or has already obtained counseling for such student. Such contact shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines required by subsection C.*

School staff who are licensed as administrative or instructional personnel by the Board of Education who (in the scope of their job duties) have reason to believe, as a result of direct communication from a student, that the student is at imminent risk of suicide must contact the student's parents to determine:

1) Whether the parent is aware of the student's state of mind, and,
2) Whether the parent wishes to obtain or has obtained counseling for the student.

Such determination and notifications will be made in accordance with the *Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools* (referenced in subsection C of § 22.1-272.1) provided by the Virginia Department of Education. Beyond the statutory requirements regarding notification, and as noted in the *Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools*, the contact with parents is an opportunity to facilitate cooperation and coordination regarding the safety and well-being of the student.

If the student has indicated that the reason(s) for imminent suicide are related to parental abuse or neglect, then school staff **shall not contact** the parents. Instead, as soon as practical, staff will notify the local social services department in the locale where the child resides or where the abuse/neglect is believed to have occurred, or may contact the Virginia Department of Social Services toll-free abuse and neglect hotline at (800) 552-7096.

Notifications Regarding Students Involved with Protective Orders

§ 22.1-279.3:2. *Public elementary and secondary school students; protective orders; notification* requires a principal who receives notice that a court or magistrate has issued an order for the protection of a child enrolled at the school, or prohibiting contact with a child at the school must notify school staff that such order has been issued when those staff:

1. provide direct educational or support services to the protected child **or** the child subject to the order,
2. have a legitimate educational interest in such information, and
3. are responsible for the direct supervision of the protected child or the child subject to the order.

Threat assessment team members have a legitimate educational interest in such information when there are threat assessment cases involving persons named in such protective orders. School administrators having knowledge of such orders should notify threat assessment team members of the order, work with law enforcement to obtain a copy of the order and take steps to ensure compliance with the order.

While the statute only applies to students involved in such orders, similar notifications should occur when school administration or threat assessment team members are aware of protective orders involving school staff or parents/guardians of students.

Reporting on Threat Assessment Activities

The *Code* outlines responsibilities for reporting on threat assessment team activities in Section E, which states:

> *Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall collect and report to the Center quantitative data on its activities using the case management tool developed by the Center.*

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety is charged with collecting, analyzing, and disseminating school safety data. VCSCS typically collects threat assessment data through the annual school safety and security surveys. Schools are obligated to cooperate with VCSCS and assist in the fulfillment of those duties as per § 9.1-184.

Schools should implement documentation and data collection procedures that are consistent with state law and with regulations regarding storage and retention of such documentation so that they can efficiently and reliably report on threat assessment activities.

Civil Immunity of School Staff

The *Code of Virginia* provides protections for school staff (or any other) who report or investigate certain incidents at school. The *Code of Virginia* § 8.01-47, grants immunity from all civil liability to any person who, in good faith with reasonable cause and without malice, reports, investigates, or causes an investigation to be made into information that any person poses a credible danger of serious bodily injury or death to any other person on school property. The *Code of Virginia* § 8.01-220.1:2, grants immunity from all civil liability for any teacher regarding acts or omissions resulting from the supervision, care or discipline of students, or reporting of alleged bullying or crimes against others, when such acts were within the teacher's scope of employment and done in good faith.

School Threat Assessment Teams: Access to Protected Information

The *Code* allows for school threat assessment team members to request and receive information from otherwise protected or restricted sources when certain criteria are met. Section F of § 22.1-79.4 states:

> *Upon a preliminary determination by the threat assessment team that an individual poses a threat of violence to self or others or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for assistance, a threat assessment team may obtain criminal history record information, as provided in §§ 19.2-389 and 19.2-389.1, and health records, as provided in § 32.1-127.1:03. No member of a threat assessment team shall redisclose any criminal history record information or health information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.*

Members of a public school threat assessment team may obtain criminal history record information (regarding adult or juvenile subjects of concern) and/or information from health records regarding such subjects, in certain circumstances. Note that this code section only allows team members to access such information from Virginia criminal or health records and does not allow access to such records from outside of the state, e.g., juvenile criminal history records regarding a student that transferred in from another state. School resource officers or other law enforcement officers serving on threat assessment teams may be able to obtain criminal offense information from states outside of Virginia but may not be able to share that information with threat assessment team members unless it was obtained through public sources of information.

To obtain information from criminal history or health records, the threat assessment team must have made a preliminary determination that an individual (not just a student) who is a subject of concern meets one or more of the following criteria:

1) poses a threat of violence to self or others, **or**
2) exhibits significantly disruptive behavior, **or**
3) has a need for assistance.

The team is not required to have completed a full threat assessment to obtain the information, only to have made a preliminary determination that the criteria are met. The school threat assessment team members may then request and obtain the relevant records for the purpose of the threat assessment team, i.e., to assess and manage the potential threat to the school.

Note that no threat assessment team member may re-disclose any information obtained under this section, nor may they use it for any purpose other than those of the threat assessment team. Criminal history record information or health information obtained by the threat assessment team may **not** be shared with any other persons (other than members of the team), nor used for any other purposes (e.g., discipline, etc.) Team leaders should carefully consider the membership of the team to include those persons with a legitimate need to know information that may be obtained by the team. For example, in a large school, an assistant principal serves on and leads the threat assessment team. If the principal is not named as a member of the team, then the assistant principal cannot lawfully share information obtained from the information sources identified in the threat assessment statute. Consider naming the principal as a backup team leader or administrative representative so that they can be lawfully and adequately briefed on the case.

In regard to criminal history information obtained via the Virginia State Police Central Criminal Records Exchange (CCRE) and the Juvenile Virginia Criminal Information System (JVCIN), note that any information/records printed from a terminal (having access

to the system) **must** be destroyed after the information is obtained. The threat assessment team may **not** maintain the record printed from the system access terminal, **nor may they make copies** of that record. School staff may store information about juvenile delinquency or convictions in files maintained by them (and separate from the student's central educational record) when they have a legitimate educational interest in the information (e.g., for threat assessment and management purposes). Per § 22.1-288.2, Section B, information regarding juvenile delinquency or criminal convictions may **not** be placed in a student's central educational record unless such offenses are related to school disciplinary actions and then become part of the student's disciplinary record.

§ 22.1-79.4 prohibits dissemination or use of records/information (obtained under Section F) outside of the purposes of the threat assessment team. Further, any person who (without proper authorization) discloses, makes use of, or knowingly permits the use of juvenile criminal history may face criminal charges per § 16.1-309. In addition, as per § 18.2-152.5. *Computer invasion of privacy;* it is a crime to use a computer or computer network to access information without authorization. Per § 18.2-152.7. *Personal trespass by computer*, it is a crime to disseminate such records/information to cause injury to an individual.

Threat Assessment Records

Exclusion of Certain Records from the Virginia Freedom of Information Act

Recognizing the sensitivity of information that may be contained in school security plans, safety audits, and/or threat assessment and management records, Virginia statutes exclude certain records from required disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (see § 2.2-3705.2. *Exclusions to application of chapter; records relating to public safety* and § 2.2-3705.4. *Exclusions to application of chapter; educational records and certain records of educational institutions*). The custodian of the relevant record retains discretion and may release such records if they so decide unless such disclosure is otherwise prohibited.

Code of Virginia § 2.2-3705.4 excludes records of a school threat assessment team from required disclosure, stating*:*

8. *Information held by a threat assessment team established by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4 or by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805 relating to the assessment or intervention with a specific individual. However, in the event an individual who has been under assessment commits an act, or is prosecuted for the commission of an act that has caused the death of, or caused serious bodily injury, including any felony sexual assault, to another person, such information of the threat assessment team concerning the individual under assessment shall be made available as provided by this chapter, with the exception of any criminal history records obtained pursuant to §§ 19.2-389 or 19.2-389.1, health records obtained pursuant to § 32.1-127.1:03, or scholastic records as defined in § 22.1-289. The public body providing such information shall remove personally identifying information of any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality.*

The *Code of Virginia* also specifies limitations to the exclusion (from disclosure) in certain situations such as a request for records regarding the effectiveness of security plans after someone on school property has suffered or been threatened with personal injury (as per § 2.2-3705.2), or information held by a threat assessment team where an individual (who has been under assessment) commits an act or is prosecuted for the commission of an act that has caused the death of, or caused serious bodily injury, including any felony sexual assault, to another person, per § 2.2-3705.4.

In circumstances such as those, schools and their threat assessment teams may be compelled to provide records relevant to the circumstances. Note that even in cases where there may be required disclosure of certain records, the statutes still limit disclosure of subsets of those records, such as criminal history records, health records, or scholastic records, regarding the subject of concern. Those sensitive and otherwise protected records may not be re-disclosed without a court order.

Finally, in regard to records of a threat assessment team, where disclosure of records may be required (or released at the discretion of the custodian of the record), the persons releasing the record must remove information identifying any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality.

Records Retention and Disposition

Under the *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-82, the Library of Virginia (LVA) has the authority to issue regulations governing the retention and disposition of state and local public records. In keeping with the *Code's* mandate, LVA has developed records retention and disposition schedules outlining the disposition of public records (see § 42.1-86.1). School threat assessment teams should retain and dispose of records in a manner consistent with the relevant LVA schedule.

Destruction of confidential or privacy-protected paper records must be done by shredding, pulping, or incineration. Electronic records must be overwritten with meaningless data or the storage media must be physically destroyed. Commercial software applications are available that electronically shred records from media. Deletion of confidential or privacy-protected information in electronic storage media is not acceptable.

Student Threat Assessment Records

Such records document individual threat assessments regarding students which may include threats to self or to others. Records may include but are not limited to assessment results, anecdotal notes, and supporting documentation. Student threat assessment records shall be retained for five (5) years after student graduates, completes a Board of Education program, transfers, or withdraws. Student threat assessment records should be disposed of using confidential destruction methods as referenced above.

Source: Schedule GS-21 (Threat Assessments; page 20)
Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/GS-21.pdf

Non-Student Threat Assessment Records

Threat assessment records regarding persons other than students document the occurrence of an incident, and any subsequent investigation that involves the employees or facilities of an agency and/or the public and have reasonable possibility of legal consequences. Records may include but are not limited to investigative and interview notes, logs, and reports, as well as materials related to accident or illness reports related to a threat case. Non-student threat assessment records shall be retained for five (5) years after the event or incident documented. While the retention schedule does not require confidential destruction of these records, given the sensitive nature of the information that may be involved, non-student threat assessment records should be disposed of using confidential destruction methods as referenced above.

Source: Schedule GS-03 (Incident Reports; page 6)
Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/GS-03.pdf

In instances where an employee, as part of a threat assessment process, has undergone evaluation or treatment by a medical professional, there may be health records that document any long-term health risk, as well as any health treatment or examination given to an employee by a medical professional to facilitate the threat assessment and management process. Records may include, but are not limited to health assessments, medical clearance or release-to-duty notices, reports, and other health records related to a threat case. Such employee health records, which are part of a threat assessment case shall be retained for thirty (30) years after separation from employment. Employee health records that are part of threat assessment records should be disposed of using confidential destruction methods as referenced above.

Source: Schedule GS-03 (Employee Health Records; page 4)
Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/GS-03.pdf

Note that the above guidance does not cover all records that may be related to a threat assessment case and that retention and disposition schedules may vary based on the specific type of record involved (e.g., disciplinary, special education, health care plan, etc.).

Schools are referred to the Library of Virginia Records Retention and Disposition Schedules, especially GS-03 Personnel Records and GS-21 Public School records.

Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/index.htm.

Overview of the Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

Threat Assessment and Management in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines | Fourth Edition (2022) sets the standard for a comprehensive and holistic approach to preventing violence and mitigating harm. This is accomplished through the early identification, inquiry, assessment, and management of concerning, aberrant, or threatening behavior impacting schools, members of the school community, and the broader community in which the schools exist. This is a care-oriented approach intended to support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of schools in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The *Model Policy, Procedures, and Guidelines* provided in this document are based not only on relevant Virginia statutes and regulations, but also the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). The document also provides a synthesis of peer-reviewed research and recognized standards of practice regarding threat assessment and management in school and workplace settings. The *Model Policy, Procedures, and Guidelines* draws from and synthesizes several key resources related to school violence and threat assessment and management in schools, including but not limited to:

- *The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective* (1999). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States* (2002). U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates* (2002). U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- *Risk Assessment Guideline Elements for Violence: Considerations for Assessment the Risk of Future Violent Behavior* (2006). Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.
- *Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information Students Learn May Prevent a Targeted Attack* (2008). U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.
- *Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence: 2nd Edition* (2009). International Association of Chiefs of Police.
- *Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention: American National Standard* (2011). Society of Human Resource Management and ASIS, International.
- *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (2013). U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- *International Handbook of Threat Assessment* (2014). Meloy, R. and Hoffmann, J. (Eds.).
- *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks* (2017). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- *Summary of School Safety Statistics* (2017). National Institute of Justice.
- *Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence* (2018). U.S. Secret Service.
- *Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2018).* National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- *A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013* (2018). Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- *Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety* (2018). Federal Commission on School Safety.
- *Crime, Violence, Discipline, & Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings from the School Survey on Crime & Safety: 2017–18* (2019). National Center for Educational Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- *The Role of Districts in Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans: A Companion to the School Guide* (2019). U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

- *Mass Violence in America: Causes, Impacts and Solutions* (2019). National Council for Behavioral Health.
- *Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence* (2020). U.S. Secret Service.
- *International Handbook of Threat Assessment 2nd Edition* (2020). Meloy, R. and Hoffmann, J. (Eds.).
- *Information Sharing Guide for K-12 Public Schools* (2020). Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.
- *Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools* (2020). Virginia Department of Education.

For over 20 years, findings about the pre-attack behaviors of targeted violence perpetrators have validated use of a fact-based threat assessment and management process relying on an appraisal of behaviors, rather than traits, as the basis for determining the nature and degree of any safety concerns, and for developing a strategic approach to reducing risk and improving the safety and well-being of the school community.

Although communicated/expressed threats of violence require assessment (and appropriate response), the DCJS model emphasizes the identification and assessment of a broader range of concerning behaviors, including but not limited to communicated/expressed threats.

While incidents of mass targeted violence impacting schools has brought increased attention to issues of school safety in recent years, mass shootings are not the only threat faced by schools. The DCJS model emphasizes an approach that is based on an understanding of the variety and breadth of violence impacting school communities, including, but not limited to mass shootings. The threat assessment and management process is intended to help prevent and mitigate risks associated with all types of targeted violence including bias, harassment and bullying, sexual violence including domestic/dating violence and stalking, grievance based acts against individuals or groups, and lone actor terrorism and violent extremism.

The model also emphasizes that effective threat assessment can best occur in school climates of safety, respect, and emotional support – environments in which students, teachers, administrators (and, where appropriate, parents/guardians) pay attention to the social and emotional, as well as academic needs of students and staff; and have access to assistance for addressing and resolving problems.

As noted above, the *Code of Virginia* (in § 22.1-79.4) requires each local school board to "adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including the assessment of and intervention with **individuals** (rather than solely students) whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students." This is consistent with long-standing research and practice literature on workplace violence prevention and intervention that recommends that a comprehensive approach to school safety would also identify and assess threats from all sources, and not solely students. It is also consistent with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education through its publications of the *Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans* (2013) and *The Role of Districts in Developing High Quality School Emergency Operations Plans: A Companion to the School Guide* (2019) in which it states:

> *A school threat assessment analyzes communication and behaviors to determine whether* ***a student, staff, or other person may pose a threat.*** *These assessments must be based on fact, must comply with applicable privacy, civil rights, and other applicable laws, and are often conducted by multidisciplinary threat assessment teams.* (2013, page 10; 2019, page 65)

Concerns regarding non-students are already recognized (as a potential threat) and addressed by most local school board policies and procedures. Model policies promulgated by the Virginia School Boards Association as well as the Virginia Department of Education's publication *Resource Guide: Crisis Management and Emergency Response in Virginia Schools* address unauthorized visitors, hostile parents, and trespassers who may include former employees and students, as potential threats.

While a comprehensive approach to school safety focuses on any individual who may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students, it is expected that the majority of cases identified will involve students engaging in (or perceived to be engaging in) threatening behaviors. School divisions may (when dealing with students who may be engaging in threatening behavior) use tools designed to assess threats posed by students.

See the Resource section for a Checklist for Implementing School Threat Assessment Processes to help assess compliance with statutory requirements and recommended practices.

Model Policy and Procedures

The threat assessment policies and procedures contained herein are models that are based on a synthesis of law, regulations, research, and contemporary standards of practice, and are consistent with the requirements of the *Code of Virginia*. They are not intended to be prescriptive. Although required to adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, local school boards have authority to establish any policies or procedures that are consistent with these model policies and procedures.

The Model School Board Policy on Threat Assessment presented here is based on the requirements of § 22.1-79.4, *Code of Virginia* requiring local school boards to adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams and prescribing the composition and responsibilities of teams as well as related referral and reporting requirements. The model policy also reflects contemporary and recognized standards of practice.

Model School Board Policy on School Threat Assessment

- The superintendent shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team, for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students.
- A threat assessment team may serve one or more schools as determined by the superintendent.
- Each team shall include persons with expertise in school administration, counseling, instruction, and law enforcement and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer. The team may include persons with other areas of expertise.
- Each team shall:
  - Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self
  - Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported and
  - Implement school board policies for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students.
- The superintendent may establish a committee (operating within the division) charged with oversight of the threat assessment team(s). An existing committee may be designated to assume the oversight responsibility. Any such committee established for oversight of the threat assessment team(s) shall include individuals with expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement.
- All school division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report any expressed threat(s) or behavior(s) that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self.
- In cases where determined to be appropriate, teams shall follow established procedures for referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment.
- Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement are to occur as required by school board policy and the *Code of Virginia*.
- Upon a preliminary determination that a **student** poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, the threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian.
  - Nothing in this policy shall preclude school division personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.
  - Nothing in this policy shall preclude the threat assessment team from notifying the superintendent (or designee) of any individual (other than a student) who poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others.

- Upon a preliminary determination (by the threat assessment team) that an individual: 1) poses a threat of violence to self or others or, 2) exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or, 3) has a need for assistance, members of the threat assessment team may request and obtain criminal history record information (of adults and juveniles) and health records.
  - No member of a threat assessment team shall re-disclose any criminal history record information or health information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.
  - The threat assessment team may **not** maintain the criminal history record printed from the system access terminal, nor may they make copies of it.
  - Juvenile delinquency or criminal history information may **not** be placed in a student's central educational/scholastic record, unless the school is taking disciplinary action related to the incidents. School staff (including members of the threat assessment team) with a legitimate educational interest may store information about such incidents in records maintained by them and separate from the student's educational/scholastic record.
- Each threat assessment team established pursuant to *Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-79.4 shall report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety.

Reference statutory authority for policy: *Code of Virginia*, § 22.1-79.4 and § 9.1-184.

Refer to: ***[School division lists here the specific local school regulation(s) setting forth threat assessment procedures and any closely related regulations.]***

The following model procedures are consistent with the requirements of the *Code of Virginia* and reflect contemporary and accepted standards of practice for threat assessment and management process in school divisions and workplaces in Virginia and across the nation.

Model Procedures for School Threat Assessment Programs

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish procedures for the identification, inquiry, assessment, and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students.

Definitions

- **Aberrant behavior** is that which is atypical for the person or situation and causes concern for the safety or well-being of those involved. Aberrant behavior for an individual involves actions, statements, communications, or responses that are unusual for the person or situation; or actions which could lead to violence toward self or others; or are reasonably perceived as threatening or causing concern for the well-being of the person. These can include (but are not limited to):
  - Unusual withdrawal or isolation of subject from peers and family members
  - Sullen or depressed behavior from an otherwise friendly and positive person
  - Atypical or out-of-context outbursts of verbal or physical aggression
  - Increased levels of agitation, frustration, or anger
  - Confrontational, accusatory, or blaming behavior
  - An atypical interest in or increasing fascination with weapons or acts of violence and/or
  - Fixation on violence as means of addressing a grievance.
- A **threat** is a concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual may pose a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others. The threat may be expressed or 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.

- A **direct threat** is defined under law as one in which the person poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services. The direct threat standard applies when the threat assessment team or school administration determines that a subject poses a direct threat, and the administration also determines that applicable disciplinary procedures are not available or sufficient to mitigate the threat. If the administration makes such a determination, the school division is not required to permit the student to participate in or benefit from the services, programs, or activities of the division. A determination that a person with a disability poses a direct threat may not be based on generalizations or stereotypes about the effects of a particular disability and must be based on an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment relying on current medical evidence or on the best available objective evidence, to determine: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.
- A **threat assessment** is a systematic, fact-based process emphasizing an appraisal of observed (or reasonably observable) behaviors to identify potentially disruptive, dangerous, or violent situations, to assess them, and to manage/address them.
- To **pose a threat** means to have (or be in the process of obtaining) the intent and capability to cause harm to self or others through planning and preparation.
- **Protective factors** are characteristics or resources that make it less likely that an individual will engage in violence.
- **Risk factors** are characteristics that make it more likely that an individual may engage in violence. Risk factors are usually stable over time**.**
- **Warning signs** are characteristics or behaviors that are associated with a current or escalating risk of violence. These tend to be dynamic, acute, and often associated with new stresses, events, losses, or failures.

Threat Assessment Team

- The threat assessment team shall include persons with expertise in counseling (e.g., school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker), instruction (e.g., teacher or administrator with instructional experience), school administration (e.g., principal, assistant principal, or other senior administrator from the school(s) covered by the team); and law enforcement, and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer (e.g. school resource officer, local/state law enforcement officer appointed to serve on the team). Other school personnel (e.g., school safety staff, human resources staff, special education staff, school nurses) or staff from community resources may also serve as regular members on the team or be consulted during the threat assessment and management process, as appropriate, and as determined by the team.

  Where resources allow, each core team member will have a designated back-up (from the same or similar area of expertise) to fulfill their duties in the event of their inability or absence.

  [Note: § 22.1-79.4.C., *Code of Virginia,* requires school threat assessment teams to include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration; and law enforcement, and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer. Additionally, the *Code of Virginia* § 22.1-280.2:3 states, *The chief local law-enforcement officer for any local school division in which a public elementary or secondary school does not employ a school resource officer, as defined in § 9.1-101, shall designate a law-enforcement officer to receive, either in-person or online, the training set forth in subsection E of § 22.1-279.8. Such officer shall serve as the law-enforcement liaison for the school administrator described in subsection E of § 22.1-279.8 in each public elementary or secondary school that does not employ a school resource officer.* Human Resources is not one of the areas of expertise required (by statute) to be part of the threat assessment team. However, given that Virginia law requires schools to have processes for the assessment of and intervention with individuals (including staff) whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students, schools should consider involvement by human resource professionals when possible].
- School threat assessment teams should have a designated team leader, typically a principal or other administrator for the school(s) covered by the threat assessment team.

- All members of the threat assessment team (core and backup members) will complete basic School Threat Assessment Training through DCJS or the equivalent. Team members should complete refresher training at least every three years and continuing education in threat assessment related topics through DCJS or their professional disciplines as resources allow.
- Team members shall work collaboratively with each other, with other school staff, and (as appropriate) with community resources to support the purposes of the team and the safety of the school and its students and staff.
- Unless it is not feasible to do so, all team members should be involved with the ongoing assessment and intervention of individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students. Team members may participate in team discussions via phone or videoconference, if necessary.
- Team members shall actively, lawfully, and ethically communicate with each other; with school administrators; and with other school staff who have a need-to-know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, students, and staff. Team members will communicate with local resources (e.g., staff of community services boards, law enforcement, social services, hospitals, etc.) based on the parties need to know, and to the extent allowed under law.
- Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement are to occur when required by school board policy or the *Code of Virginia*.
- In fulfilling statutory responsibilities, school threat assessment teams shall:
  - Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self. This may be done by conducting training or awareness sessions, broadly disseminating relevant information (e.g., websites, social media, resource materials), and ensuring access to consultation with threat assessment teams,
  - Clearly identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported and,
  - Implement school board policies in an effective manner for the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior poses (or may pose) a threat to the safety of school staff or students, including (where appropriate) referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment. (§ 22.1-79.4, *Code of Virginia*),
  - Collect and report quantitative data on its activities to the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety.

Oversight Committee

- The superintendent may establish a school division-level oversight committee or team to oversee and provide support for school threat assessment teams.

  [Note: § 22.1-79.4.B., *Code of Virginia,* authorizes (**but does not require**) the superintendent of each school division to establish a committee charged with oversight of the threat assessment teams operating within the division, which may be an existing committee established by the division. If such a committee is established (or designated) with the purpose of oversight of the threat assessment team(s), it is required that the oversight committee include individuals with expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement.]
- The team shall include a senior division administrator (e.g., Assistant Superintendent for Administration) and senior division administrators in school safety, in student services, and in human resources, and will work in consultation with designated representatives of the ***(specify)*** community services board and ***(locality)*** police department (or sheriff's office).
- The school division level threat assessment team shall provide oversight to school level threat assessment teams; ensure that procedures are maintained for effective information sharing between the school division and community mental health and law enforcement agencies; assess the effectiveness of the threat assessment process throughout the school division; and recommend changes to policies and procedures, as needed, to ensure an effective threat assessment process reflecting known best practices.
- The Oversight Committee may also serve as a division level threat assessment team for those cases that impact across the school division or where cases surpass the resources or abilities of school threat assessment teams.

Procedures

Sustain and Enhance a Safe, Positive, School Climate

A critical aspect of preventing violence involves developing and sustaining positive school climates that are built on foundations of safety, respect, trust, care, and connectedness. Schools can build positive climates through a range of approaches including supporting and celebrating diversity, role-modeling and engaging in open communication between members of the school community, actively and timely addressing conflicts and working to resolve them, and addressing issues like bullying, bias, and harassment.

- Encourage teachers and staff to build positive, healthy, and trusting relationships with students (and their families). Maintaining professional standards and boundaries with students is foundational to these efforts, and to ensure that relationships are healthy and developmentally appropriate.
- Providing professional development and support for teachers and other school staff to enable them to meet the diverse cognitive, emotional, and social needs of students.
- Encourage staff and students to notice and engage with others that seem withdrawn, isolated, or alienated or are otherwise struggling.
- Encourage caring concern and break down "codes of silence" by helping staff and students feel empowered to share concerns in a timely manner.
- Help students feel more connected to their classmates and school community to foster a positive school climate. This can include identifying clubs or teams at school that students can join or encouraging students to develop their own group.
- Utilize frameworks like school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) that promote safe, supportive school climates by actively teaching students what appropriate behavior looks like in a variety of settings, and by focusing on recognizing and encouraging good behavior.

Identifying and Reporting Threats

When an individual engages in concerning, aberrant, or threatening behaviors that may pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others, the ***[School Division]*** **Threat Assessment Procedures** shall be followed.

- Incidents of concerning, aberrant, or threatening behaviors shall be reported to **[Identify members of the school community to whom such threats should be reported]**.
- The team should ensure that any reporting mechanisms used by the school (e.g., hotlines, tip lines, website, social media/mobile apps, etc.) are kept up to date, work consistently and are checked on a regular and timely basis.
- Threats of self-harm or suicidal behavior by students, also require compliance with § 22.1-272.1*, Code of Virginia,* with guidance provided by the Virginia Department of Education regarding suicide prevention and intervention*,* and with applicable school board policies and regulations ***[cite Division Regulation #]***.
- For any individual, when threats of self-harm are accompanied by threats to harm others, or the assessment indicates the existence of a threat to others, the threat assessment team shall be notified and take appropriate action to prevent acts of violence. The threat assessment team shall work collaboratively with other entities involved in the case.
- All school division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to 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, or otherwise be in need of intervention or assistance.
- Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses an imminent threat of serious violence shall immediately notify law enforcement, school security, as well as school administration, in accordance with school board policies on Critical Incident Response ***[cite Division Regulation #]***.

- In accordance with § 22.1-279.3:1, *Code of Virginia* certain types of threats require immediate notification to law enforcement. The principal or designee shall immediately report to the local law enforcement agency any incident **that may constitute a felony**:
  - sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person, abduction of any person, or stalking of any person, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity
  - any conduct involving alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid, including the theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications
  - any written threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity
  - the illegal carrying of a firearm onto school property
  - any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, explosive or incendiary devices, or chemical bombs, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity
  - any threats or false threats to bomb, made against school personnel or involving school property or school buses.
- The school administrator (principal or designee) shall also immediately report any act of the first four bulleted acts noted above (including the assault and battery that results in bodily injury of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity) that may constitute a criminal offense to the parents and/or guardians of any minor student who is the specific object of such act. Further, the principal or designee shall report whether the incident has been reported to local law enforcement pursuant to this subsection of the *Code* and, if the incident has been so reported , that the parents and/or guardians may contact local law enforcement for further information, if they so desire.
- The school administrator **may** report any other criminal incidents (including misdemeanors) that occur on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity.

Assessing Threats

Triage

- The threat assessment team leader may designate a subset of team members to triage cases reported to the team. This triage process serves to screen cases and determine their appropriateness for review and/or action by the full team. If the team chooses to implement a triage process, at least two members of the threat assessment team will review initial reports of concern. The triage team will consider the nature and level of concern, determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns, or whether the full team should further assess and manage the situation, and initiate any crisis responses, as appropriate. To triage a prospective case as not necessary for further review or actions by the full threat assessment team, all members of the triage team must concur that there is no identifiable threat/concern, or that there is a low level of concern regarding issues that are being adequately addressed. Where cases are triaged out, the full team (at the next meeting) will have opportunity to review cases that were triaged out and consider bringing them into the full process, if needed.
- Upon notification of concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior or communications, the threat assessment team shall determine if an imminent threat appears to exist. If the individual appears to pose an imminent threat of serious violence, the team leader, school administrator (or designee) shall notify law enforcement and take appropriate steps in accordance with School Board policies on Critical Incident Response ***[cite Division Regulation #]***. [Note: In accordance with *Virginia's Crisis Management and Emergency Response Resource Guide* school responses may include actions such as evacuation, lockdown, and shelter-in-place.]
- If there is no reasonably apparent imminent threat present, or once such an imminent threat is contained, the 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 should include (as necessary and appropriate):
  - Review of the reported concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior or communication
  - Review of school and other records for any prior history or interventions with the individual(s) involved

  - Conducting timely and thorough interviews of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or target(s) of the threat, other witnesses who have knowledge of the concerns, and where reasonable, the individual(s) who allegedly engaged in the threatening behavior or communication. The purpose of the interviews is to gain a holistic understanding of the situation, determine the nature and level of the concerns, to identify areas where more information may be needed, and to inform appropriate strategies or interventions to address any concerns identified.

- If it is determined that there is no identifiable threat/concern or that there is a low level of concern (that is being adequately addressed) and the threat assessment team determines that no further assessment, intervention, or monitoring is required at this time:
  - The threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the incident and triage/screening is adequately documented via ***[cite School Division documentation source here]***. The threat assessment team shall maintain the documentation in accordance with School Board policy. [NOTE: A sample **Threat Assessment and Response Form** is provided as part of this guidance document. The form is available on the DCJS website and may be adapted to meet the needs of the school].
  - If the individual (about whom the report was made) does not pose a threat but may benefit from, or is in need of some other type of assistance, the threat assessment team leader shall ensure that the individual is referred to the appropriate school or community-based resources.

Assessment

- If it cannot be determined with a reasonable degree of confidence that the case involves no identifiable threat or a low level of concern (that is being adequately addressed), then a more in-depth assessment is to be undertaken by the full threat assessment team to determine the nature and degree of any threat posed, and to develop strategies to prevent violence and reduce risk, as necessary. The assessment may include but not be limited to reviews of records; interview and consultation with staff, students or community who know the individual; and interviews of the individual and the target/recipient of the threat(s).
- Based on information collected, the threat assessment team shall determine strategies to mitigate the threat and provide intervention and assistance to those involved, as needed.
- Upon a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, the threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. (§ 22.1-79.4.D., *Code of Virginia* and § 22.1-272.1, *Code of Virginia*).
- Upon a preliminary determination (by the threat assessment team) that an individual: 1) poses a threat of violence to self or others or, 2) exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or, 3) has a need for assistance, members of the threat assessment team may request and obtain (from within the Commonwealth of Virginia) criminal history record information (of adults and juveniles) and health records (see § 22.1-79.4).
  - No member of a threat assessment team shall re-disclose any criminal history record information or health information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.
  - The threat assessment team may **not** maintain the criminal history record printed from the system access terminal, nor may they make copies of it.
  - Juvenile delinquency or criminal history information may **not** be placed in a student's central educational/scholastic record, unless the school is taking disciplinary action related to the incidents. School staff (including members of the threat assessment team) with a legitimate educational interest may store information about such incidents in records maintained by them and separate from the student's educational/scholastic record.
- In instances where there is a moderate, high, or imminent level of concern, and that 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 engaged in threatening behaviors.

Managing, Monitoring, and Resolving Cases

- 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 threat assessment team shall maintain documentation in accordance with School Board policy.
- The threat assessment team shall assist individual(s) within the school who engaged in concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior or communication, and any impacted staff or students, in accessing appropriate school and community-based resources for support and/or further intervention.
- For each case, a member of the threat assessment team shall be designated as a case manager to 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 Board 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. [NOTE: A sample **Threat Assessment and Management Form** is provided as part of this guidance document. The form is available on the DCJS website and may be adapted to meet the needs of the school].
- Resolution and closure of the case is to be documented in accordance with School Board policy.

See also:

- Student Conduct Policies (specify those dealing with threat/intimidation)
- Suicide Prevention Policies and Procedures
- Critical Incident Response Policies and Procedures
- § 22.1-79.4, *Code of Virginia*
- § 22.1-272.1, *Code of Virginia*
- *Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools,* Virginia Department of Education

Guidelines for School Threat Assessment and Management

These guidelines are consistent with the requirements of the *Code of Virginia*, as well as other Federal law and regulations (e.g., FERPA and HIPAA), and reflect contemporary and accepted standards of practice for threat assessment and management in educational and work settings. Such standards of practice include those listed in the *Overview of the Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines*, such as:

- *Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence, 2nd edition*
- *Enhancing School Safety Using A Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence*
- *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks*
- *Workplace Violence Prevention and Intervention: American National Standard*
- *International Handbook of Threat Assessment*

Virginia C.A.R.E.S. for School and Campus Safety

Threat assessment and management in Virginia public educational settings is one component of the **Virginia C.A.R.E.S. for Schools and Campuses** program. The **Virginia C.A.R.E.S.** program was developed in 2016 to emphasize initiatives by the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety to support schools and campuses in enhancing the safety and well-being of educational settings across the Commonwealth. The **Virginia C.A.R.E.S.** program recognizes that threat assessment and management processes are one part of a comprehensive and sustained approach to support and enhance the health, safety, and well-being of schools and campuses. School and campus safety (and well-being) are sustained and enhanced through:

C: Caring and connection to build a positive school/campus climate

A: Awareness of resources and reporting options

R: Recognition of, and response to, threatening, aberrant, or concerning behaviors.

E: Engagement with the community and with persons (within the school or campus) for whom there is concern.

S: Support for all members of the school/campus community.

The threat assessment and management process is only one component of an overall strategy to reduce school violence and it is implemented within the larger context of strategies to ensure schools are healthy, safe, and secure environments. The primary objective of school violence-reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within the school, and where possible, in the broader community.

Other school safety strategies that may be employed are:

- Effective communication among and between school staff, students, and parents/guardians of students
- School climate assessments
- Emphasis on school connectedness, inclusion, and engagement
- Physical security measures
- Support for reporting concerns and bystander engagement
- Bullying prevention and intervention
- Fair and equitable approaches to discipline
- School-based services for support, guidance, early identification, and intervention
- Trauma informed approaches and programs, recognizing impact of adverse childhood experiences
- School-law enforcement partnerships including school resource officers
- Collaborative relationships with mental health, social services, and other community-based resources
- Planning and preparation to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from potential crises

Overview of Threat Assessment and Management

Key Findings About Targeted Violence

These guidelines are informed by research about targeted violence occurring in, or related, to school settings. Such research includes, but is not limited to, *Protecting America's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence* (2019) and the FBI's report, *A Study of Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013* (2018). Among the key findings:

- There is no one demographic profile of a perpetrator of targeted violence, nor is there a profile for the type of school that has been targeted.
- In addition to students, others also engage in targeted violence in schools, including administrators, teachers, other staff, parent/guardians of students, contractors, people in relationships with staff or students, and even people with no connection with the school.
- Incidents of targeted violence at schools/workplaces are rarely sudden or impulsive acts. Perpetrators engage in a process of considering, planning, and preparing for acts of targeted violence.
- Perpetrators usually had multiple motives to act violently, the most common involving an unresolved grievance with a peer (co-worker or classmate).
- Many perpetrators of major acts of violence had experienced psychological, behavioral, or developmental symptoms, but may not have been diagnosed with a mental health condition or benefited from adequate treatment.
- Many perpetrators of major violence impacting schools were suicidal in addition to their violent acts toward others.
- Suicidal behaviors are a significant and growing concern among school-age youth whether there is risk of violence to others or not.
- Most individuals who perpetrated violence engaged in multiple behaviors prior to the incident that caused others to have serious concerns about their behavior and/or well-being.
- Many individuals who perpetrated violence had multiple stressors, including significant difficulties with losses or failures.
- Many student perpetrators had been victims of (or participated in) prior bullying, which was often observed by others.
- Most individuals who perpetrated violence did not threaten their targets directly prior to engaging in violence, though many expressed their grievances and aspects of their thoughts or plans to others, often through social media or online activities.
- Prior to most incidents of targeted violence, other people knew about aspects of the individual's ideas, plans or preparations to cause harm.
- Many bystanders who had knowledge of concerning behaviors did not report them.
- While most perpetrators act alone, in many cases, others (e.g., staff, students, peers, family members, etc.) were involved in some way, such as failing to report concerns (or take other steps) to prevent violence, encouraging violence, and even helping with plans or preparation for violence.

Guiding Principles

Research and practical experience have helped identify several principles that guide the threat assessment and management process. These include:

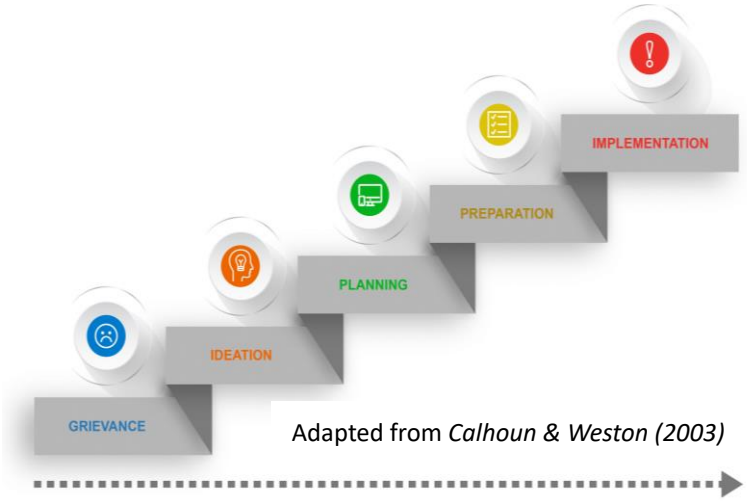
Effective assessment is based upon observations of behavior rather than on general characteristics, traits, or profiles.

Perpetrator "profiles" do not provide a reliable basis for making judgments of the threat posed by a particular individual. The threat assessment process examines the behavior of the subject in relation to the context, issues, challenges, and resources involved. This provides for an individualized, holistic, and contextually based assessment of and response to the situation.

Targeted violence is the result of an understandable and usually discernible process of thinking and behavior.

Individuals who committed acts of targeted violence rarely "just snapped". Instead, they engaged in a process of thought and behavior that escalated over days, weeks, months, and even years. That process is often referred to as "The Pathway to Violence" and is represented in Figure 1. As with any model, the Pathway reflects a general process for understanding intentional actions. For a given person, the process is not necessarily as linear as the model depicts. Rather, the person may ebb and flow in their rate and direction of movement toward (or away from) violence, and cycle between phases of the process (e.g., from preparatory behaviors back to planning, then more preparation). As the subject exerts or demonstrates increased "intensity of effort" around the ideation, planning and preparation, e.g., more attention, time, energy, resources, etc., there is greater risk for harm, and likely a greater impact on others. The steps along the pathway include:

Figure 1: The Pathway to Violence



Adapted from *Calhoun & Weston (2003)*

GRIEVANCE: A grievance may be a real or perceived sense of loss, mistreatment, or injustice, often fueling a feeling of being wronged. Most people will experience grievances through life and the vast majority do not engage in acts of violence. However, for those who do engage in targeted violence, grievances (or other motivations) are common precursors.

IDEATION: Expressing thoughts or fantasies regarding the use of violence to address a real or perceived grievance. Note that many people have occasional or fleeting thoughts of violence in response to perceived grievances. Most do not act on those thoughts or move forward along the pathway. Therefore, knowledge that someone is thinking about violence does not confirm that a danger exists but should orient us to the possibility, and that the subject is struggling with a grievance of some sort.

PLANNING: Giving thought and consideration not only to the idea and intent of committing violence, but also to the who, what, when, where and how of doing so. Expressions here may begin to reference timing, location, targets, means, methods, etc. The subject may seek out and gather information regarding their grievances, their targets, means of causing harm, equipment, etc. They may research other incidents of targeted violence to learn from other perpetrators.

PREPARATION: Beyond just having or acquiring weapons, this stage involves attempts to prepare for the violence and to develop or acquire the capability to cause harm to the intended target(s)/victim(s). They obtain or try to obtain the means to fulfill their plans, which may be weapons, tools, clothing to match their fantasies/role-models, etc. As they move forward in planning and preparation, they may adjust plans as they encounter barriers or opportunities to the original ideation and plans. They may seek or take advantage of opportunities and circumstances that support their fantasy and plans. Finally, much of targeted violence (though not all) occurs in relative proximity to targets. Subjects may conduct surveillance or probe boundaries or security systems to see if they can access areas where they do not belong or get close to people in ways that are inappropriate or atypical.

IMPLEMENTATION: The subject initiates the operationalized plan once reaching a point where they perceive themselves as capable of doing so. Capability is based on the subject's perceived skill (to cause harm) and their will to do so.

As a subject moves along the Pathway to the right, and more of the steps are present, capability and risk for violence increases along the vertical dimension. The horizontal line at the bottom of the Pathway model represents time. As a subject moves to the right along the pathway, there is often an escalation in the rate of movement (i.e., a flurry of activity or energy burst), or changes in the frequency of behaviors causing concern (e.g., a number of concerns over time), or a sudden change in their patterns of behavior. Where a subject has caused numerous concerns over time and then suddenly there is no more information about concerns regarding the subject (i.e., they "go off the radar"), the team should check whether the concerning

behavior has stopped, the subject has become more covert in their actions, or community members have stopped reporting concerns.

Research indicates that while targeted violence incidents are rarely spontaneous and impulsive, they can escalate rapidly from ideation through implementation. That is, the time span between the subject's decision to cause harm and the actual incident may be short. This may be expedited by a sense of desperation for resolution, lack of concern for consequences, or the influences of others encouraging escalation (e.g., through social media or direct communications). Consequently, when there are indications that a subject may pose a threat to the school community, threat assessment teams will need to move quickly to inquire about and intervene in that planning or preparation.

The steps along this path indicate opportunities to observe, identify and intervene with threatening and/or aberrant behaviors that cause concern for violence by, or the well-being of, the individual. Frequently, information about an individual's ideas, plans and preparations for violence can be observed before violence can occur. However, information is likely to be scattered and fragmented. For example, a teacher may see a certain set of behaviors of an individual in her class, a coach observes other behaviors or expressed thoughts by the individual, a school resource officer has other concerns, and a school administrator is aware of certain conduct violations. The challenge, and the key, is to act quickly upon initial reports of concern, gather other pieces of the puzzle, and assemble them to determine what picture emerges.

Violence stems from an interaction among the Subject(s), Target(s), Environment/Systems and Precipitating Incidents. *(STEP; Deisinger, 1996; Deisinger & Nolan, 2020).*

Identifying, assessing, and managing potential acts of violence or other harm requires a comprehensive and holistic perspective of the situation involving four key domains and their interaction. The team will consider four domains that impact the assessment and management of cases:

- **S** Is the **Subject** engaging in behavior(s) that may pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others, or significant disruption, or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention?
- **T** Are **Targets/others** vulnerable to harm, in need of or protective actions, impacted by the situation, or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention?
- **E** Are there **Environmental/systemic** issues contributing to or impacting upon the situation?
- **P** Are there reasonably foreseeable **Precipitating events** that may impact the situation?
- **+** Are there actions the threat assessment team can facilitate (to address any concerns noted), beyond those already being effectively done?

Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger, et al (2020)

Violence is a dynamic process.

No one is either always dangerous or never dangerous. The level of concern depends on the totality of the situation. An assessment is only as good as the quality of information on which it was based and **at the time** that it was made. The dynamics of the case can and will change as the team engages in interventions, as subjects, targets and others interact, and as other life circumstances (including those outside the control of the team) impact on the case and the level of danger and concern posed. Threat assessment and management involves ongoing review, re-assessment, and modification of intervention strategies through the point at which the case is adequately resolved.

Threat assessment is about prevention, not prediction.

The team is **not** trying to predict whether a subject is a "violent person." Instead, the team is trying to determine under what circumstances this subject might become violent or engage in other harmful or significantly disruptive behaviors, what the impact of the situation is upon others (even when a subject poses no identifiable threat), what environmental/systemic factors may be contributing to the situation, and whether there are any precipitating events on the foreseeable horizon. That comprehensive perspective helps prevent violence and assist those in need, even if they were never going to be violent.

Social media and online activity are critical considerations in many cases.

Use of social media and web-based communications are ubiquitous in our society. Subjects of concern, and those concerned about those subjects, often use social media to express such concerns. For those who may pose a threat, their expressions of grievances, violent intent, planning and preparation, can often be observed in online activities.

A central question in a threat assessment inquiry is whether a subject *poses* a threat (i.e., is building the capability to cause harm), not just whether the subject has *made* a threat (directly expressed intent to harm).

Research on serious targeted violence in schools and workplaces has found that few perpetrators directly communicated a threat to their target before the violence, especially when there was no prior intimate relationship between the perpetrator and target. In most incidents of targeted violence, perpetrators did not directly threaten their targets, but they did communicate their intent and/or plans to others before the violence. This indirect expression or third-party communication of intent to cause harm is often referred to as "leakage". Individuals who are found to pose threats (i.e., developed the capacity and engaged in violence) frequently do not make threats to their targets. The absence of a directly communicated threat should not, by itself, cause a team to conclude that a subject does not pose a threat or danger to self or others.

The relationship between mental illness and violence is complex.

Most persons living with mental illness will not be violent toward others. Most people who are violent are not mentally ill. The presence of serious mental illness increases general risk of violence, but it is still not the major factor that it is perceived to be and is almost never the sole or primary explanation for a violent act. Other risk factors such as having a history of violence, childhood exposure to violence, or substance abuse or dependence, have more significant correlations with violence overall. When considering targeted violence, substantially higher rates of severe mental illness have been observed among adult mass murderers, public figure attackers, and lone actor terrorists than in the general population. However, even for many of these, having a mental illness was less of a factor for violence risk than was the cessation or lack of adequate treatment for the illness. For threat assessors dealing with a subject of concern, the **symptoms and behaviors** associated with the subject's mental illness (versus the diagnosis) can be significant factors impacting a case.

An inquisitive, objective, and diligent mindset is critical to successful threat assessment and management.

Those who carry out threat assessments must strive to be thorough, diligent, accurate and fair, continuing throughout the assessment process both to gather pieces of information and to fit the pieces into a larger picture and to gain understanding of the context and situation. One hallmark of a good inquiry or investigation is corroboration or fact-checking. Where possible, it is important to see where information from one source is confirmed information from another source.

A collaborative and coordinated approach between systems within the school and the community are critical for an effective threat assessment and management processes.

Effective working relationships and collaborations with services and programs both within the school (e.g., school-based mental health professionals, administrators, disciplinary officers, human resources, etc.,) and in the broader community (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, law enforcement) are critical to identifying, assessing, and managing individuals who may be on a path to carrying out an act of targeted violence.

Essential Elements of an Effective Threat Assessment and Management Process

Research and practice have shown that, to establish and sustain an effective behavioral threat assessment and management process, organizations must have a **systematic** process that:

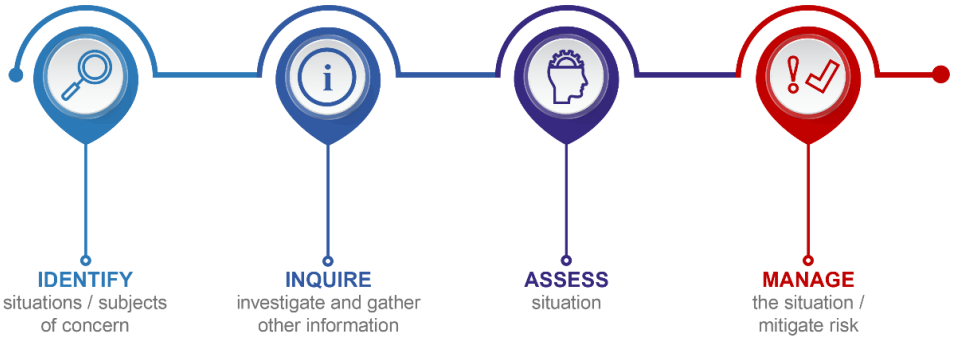
- Utilizes an effective and relevant multi-disciplinary approach that enhances the team's ability to address all threats
- Enables community engagement and centralized awareness of developing concerns through an active outreach program
- Conducts a thorough holistic and contextual assessment of the situation (e.g., using the STEP framework)
- Implements proactive and integrated case management strategies (e.g., using the STEP framework)

- Monitors and re-assesses case on a longitudinal basis
- Conducts all practices in accordance with relevant laws, policies, and standards of practice
- Sustains a focus on continuous improvement of the process and adapts to challenges and changing needs.

Source: Deisinger (2007); Deisinger & Nolan (2020)

Building a Systematic Process

An effective threat assessment and management program involves a systematic process emphasizing early identification of situations that may pose a threat of violence or harm or indicate a need for intervention and support. The process utilizes a comprehensive approach to understanding and assessing the situation, and a holistic, collaborative approach to managing the concerns identified. There are four key steps in the threat assessment and management process:



- **Identify** subject(s)/situation(s) whose behavior or impact is concerning, aberrant, or threatening. Most cases originate from information and observations that are provided to the threat assessment team by concerned members of the community. The team may also monitor for and identify patterns of behavior that may indicate a threat or concern that has not yet been reported by persons outside the team.
- **Inquire** and gather additional relevant information about the subject/situation that is reasonably, lawfully, and ethically available to the team. Beyond the initial report, the team considers what else, if anything, may be known about the situation or those involved. The focus of the threat assessment inquiry is not primarily to "prove a case", but rather, to understand the situation and how best to address any related concerns. Some threat assessment cases may also involve an administrative or law enforcement investigation to determine if a policy or criminal violation has occurred.
- **Assess** the case comprehensively, considering the totality of information that is reasonably, lawfully, and ethically available and make an assessment of the situation, determine what conclusions can be reasonably drawn, and identify what other information may be needed to help the team better understand and manage the case.
- **Manage** the needs of the case. Develop, implement, monitor, and adjust strategies to manage the situation – to prevent violence and other harm where possible, to reduce/mitigate impact of the situation, to address unmet needs of persons involved, to minimize the future impact of any contributing factors that may stem from the school environment or systems, and to consider contingencies for reasonably foreseeable events that may impact upon the case.

See the Threat Assessment and Management Process Flowchart provided in the Resource section for an example of a systematic process for facilitating identification, inquiry, assessment, and management of a case.

The Goal of Threat Assessment and Management Programs

The primary goal of the threat assessment and management process is to support and enhance the **health, safety, and well-being** of the school community. All that a team may do during a case is done in service of the health, safety, and well-being for **all** involved, including (but not solely for) the subject of concern.

It is important not to confuse tactics or tools (e.g., counseling, support, discipline, prosecution, dismissal, etc.) with goals or desired outcomes (i.e., enhance the safety and well-being of the situation). So, when we hear ourselves saying that "Our goal is

to get the subject to counseling", we catch ourselves and re-focus on "Our goal is to improve the safety and well-being of the situation. Now, what tools or resources may help us? How will a referral to counseling help us move toward that goal? If counseling is not sufficient in this case, what are other approaches that may work? What do we do if those do not appear to be working? In addition to intervening with the subject, what can we do to enhance the safety of others?"

Threat assessment and management is not approached as an adversarial or punitive process and should not be equated with disciplinary processes. Rather, threat assessment and management is a helping process and is most effective when it is **not** framed or approached as adversarial. Many subjects of concern are seeking to be heard and understood in their grievances. While some of the ways the subject may be trying to address a grievance may be inappropriate or threatening (and need to be addressed), some of the grievances may be legitimate or may help us understand environmental or systemic issues (such as bullying, harassment, or bias) that are fueling grievances. We use a holistic approach to understand identified concerns, but also (where possible) the underlying factors that are causing or contributing to the concerns.

Enhancing Communication, Collaboration and Coordination

An effective threat assessment and management process relies on, and in-turn, supports and enhances communication, collaboration, and coordination of efforts within the school, and between the school and the community. These involve:

- Communication in lawful, ethical, and effective manner and in all directions including:
  - To the threat assessment team regarding reports and assistance from the community
  - Within and between the members of the threat assessment team(s), and
  - From the threat assessment team to community members (e.g., school administration, law enforcement, staff, students, parents/guardians, etc.) based on a legitimate need to know the information to support the health, safety and well-being of the school community.
- Collaboration: A shared sense of commitment and responsibility to work cooperatively to support the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.
- Coordination: Engaging in planned and coordinated efforts, both within team and with other school and community partners proactively, preventively, responsively, and reasonably to support the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.

Schools typically have a range of multi-disciplinary processes that may be established to address different, but often overlapping concerns. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Bias and harassment prevention and response
- Bullying prevention and response
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS)
- Student Assistance Program (SAP)
- Staff Assistance Program
- Special education programs
- School climate initiatives
- Suicide prevention and crisis response
- Title IX compliance
- Sexual violence prevention and response
- Trauma-informed approaches

School administration and threat assessment team members must work diligently to ensure there are adequate processes for effective communication, collaboration, and coordination of efforts when cases cross areas of responsibility. This is critical to ensure that issues do not "fall between the cracks", and that resources are managed effectively and not duplicated unnecessarily.

There are also challenges and opportunities in sustaining effective communication, collaboration and coordination with processes that exist outside of the school, or that may work within the school to assist schools (e.g. SROs, community mental health professionals providing services or supporting processes within schools, etc.). Effective teams work to identify key partnerships and continuously work to establish, sustain, and enhance working relationships between the school and those entities. This may include a variety of activities including:

- Establishing memoranda of agreement for collaborative services or referrals
- Liaisons with community threat assessment processes

- Liaisons with community crisis outreach/response services (e.g., CIT or Mobile Crisis Response Team, etc.)
- Creating and updating contact lists for local/regional resources
- Establishing and sustaining relationships with key personnel through regular contact
- Establishing or serving on community tasks forces to address challenges facing the community, including the school.

Teams that engage in proactive efforts to sustain relationships through ongoing communication, collaboration and coordination are better prepared to deal with the range of threats they may face.

Threat Assessment Teams to Address All Threats

Virginia law requires, and professional standards of practice recommend, the use of multi-disciplinary approaches to threat assessment and management to enhance the school's ability to identify, assess and manage all threats that may be posed.

Multi-Disciplinary Threat Assessment Team

A well-developed multi-disciplinary approach helps maximize the knowledge, skills, abilities, and resources to address concerns and to enhance the team's ability to identify, inquire, assess, and manage cases.

Core Team Membership

Key membership for Threat Assessment Teams typically involves people with expertise in school administration, counseling, instruction, and law enforcement, and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer. Following are examples of roles within schools that typically reflect the relevant expertise required and common roles for those members as part of the Threat Assessment Team:

School Administration (e.g., principal, or assistant principal)

- Typically leads or chairs the team and facilitates the process
- Appoints members of the team and back-ups
- Consults with team members to determine when threat assessment is necessary
- Ensures integrity and diligence of the process
- Ensures that the intervention/safety plan is followed
- Ensures compliance with relevant laws, regulations, standards of practice and memoranda of agreement

Counseling (e.g., school counselor, psychologist, social worker)

- Assists in conducting interviews with subject, targets, witnesses, etc.
- Assists in reviewing information, including educational records, medical information, mental health evaluations, etc.
- Provide perspectives about motivations for violence or any impact of trauma, emotional distress, or psychological, behavioral, or cognitive issues that may impact risk or response to intervention
- Evaluates the need for additional assessment (e.g., mental health assessment, special education evaluation, disability, violence risk, fitness for duty)
- Facilitates involvement of counseling/mental resources within school as well as community resources
- Helps develop and implement management, intervention, and monitoring plans

Instruction (e.g., teacher, special education professional)

- Assists in conducting interviews with subject, targets, parents, teachers, and other students
- Liaison and support with teachers, coaches, parents
- Assists in gathering and assessing information for review (e.g., classroom behavior, performance, challenges)
- Guides and supports classroom management, peer support of staff

Law enforcement

- Takes necessary steps to ensure safety and security
- Assists in conducting interviews with subject, targets, parents, teachers, and other students as appropriate and lawful
- Determines if legal action is necessary
- Facilitates appropriate follow-up activities in the community
- Serves as a liaison with law enforcement, probation/parole, juvenile justice, etc. as needed
- Assists in gathering information (e.g., law enforcement records or contacts)

Other considerations for membership include persons with expertise in:

- Human Resources (advise on personnel policy, practices, and resources such as Employee Assistance Programs)
- Special Education staff (assess for impact of any disability upon behavior, design accommodations or modifications to help address behavior, develop/update individual education program (IEP) or behavioral intervention plans)
- Legal Counsel (to advise on legal standards, liability concerns, compliance with law, regulations, and policy)
- Ad hoc members (to help team engage more effectively with underserved communities, or to minimize gaps in awareness or reporting, or who have special expertise to help the team deal with an issue)
- Key Gatekeepers, i.e., someone from the school, (e.g., teacher, counselor, coach, nurse, other school employee) or community (e.g., probation officer, clergy member, social service worker) who may have a strong connection with subject (or target) or have special expertise to help the team deal with an issue.

Designated team leader

Each team should have a designated leader to facilitate the team process and ensure compliance with legal requirements and standards of practice. This is typically a school administrator with oversight of the threat assessment team process for the school(s) covered by the team but may be any staff member with the requisite leadership skills, appointed by school administration.

Back-up members

Schools should (as resources allow) identify back-up or secondary team members to fulfill responsibilities if the primary team member is not available. Ideally, each core member would have at least one back-up, typically from the same area of expertise. Note that back-up members must have adequate training and support to be prepared to fulfill their roles when needed.

Roles for all team members:

- Identify members of the organization to whom threatening behavior should be reported
- Provide guidance to staff regarding recognition and reporting of threatening or aberrant behavior
- Ensure communication, collaboration and coordination with other relevant resources and processes
- Provide notifications as required under law or per the needs of a case
- Respect confidentiality and privacy of the threat assessment process
- Comply with relevant laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and guidelines

Upon appointment to the team, each team member should consider the following questions to facilitate review of records that may be relevant to the threat assessment process, and to determine when, how, and with whom that information can be shared:

- In your day-to-day role, what information sources can you access lawfully and ethically?
- Can you share that information with other team members?
- Are there any conditions that limit information sharing from your information source, or conversely, that require you to share information? If so,
  - What are those conditions?
  - What are the thresholds that impact when and to whom you can share information?

Supplemental Resources:

Finally, the team should consider having (or having access to) external consultants as needed. This would include:

- A threat management specialist who has the relevant education, training, and experience to assist with the inquiry, assessment, and management of challenging cases; to coach and ensure consistency of process; to assist with continual improvement of the process; and to sustain training of team members.
  - This level of expertise is most often established at the division level as part of the Oversight Committee.
  - As funds allow, the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety provides technical assistance regarding development of school threat assessment processes and consultation regarding cases. Schools wishing to request technical assistance can access a request form on VCSCS website.
  - The Virginia State Police and Virginia Fusion Center have implemented threat assessment resources to better support localities in identifying, assessing, and managing potential threats. Especially in cases where there is potential criminal behavior, the Fusion Center may be able to supplement searches regarding online activity or other history.
- An independent medical/psychological evaluator (IME), who has the relevant education, training, and experience to conduct clinical violence risk assessments when necessary. It is best to have a pre-established relationship with at least one, and preferably two, qualified evaluators. Having a pre-established relationship allows better opportunity to vet potential providers (to ensure their competence and experience), to enhance availability when needed, to minimize conflicts of interest, to understand costs and process for assessments, and for them to understand the needs and resources of the school.

Maximizing Effectiveness of the Team

Team membership should not be viewed only in terms of what positions or offices are represented on the team. Team membership can also factor in which types of individuals may be best suited to serve on a group like this. In choosing team members, it can help team functioning to have the following skills and attributes in those who make up the team:

- People who are passionate about the goals of the team – who believe prevention is possible
- People who are familiar with (and trained in) threat assessment principles and practices
- People who are inquisitive and can have a skeptical mindset for work on the team
- People who exercise good sense of judgment, and who are objective and thorough
- People who relate well with others and can work well in a group
- A team chair or leader who can effectively lead team discussion – and keep the team on track, and
- People who can advocate for necessary resources – for the team and for individuals of concern.

Key Dynamics of Successful Multi-Disciplinary Teams

Research across several organizations has identified common factors related to the success of multi-disciplinary problem-solving teams. While little of that research has directly involved Threat Assessment Teams, the lessons learned are important for consideration. For example, Google did an exhaustive analysis of many of its teams and found that team success was largely unrelated to the technical skill of the team members. Rather, the team's success was driven more by dynamics related to interpersonal communication and collaboration. The 5 key dynamics related to team success were:

Psychological Safety: Able to take risks in discussion of issues without feeling insecure or embarrassed.

Dependability: Can count on each other to do high quality work on time.

Structure & Clarity: Clear about our goals, roles, and plans.

Meaning of Work: Working on something that is personally important

Impact of Work: Fundamentally believe that the work matters.

Source: Rozovsky, J. (2015). *The five keys to a successful Google team*.

Other Resources and Approaches to Increase Effectiveness

Teams should work proactively to develop, research, implement, and enhance other resources that can help the process work more effectively. Considerations include:

- Identify and list local resources (school-based and community-based): community mental health services, child protective services, law enforcement crisis response units, emergency psychiatric screening services, etc.
- Establish liaisons with resources and secure access (including after-hours): Build relationships and communication with resources.
- Develop relationships with other school districts: Be familiar with what other regional school districts do for their threat management programs. The team's next case may be the last one for another school district!
- Identify state-level resources: Guidance and technical assistance from state board of education, school board association, union, state center for school safety, law enforcement fusion center, etc.
- Identify potential subject matter expertise: What resources does the team have access to regarding implications when disabilities are present, independent violent risk assessments, tracking social media threats, etc.
- Access to informed/relevant legal counsel input (e.g., on questions such as FERPA exceptions, compliance with legal requirements).

Developing a Process to Address All Threats

Subjects who may pose a threat

A school must establish a multi-disciplinary threat assessment team process that enhances the school's ability to identify, inquire, assess, and manage a range of threats that may be posed to the school community. While current students are the largest constituency served by a school and will likely represent most threats faced by a school, the range of subjects who may pose a threat is much broader and includes:

- Students: current and former (and potentially prospective)
- Employees: current and former (and potentially prospective)
- Parents, guardians, or other family members of students
- Persons who are (or have been) in relationships with staff or students
- Contractors, vendors, or other visitors
- Persons unaffiliated with the school

Teams should develop processes to facilitate identification and reporting of concerns regarding any subjects who may pose a threat to the school, its staff, or students. The team must also be prepared to adequately assess and (to the extent reasonable) manage the risk posed by the full range of potential subjects of concern. This includes procedures for referrals to relevant community services not only for students, but for staff, parents, or others with whom the team may intervene.

Considering the Range of Threats Posed

Mass violence impacting schools. Mass violence, especially shootings, impacting schools has been an increasing concern over the past several years. While such mass attacks do occur, they are still (thankfully) quite rare. Even though they are not statistically likely, when they do occur, they can have a catastrophic impact. In addition, staff, students, and parents sometimes perceive the risk as more likely than it is, which impacts their perceptions and experiences regarding the safety of the school and the responsivity of school administration. Schools must develop and utilize systematic processes that consider and assess the risk for such eventualities and be prepared to manage them to the extent possible.

Individual violence impacting schools. Most cases faced by school threat assessment teams will not often involve concerns about mass attacks. Instead, cases will typically involve individuals who are struggling with real and perceived grievances and other life stresses, have few or compromised coping skills, and will be engaging in behavior that is disconcerting or threatening to a relatively small number of staff or students. Team members should be familiar with risk factors, protective factors and warning signs for individuals who may pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others. Following are several examples of types of threats that may be posed.

Bullying: Under Virginia law (§ 22.1-276.01) "Bullying" means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. "Bullying" includes cyber bullying. "Bullying" does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict. Key elements of bullying behavior include:

- Unwanted and aggressive behavior intended to:
  - Harm
  - Intimidate or
  - Humiliate
- A real or perceived imbalance of power between the subject(s) doing the bullying and the person(s) being bullied
- Repeated behavior over time or causes emotional trauma

In 2017, about 20 % of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school and 16% said they were cyber bullied during the school year. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), involvement in bullying, along with other risk factors, increases the chance that a young person will engage in suicide-related behaviors compared to students who do not have any involvement in bullying. Note that this includes students who are being bullied as well as those perpetrating the bullying behavior.

Potential indicators of bullying:

- Physical signs like torn, damaged, or soiled clothing; unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches; missing or damaged items like books or homework without a credible explanation
- Social isolation, sudden loss of friends, or avoidance of social situations
- Frequent headaches, stomach aches, feeling sick, or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, difficulty sleeping, frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors or talking about suicide

Barriers to seeking help among persons being bullied:

- Might feel helpless, weak, or fear being seen as a snitch or tattletale
- Fear of backlash or more bullying
- Feel humiliated and not want adults or others to know
- Feel socially isolated
- Fear being rejected by peers and losing support

Material adapted from National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments *Understanding and Intervening in Bullying Behavior*.

Dating violence sexual assault: Domestic, dating, or intimate-partner violence are significant issues impacting schools and workplaces. Overall rates of violence at work have decreased steadily for the past 20 years. However, incidents of domestic/relational violence coming into the workplace and/or school have not decreased in the same way and for some organizations, have increased over the past few years. Threat assessment team members should understand foundational issues related to violence risk in such cases, especially the importance of recognizing the significance of attempted strangulation, as a risk factor for continued violence including homicide.

Dating violence and sexual assault disproportionately affect teens and young adults. Hundreds of thousands of young people are experiencing dating abuse, sexual assault, and stalking every year. Among adult victims of rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner, 22% of women and 15% of men first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention). The 2017 Youth Risk

Behavior Surveillance Systems (YRBSS) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control found that 8% of high school students had experienced physical violence by someone they were dating and 7% of students had experienced sexual violence, including non-consensual sex. There is significant diversity in youth dating abuse victims including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) individuals, immigrants, those with limited English proficiency, and those whose religious or cultural values may limit disclosure (of the abuse) to others. The Youth Risk Behavior Surveys show that sexual minority students experience higher risk for violent victimization. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey defines sexual minority youth (SMY) are those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB); who are not sure of their sexual identity; or who have sexual contact with persons of the same or both sexes

In February 2020, the U.S. Secretary of Education emphasized the need for schools to comply with obligations under Title IX to address issues of sexual discrimination including harassment and sexual violence (e.g., domestic/dating violence, sexual assault, stalking). Schools may face increased scrutiny and compliance reviews regarding their handling of incidents of sexual violence and misconduct, including circumstances where schools are perceived as not effectively resolving concerns about staff who engage in sexual misconduct.

Teen dating violence has significant effects on physical health, mental health, and educational outcomes. Youth victims of dating violence are more likely to experience depression and anxiety symptoms, engage in unhealthy behaviors like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, exhibit antisocial behaviors, and more frequently express thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

Threat assessment teams should also be aware of and consider research regarding teen dating violence when assessing and managing cases. Following is a snapshot of some key findings:

- A survey of U.S. high school students suggests that 1 in 5 female students and 1 in 10 male students who date have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual teen dating violence during the past 12 months (Vagi, et al, 2015).
- Emotional/psychological violence is the most common type of dating violence. Numbers range depending on the survey and type of population surveyed (e.g., just girls or just boys), but about a third to three quarters of youth who date report **perpetrating** this type of violence against a dating partner at least once (Niolon et al, 2015).
- Sexual dating violence is often reported to authorities at lower rates than other types of violence (Miller et all, 2015).
- Teen girls who experienced recent dating violence were 60% more likely to report at least one suicide attempt in the past year than those who did not experience recent dating violence (Olshen et al, 2007).
- Female students who experienced both physical and sexual dating violence were twice as likely to attempt suicide as students who reported experiencing one type of violence. Male victims of both types of violence were about 3 times as likely to attempt suicide as male students who experienced one form of victimization (Vagi, et al, 2015).

Stalking: Stalking is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear. One in six women, and one in 17 men will be stalked in their lifetime. Data are scarce regarding stalking by youth, but some research has found that 5% of high school students had stalked someone in the prior year. Stalkers use many strategies to stalk their victims. The acronym S-L-I-I (Logan & Walker, 2017) can help teams consider the range of a stalker's behavior and its impact:

- **S**urveillance: How is the stalker tracking or monitoring the victim?
- **L**ife invasion: How has the stalker invaded the victim's life?
- **I**nterference: What has the victim lost and/or what is s/he afraid of losing because of the stalker?
- **I**ntimidation: How has the stalker intimidated or threatened the victim?

Ybarra, et al (2016) collected data regarding stalking-like behaviors of adolescents. These included:

- Hyper-intimacy: Tried to get someone's attention by doing something "over the top"
- Intrusive Pursuit: Tried to "talk" with someone when it seemed like they did not want you to
- Following: Followed or spied on someone without them knowing
- Aggression: Damaged or destroyed someone's things that they loved
- Threats: Threatened to hurt someone or yourself if they did not pay attention to you
- Surveillance: Downloaded a GPS or tracking program to their cell phone without them knowing

Over a third of youth have engaged in at least one of these behaviors. One in six said they have done two or more in their lifetime. Among those who have acted out these behaviors, 12% did it to more than one person in the past year. The six types of behavior are listed in their relative frequency with the most common being hyper-intimacy. Of particular note, female youth reported engaging in these behaviors at rates similar to males.

Stalking is a major predictor of lethality in cases of intimate partner violence with as many as three-quarters of femicide victims murdered by intimate partners being stalked prior to being killed. Yet very few stalkers are charged, arrested, or prosecuted.

Human Trafficking: Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit a person for labor or commercial sex. Any minor (i.e., under the age of 18) who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is a victim of human trafficking according to U.S. law, regardless of whether there is force, fraud, or coercion. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked in countries around the world – including the United States. Many of these victims are lured with false promises of financial or emotional security; and they are forced or coerced into commercial sex (prostitution), domestic servitude, or other types of forced labor. Increasingly, criminal organizations such as gangs are luring children from local schools into commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking. Human trafficking can involve school-age youths, particularly those made vulnerable by unstable family situations, or who have little or no social support. The children at risk are not just high school students – studies show that the average age a child is trafficked into the commercial sex trade is between 11 and 14 years old. Traffickers may target young victims through social media websites, and after-school programs, or through other students who are used by the traffickers to recruit other victims.

How Do I Identify Human Trafficking?

Threat assessment team members should be familiar with potential indicators of human trafficking. While no single indicator is necessarily proof of human trafficking, recognizing the signs is the first step in identifying and helping potential victims.

- Unexplained absences from school, or not attending school regularly
- Sudden changes to usual attire, behavior, or relationships
- Suddenly has more (and/or more expensive) material possessions
- Chronically run away from home
- Act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous and paranoid
- Defer to another person to speak for him or her, especially during interactions with school authority figures (this may include an adult described by the student as a relative, but also may be a friend or boyfriend/girlfriend)
- Show signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or other serious pain or suffering
- Appear to have been deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care, or other life necessities
- Possess their own identification documents (e.g., student identification card, driver's license, or passport), vs someone else having control of them
- Presence of a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" who is noticeably older
- Engaging in uncharacteristically promiscuous behavior, or making references to sexual situations or terminology that are beyond age-specific norms
- Appear to be restricted from contacting family, friends, or his or her legal guardian

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
Human trafficking 101 for school administrators and staff. www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/humantraffickin101-schladmin.pdf?utm_source=FindYouthInfo.gov&utm_medium=Federal-Links&utm_campaign=Reports-and-Resources

Adult Sexual Misconduct Perpetrators: There has been increased attention to school staff who have engaged in predatory sexual misconduct towards students, staff, or others. The Education Week Research Center (2018) found that over 30% of school staff had observed or experienced sexual misconduct from or between colleagues, and 15% had observed staff engage in misconduct toward students. Nearly 7% of students have reported unwanted sexual contact that most commonly came from coaches, teachers, substitute teachers, and bus drivers. Most incidents involved physical contact, but technology played a significant role in three-quarters of cases (Henschel & Grant, 2018). Perpetrators who work in schools target students using the same methods as those who target children in other settings: They zero in on those who are vulnerable, are calculating in their approach to isolate, manipulate, and lie to children to gain sexual contact and make them feel complicit (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Grooming, Trolling, and Exploiting: To keep their conduct secret, perpetrators coerce and "groom" potential victims. That is, as sexual contact escalates, they methodically increase the attention and rewards they give to their targets. Grooming allows perpetrators to test their targets' silence at each step, pressing boundaries as they go. To nurture the relationship, perpetrators make the target feel "special" by, for example, brandishing gifts and/or spending extra time with the target in nonsexual ways, all in an effort to learn whether the target will keep silent (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

At the same time, the perpetrator also tests the adults surrounding the child, including those who work at school, individuals in the school community, and the child's parents or guardians. More subtle behaviors may be done publicly so that the perpetrator can gauge reactions, share information to manipulate how the behavior is interpreted by the adults, and further control the child victim. For example, a teacher may lead their colleagues to believe the parent has provided consent for them to drive a student home because the parent needs help. In response, the perpetrator receives accolades and gratitude from their colleagues, and has begun the process of grooming peers as well. It is also harder for the victim to feel believed by others. The perpetrator gradually progresses to engaging in sexualized behaviors, often using threats and intimidation tactics with the child to keep his or her sexual misconduct secret. Keeping silent implicates the targets, making children believe they have been complicit in their own abuse and are therefore responsible for the abuse. Perpetrators will often threaten wavering targets, or those who seem likely to report the misconduct, with a reminder of their powerlessness and that the victims will not be believed (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Violent extremism: School staff may not consider schools to be places where concerns about terrorism or violent extremism may exist, yet experience shows that can be the case. The FBI stated:

> *High school students are ideal targets for recruitment by violent extremists seeking support for their radical ideologies, foreign fighter networks, or conducting acts of targeted violence within our borders. High schools must remain vigilant in educating their students about catalysts that drive violent extremism and the potential consequences of embracing extremist beliefs.* [Source: FBI (2016). *Preventing violent extremism in schools*.]

Experiences related to adverse childhood experiences and development challenges can leave youth at risk for targeting by others with violent ideology, often utilizing the ubiquitous use of social media by youth as a gateway to connection. The FBI noted the importance of school threat assessment teams being prepared to recognize and address such concerns effectively. The approaches advocated for (by the FBI) to identify and reduce risks for involvement in violent extremism overlap significantly with the general roles of the threat assessment team:

- Building resilient schools through enhanced student social and emotional well-being
- Increasing awareness about the forms and dynamics of violent extremism
- Enhancing information sharing among those stakeholders who can provide support and services to students
- Facilitating disengagement programs to turn at-risk youth away from violent trajectories
- Leveraging school programs to deter youth from embracing extremist ideologies
- Fostering ideals of diversity, inclusion and tolerance, while upholding Constitutional freedoms and rights under the law.

Weapon carrying at school: In 2017, about 16 percent of students in grades 9–12 reported that they had carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club anywhere at least 1 day during the previous 30 days, and 4 percent reported carrying a weapon on school property at least 1 day during the previous 30 days. Approximately 3.5% of students reported access to a loaded gun without adult permission during the school year. [Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey. (April 2019)]

Suicidal behaviors: Youth suicide is recognized as a serious public health concern in Virginia and across the nation. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10–24. Since 2013, suicide rates have increased for adolescents between the ages of 10 and 24. Each year, approximately 8% of high school students attempt suicide and nearly 3% make a suicide attempt that necessitates medical treatment. In 2017, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC) noted that 17.2% of high school students seriously considered a suicide attempt in the last school year. The number of children ages 5–17 that have been hospitalized for suicidal thoughts or behavior has doubled in the last decade. The YRBS also finds that sexual minority students are at a greater risk of a range of mental health concerns including suicidal behavior.

Suicide or suicide attempts by school staff or family members of students can have a significant effect on the safety and well-being of students at school. There is also a small but observed trend regarding suicides in work or public settings, often by persons with unresolved grievances against a workplace or school.

Over 75% of persons engaging in suicidal behaviors have engaged in behaviors (e.g., warning signs) that caused concern for their well-being. The *2018 Virginia School and Division Safety Survey Report* noted that 56% of threat assessments reported by schools involved threat to self only (suicide or self-harm) and 5% involved threats to self and others. Therefore, it is critically important that school divisions have policies and procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene with, and respond to youth suicidal behavior.

Identifying and Reporting Concerning, Aberrant or Threatening Behavior

All school division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report immediately to the school administrator or designee any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest a student may intend to commit an act of targeted violence.

Overcoming the Bystander Effect

Research and practice have shown that, where incidents of targeted violence have occurred, other people tended to have concerns about the subject or to be aware of behaviors that indicated thoughts, planning or preparation for a violent act. People choose not to come forward for a variety of reasons. The witness or impacted person isn't sure their observation is important or whether they should get involved, or don't know what to look for, or where and how to report concerns, or are concerned about what will (or will not) be done if they report their concerns. Where members of the community have knowledge or concerns about the safety or well-being of a situation, but do not come forward, that is often referred to as the Bystander Effect.

To help bystanders be more actively engaged in supporting the safety and well-being of the school, members of the school community need to know:

It is everyone's role and responsibility to share and address concerns.
Supporting the safety and well-being of the community means that everyone has a role, not because the policy says so, but because that is the responsibility of the school community to each other – to recognize concerns, to respond in a helpful manner (where appropriate) and to report the concerns to persons who can best help the situation. Members of the school community should be encouraged on an ongoing basis to report any threatening communication or troubling behavior and be reminded that reporting is an act of caring. The threat assessment process is developed and implemented to facilitate early identification and intervention with those needing assistance and/or considering violence as a means of addressing their concerns. Building and supporting a safe and positive school climate enhances connection and engagement from and with the community.

Effective threat assessment processes encourage a perspective of ***No One Alone***. No member of our community should be (or feel) alone with a concern and unable to deal with it. Complex situations are best dealt with in a collaborative manner using the best resources available. It is rare for one person to have all the knowledge, skills and resources needed to address concerns, and it is not reasonable to expect that of any one person. We are better together!

A team should periodically examine where they get the most reports and the least. The team may want to do some targeted outreach or additional liaison to areas from which they currently receive few or no reports, or where they receive reports that are significantly delayed or misdirected. They should also consider the factors that may be impacting areas from which they are receiving the most reports. Consider:

- Are those areas well informed and engaged in the process and so are better at recognizing and reporting concerns?
- Do those areas have unique environmental/systemic issues impacting the nature or number of concerns?
- What resources may be needed to address those issues?

Identify Concerning, Aberrant, Threatening, and Prohibited Behaviors to be Reported

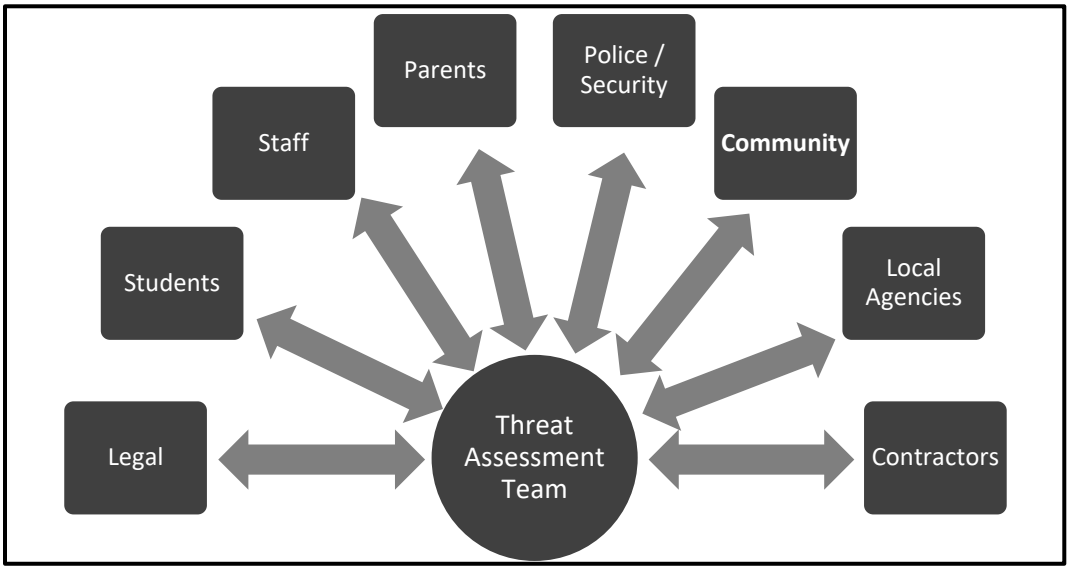
School community members will want to understand what behaviors to watch for and what sorts of concerns are best handled by the Threat Assessment Team. While there is no one list of behaviors that may cause concern, providing examples of concerns with which the team can assist, will help community members better recognize, respond to, and report concerns appropriately. Examples should include prohibited behaviors (e.g., engaging in violence, bringing a weapon to the school, communicating threats, bullying, etc.) but should also include examples of behaviors that may be concerning or aberrant, even when those behaviors by themselves may not appear threatening, but are still causing concern.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Threatening statements or gestures
- Persons with ongoing, unresolved grievances with members of the school community
- Atypical, unusual, or bizarre communications or behavior
- Significant changes in behavior
- Increased focus or fixation on aspects of violence, harm, or death
- Information about someone expressing thoughts, plans or preparations for violence
- Concerns that someone may harm themselves
- Behavior that significantly disrupts the learning or working environment
- Behavior that seems troubling or disturbing
- Persons seeming isolated and alienated from others
- Anyone unknown to the school

Establish and Promote Effective Reporting Mechanisms

Community members need to know where, how and with whom they should share concerns. The school should have multiple mechanisms to foster reporting and centralized awareness of concerns by the threat assessment team as in the following figure.



This diagram shows examples of various sources of information – in school and outside of school – that may report concerns to the threat assessment team. Likewise, these are various places where a threat assessment team can check in periodically and see if they have any concerns to report.

Notice that all the communication pathways are bi-directional to support continued engagement in and support of the threat management process. This is not to say that the team discloses all aspects of the case to those outside the team, but rather that the team discloses information (within the limits of law and professional ethics) based on what those persons have a need to know, to support the safety and well-being of the situation.

Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses an imminent threat of serious violence that requires containment should notify school security and law enforcement in accordance with school board policies on Critical Incident Response**.**

Establish and identify how and where concerns can be reported. The team should ensure that any reporting mechanisms used by the school (e.g., hotlines, tip lines, web site, social media/mobile apps, etc.) are kept up to date, work consistently and are checked on regular and timely basis.

Be sure to provide access to mechanisms that allow for anonymous reporting. Anonymous reports can involve some challenges, as they may not include enough information to understand the problem or how to intervene. As they are anonymous, there may not be a way to follow-up for more information or to consider the credibility of the report. However, some community members will only come forward through an anonymous report and it is likely better to have an anonymous report (of a legitimate concern) than to have no report.

Be sure that staff understand that that Virginia law provides immunity (from civil liability) for good faith reports of concerns.

Be Responsive to Reports

Community members are often worried that their concerns are not significant enough to be reviewed, or that they would be wasting the team's time. We want all community members to know that reports are wanted, even if the situation does turn out to be nothing. Community members are more likely to come forward with concerns where they understand the process of how those concerns will be addressed, that they will be taken seriously, and the concerns will be addressed appropriately.

Regular reminders of issues and process

Schools can be vibrant and exciting places due in part to the regular turnover in the membership of the school community. Unfortunately, that also means that everyone that understood the points (above) last year, does not represent the whole of the community this year, so the messaging needs to be regular and ongoing.

Provide regular and ongoing opportunities for staff, students, parents, and others to gain understanding of the threat assessment process, and recognition and reporting of concerns. Include awareness building into other relevant training opportunities such as:

- Verbal de-escalation
- Incident survival and response
- Mental health first aid

Provide awareness and training information through available resources such as school website, mobile apps, newsletters/email, social media, etc.

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety provides a free video and guide for use by schools to support school and community awareness of school threat assessment programs.

K-12 Threat Assessment in Virginia: A Prevention Overview for School Staff, Parents, and Community Members, available at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov/sites/dcjs.virginia.gov/files/publications/law-enforcement/k12-threat-assessment-prevention-overview.pdf

The video can be accessed at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS7m3RUy9c0

Build and sustain a culture of care, concern and engagement for the safety and well-being of the school community.

Assessing and Classifying Threats

Intake Process

The team should establish a process for the intake and triage of a report regarding concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior. When a potential threat is reported, the 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 in accordance with the school's threat assessment guidelines.

Upon receipt of the initial report, the team will obtain basic information about the situation including (but not limited to):

- Initial Report of Concern: Date/time reported, date/time reviewed, person receiving report
- Reporting Party: Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to subject of concern
- Incident/Nature of Concern: Date/time occurred, location, nature of threat /concern, weapons involved/threatened, details about concerns, and any relevant background about situation
- Subject of Concern: Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to reporting party or target(s)
- Identified/Identifiable Target(s): Name, affiliation, contact information, relationship to reporting party or subject

If the initial report contains information that indicates an imminent threat, then the team will activate the appropriate crisis response plans.

Triage and Screening

Schools should establish a consistent process for conducting an initial review (triage and screening) of concerns reported. This triage process serves to identify imminent safety concerns and to prioritize cases for action by the team, to screen out cases that are not appropriate for the threat assessment team or are already being adequately addressed, and to determine the need for a more complete assessment and/or intervention strategy to address concerns.

The school should establish whether the full threat assessment team will conduct the triage, or whether to designate a subset of team members to triage concerns that are reported. If the team chooses to have a subset of the team conduct the triage process the triage team should involve at least two members of the threat assessment team, preferably involving differing roles and perspectives, e.g., a school administrator and a school counselor. However, schools have latitude to utilize any team members or other staff who are adequately trained, available, and relevant to the situation.

Upon the initial reviews of the reported concerns, relevant records or other sources of information, the team (or the intake/triage group) shall determine if an imminent threat is believed to exist. If the individual appears to pose an imminent threat of serious violence or harm, the administrator shall notify law enforcement in accordance with School Board policies.

An imminent threat is indicated by such factors as:

- Subject intends imminent and/or serious harm to self/others:
  - Has weapon in the school, on a school bus, at a school activity, or enroute to/from any of those
  - Conveyed imminent intent to use weapon(s) **or** cause serious injury
  - Access to and/or possession of weapons
  - Attempting to breach security and/or to gain access to targets
- Lack of inhibitions for using violence, indicated by:
  - Feels justified in using violence to address grievances
  - Has no perceived alternatives to the use of violence (e.g., nothing else left to do)
  - Lack of concern for or desiring of consequences (e.g., nothing left to lose)
  - Has the capability and willingness to cause harm

If the situation is emergent or imminent, initiate crisis response procedures according to school policy, e.g.:

- Involve law enforcement and appropriate security personnel
- Initiate relevant security protocols
- When safe to do so, move on to triage and assessment steps to further resolve any ongoing threat posed

In the absence of any apparent imminent threat in the initial report, or once appropriate crisis procedures are in place and it is safe to do so, the team gathers other information ("pings the system") about the situation (i.e., about the Subject, Target, Environment, and Precipitating Events) from various sources to which they may have lawful and ethical access, such as:

- Review of the threatening behavior or communication
- Review of school and other records for any prior history or interventions with the individual(s) involved
  - Prior threat assessment team contacts
  - Recent (and historical) work or school performance history
  - Special education records or disability accommodations that may be relevant
  - Disciplinary or personnel actions
  - Law enforcement or security contacts at school and in the community
  - Prior critical involvement with mental health or social services activated by the school
  - Current or historical grievances, stresses, or losses that may be related to the behavior of concern
  - Online/open-source searches: internet, social media
  - Other written materials: schoolwork, reports, evaluations, letters, email, journals, etc.

- Conduct 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 student can be determined.

Based on those initial reviews, the triage process will:

- Consider the nature and level of concern indicated,
- Determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns,
- Determine whether the full team needs to further assess and manage the situation,
- Initiate any crisis responses as appropriate.

To triage a prospective case out, that is, as not needing further review or actions by the full threat assessment team, all members of the triage team must concur that there is no identifiable threat/concern, or that there is a low level of concern regarding issues that are being adequately addressed. Where cases are triaged out, the full team (at the next meeting) should have opportunity to review cases that were triaged out and consider bringing them into the full process if needed.

If it cannot be determined with a reasonable degree of confidence that the alleged threat is no/low 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; interview and consultation with staff, students or community members who know the individual or have knowledge of the situation; and interviews of the subject and the target/recipient of the threat(s).

Based on information collected, the school threat assessment team shall determine strategies to mitigate the threat and provide intervention and assistance to those involved, as needed.

The Nexus Between Threat Assessment and Suicide Risk Assessment

Note that § 22.1-79.4, Section D imposes a duty (notification to school administration) on threat assessment team members when they, in the course of their duties on the threat assessment team, make a determination (even at a preliminary level) that a **student** poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self (or others). This is similar to the duty that any school administrative or instructional staff have when they have reason to believe that a student is at imminent risk for suicide (as per § 22.1-272.1, see next section). This does not require that all cases of suicidal behavior or harm to self be handled by the threat assessment team when they involve students. However, it is critical that schools have clear and consistent policies and procedures to ensure such situations are addressed in a comprehensive and appropriate manner.

The goal of the threat assessment and management process is to take appropriate preventive and intervening measures to maintain the health, safety, and well-being of the school community. This is done through systematic processes facilitating early identification, comprehensive assessment, and holistic case management. These goals are consistent with those of suicide prevention and intervention processes.

Virginia law (e.g., § 22.1-79.4) imposes certain duties on school threat assessment teams related to individuals who may pose a threat to the community, school **or self**. These duties include providing guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of aberrant or threatening behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, **or self**. Further, upon a threat assessment team making a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat **to self** or others, the threat assessment team has a statutory responsibility to notify senior school administration. Virginia law emphasizes the role of threat assessment teams in suicide prevention and intervention.

There are several benefits of utilizing the Threat Assessment Team in the suicide risk assessment process as it can provide additional options and resources if needed and deemed appropriate, such as:

- The team is established and practiced in working collaboratively to address concerns related to the health, safety, and well-being of the school.

- Utilizing the Threat Assessment Team for all cases that pose a threat of violence or harm to self or others enhances consistency of application of policies, procedures, and practices across cases. Even where schools have a separate student suicide crisis response process, they still have a responsibility to address threats posed by non-students, including those that pose a threat of harm to self (e.g., school staff).
- Under Virginia law, members of the Threat Assessment Team may have authorized access to otherwise protected records that other school staff do not have lawful access to without a release (e.g., criminal history information of adults and juveniles, and health records of any individual who may pose a threat to others or self within the school). Such records could provide more insight regarding the student's risk and needs, and help the student access the appropriate services.
- The school resource officer (SRO) or law enforcement officer (LEO) that serves on the TAT may have knowledge of concerns occurring outside of the school that would be relevant and pertinent to know, as situation warrants. The SRO/LEO may also be able to facilitate supplemental care and assistance if law enforcement deals with the student outside of school (e.g., for welfare checks). Several law enforcement agencies in Virginia operate Crisis Intervention Teams or are part of Mental Health Crisis Response Teams that provide trained law enforcement officers (sometimes co-responding with mental health professionals) who can facilitate welfare/well-being checks, facilitate referrals to service and conduct follow-ups with the student and parents/guardians, as appropriate.
- Given that the suicide assessment process (for students) likely involves sensitive information from educational records, state law prohibits members of threat assessment teams from disclosing such information outside of the Threat Assessment Team process or using the information for any other purposes. This provides additional protections for sensitive and confidential information regarding student health, safety, and well-being.

Schools can also effectively manage situations using parallel processes involving the Suicide Crisis Response Team and the Threat Assessment Team. The nexus between the Threat Assessment Team (TAT) and the Suicide Crisis Response Team is critical to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of school communities. Where schools operate both processes, they should, at minimum, utilize the threat assessment team in a "Triage" role, such as in the following process:

- Ensure the student of concern is in a safe environment and receiving appropriate support and supervision.
- Make notification to relevant school administration as well as school (and/or community) mental health professionals for any necessary immediate actions.
- Conduct triage involving at least two (2) members of the threat assessment team, suicide crisis response team, or both. Typically, this would involve a school counselor or school psychologist and an administrator, but with schools having have latitude to utilize staff who are adequately trained, available, and relevant to the situation. For example, if there are concerns that the student may have a weapon or may attempt to flee, the school resource officer or local law enforcement may assist to support the safety of the student and staff. Most law enforcement officers have had significant training and experience in conducting initial screening for risk of suicide/self-harm.
  - Review initial report and any supporting materials
  - Check threat assessment team records for any prior contact with or interventions involving TAT
  - Check for other documentation within school records or information available from staff or others that may inform the triage process
  - Conduct the initial interview and assessment with the student of concern utilizing the assessment process and documentation specified by the school division
- If the triage/preliminary assessment process identifies any of the following concerns, in addition to, or in place of, the concerns of a potential threat to self, then the threat assessment team shall assume primary responsibility for the management of the case as a whole.
  - The student also has ideation or intent to harm others.
  - The student's acts of harm to self would pose a threat of harm to others, whether intended or not, e.g., a student intending to harm only themselves by shooting themselves in front of an occupied classroom. Even where the student had no intent to cause harm to others, the risk to others would be significant.

  - The student has engaged in behaviors (e.g., planning or preparation) that would place others at risk of harm, whether intended or not.
  - The student's suicidal or self-harm behaviors are related to experiences of victimization, bias, bullying, harassment, or to other environmental/climate issues within the school.
  - Others (e.g., students, staff, parents/guardians, community, etc.) are, or may reasonably be, significantly impacted by the threat of harm to self.

  Where any of these criteria are met, then the TAT should undertake a full threat assessment, including but not limited to the individual suicide assessment done with the student of concern.

  School or community mental health professionals should retain the primary responsibility for the direct assessment of and mental health interventions with the student exhibiting risk for self-harm or suicide, per school guidelines. Other team members assist by supporting those assessment and intervention actions and taking responsibility for addressing other concerns impacting upon the case, such as those noted above.

- If none of the above conditions are met, then no other actions are needed by the threat assessment team and the threat assessment case can be closed. The suicide risk assessment and relevant interventions will be completed by the Suicide Crisis Response Team as relevant for the needs of the case.

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety and the Virginia Department of Education recognize the broad diversity across school divisions in terms of differing concerns, needs, staffing, and resources to address these challenging issues. To that end, schools are encouraged to implement and utilize processes that minimize gaps in identification, assessment and intervention with students who may pose a threat of harm to self, and that build an effective nexus of communication, collaboration and coordination with existing threat assessment and management processes. The Virginia Department of Education provides *Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools* to supplement these *Threat Assessment Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines*, and are intended to offer additional guidance to school threat assessment teams, and other staff, when addressing threats to self.

Conducting Interviews

When circumstances allow, prior to conducting an interview with a persons involved in a case, threat assessment team members are best served by being well acquainted with the information available about the reported concerns, as well as any relevant information about the interviewee's background, behaviors, and relationship to others involved.

The team should conduct interviews as appropriate with:

- Person(s) reporting threat or concern
- Person(s) receiving the initial report of threat or concern
- Target/Recipient(s) of any threatening or unusual communications
- Witness(es)
- Subject who allegedly engaged in concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior
- Other potential sources:
  - Peers: Friends/Classmates/Co-workers
  - Employer, teachers, coaches
  - Parents/guardian
  - Relational partners
  - Local or state law enforcement
  - Community services

In addition to the value of the information that may be gained about a situation, the team should also consider the risks associated with each potential interview. Peers of subjects may warn the subject that the team is looking into their behavior. Co-workers or relational partners may have biases for or against the subject (or target) that skews their response. The subject

may be alerted that the school is aware of concerns and may escalate their behavior before they are stopped. The very act of asking questions about a subject, may cause concern/fear that they are dangerous, even if that turns out not to be the case.

Rarely will team members know all those potential dynamics before interviews are initiated but should be aware of the potential impact and reactions and monitor and plan for relevant contingencies.

The team should also give consideration not only to who should be interviewed, but:

- By whom? What team member or key gatekeeper is best positioned in terms of role or relationship to have the most effective interview with the least conflict or bias?
- With what skill set? What training, experience, preparation, or mentoring will be necessary or helpful to support an effective approach?
- In what setting?
- With what goals in mind?
  - Information gathering and assessment
  - Redirect from violence/targets
  - Problem solving/support
  - Set boundaries/limitations
  - Admonishment/confrontation
  - Intervention/referral
  - Monitoring
  - Deterrence

Effective teams regularly monitor for, assess and work to minimize the negative impact of bias in decision-making. The team should also seek out, and factor in, information from multiple sources in its assessment, rather than relying on just one piece of information or perspective. The team should consider whether a source has direct and first-hand knowledge, their credibility, and the consistency of that source information with that of other sources.

Interview with threat recipient(s)/target(s) and witness(es): Individuals who have been identified as potential targets of the subject of concern should also be interviewed where possible, along with any persons who witnessed the concerning behavior. The threat assessment team should inform the subject of the interview that the primary purpose of that interview is to gather information about a possible situation of concern with the goals of preventing harm to staff or students, and providing assistance to those involved.

A potential target should be asked about their relationship to the subject of concern and queried about recent interactions with that subject. The interviewer should gather information about grievances and grudges that the subject of concern may hold against a target or against others. Interviews with potential targets should be conducted with special sensitivity. Care must be taken to gather information without unduly alarming a potential target. If the threat assessment team believes that there may be a risk of violence to an identified target, that target should be offered assistance and support for their safety.

The assessment process facilitates increased and revised understanding of issues over time. That is, when new information is made available to the team during or after the initial assessment, the team should review the new information and re-evaluate the threat accordingly. The team will want to maintain contact with the target/recipient to obtain information about any further behaviors of concern, improvements in the situation or other relevant developments.

Review of records/consultation with staff members who know the individual best: Background information can inform the threat assessment team's approach to and questioning of the student. This information may help the threat assessment team determine whether the subject poses a threat to targets. In addition, knowledge of background information concerning the student prior to the interview may help the threat assessment team judge whether the student is forthcoming and straightforward. Some areas for background information from records and consultation with adults in school who know the subject best include:

- Recent (and perhaps historical) work or school performance history
- Disciplinary or personnel actions
- Prior threat assessment team contacts
- Law enforcement or security contacts at school and in the community
- Prior critical involvement with mental health or social services

- Presence of known problems in the life of the individual
- Current or historical grievances that may be related to the behavior of concern
- Online searches: internet, social media, email, etc.

Interview with Subject of Concern: Generally, an individual who is part of the school (staff or student) should be asked directly about his or her actions and intentions. Many subjects will respond forthrightly to direct questions approached in a non-judgmental manner. An interview conducted during a threat assessment inquiry can elicit important information that permits the threat assessment team to better understand the situation of the individual and possible targets. This understanding, in turn, will help the threat assessment team to assess the risk of violence that the individual may pose in each situation. Interviews with the individual of concern also can generate leads for further inquiry.

Generally, it is best to have the subject learn from the team that people are concerned about her or his behavior and have a chance to explain that behavior or contributing circumstances, rather than have that subject hear through the grapevine that they are being "investigated" by the threat assessment team.

An interview can also send the message to the individual that his or her behavior has been noticed and has caused concern. Interviews give individuals of concern the opportunity to tell their perspectives, background, and intent; to be heard and experience support/empathy where appropriate; and to reassess and redirect their behavior away from activities that are of concern. The interview may suggest to a subject who has mixed feelings about attacking, that there are people who are interested in his or her welfare, and that there are better, more effective ways to deal with problems or with specific people.

Although an interview with a subject of concern can provide valuable information, relying too heavily (or solely) on that interview as a basis for making judgments about whether that subject poses a threat is likely to present problems. The information offered by the subject may be incomplete, misleading, or inaccurate. It therefore is important to collect information to corroborate and verify information learned from the interview.

For subjects of concern who are not part of the school community, school threat assessment teams should carefully weigh the risks and benefits of attempting to engage directly with the subject especially when the subject may have engaged in criminal behavior. In such cases, local law enforcement or school attorneys should be consulted regarding whether the subject should be interviewed, who is best positioned to conduct the interview, and the likely benefits and risks of such an interview. For subjects engaging in potentially threatening behavior from a distance (e.g., through social media) or who are anonymous, it may not be practical to be able to conduct an interview and the team would focus more on building protective strategies for the school community and monitoring the subject's behavior/communications as best as circumstances allow.

Assessment

Key Areas for Inquiry

Following are key areas for inquiry and investigation by the team and that have been developed based on research and standards of practice regarding threat assessment. These resources include (but are not limited to): *Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing & Managing Threats of Targeted Attacks* (Amman et al., 2017); *Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence (NTAC,* 2018); *The International Handbook Of Threat Assessment* (Meloy & Hoffmann, 2014/2020); *The Role of Warning Behaviors In Threat Assessment* (Meloy, et al., 2011); *Protective Intelligence & Threat Assessment Investigations: A Guide for State & Local Law Enforcement Officials* (U.S. Secret Service, 2000).

The following are not intended as questions that would necessarily be asked directly of the subject of concern, though some may be used that way. Rather, the team should review the totality of the information available and use the questions to guide their understanding of the situation, need for intervention, and to inform plans for interventions and follow-up.

Note that this section is not intended as an exhaustive or complete list of areas of inquiry, but rather, as core areas that support assessment and understanding of the situation, the nature and severity of any risk, and that may guide interventions. Additional questions may be asked for clarification and/or to probe more deeply to fully understand the circumstances.

See the sample Threat Assessment and Management Form provided in the Resource section for an example of documentation regarding information gathered and considered through the inquiry process. Part III of the Threat Assessment and Management Form provides a template including the key areas of inquiry.

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding the Subject(s) of Concern

Inquiry regarding a subject of concern seeks information regarding the nature and severity of concerns, whether the subject may pose a threat of violence or other harm to self or others; or is otherwise in need of assistance or intervention. The inquiry considers all sources of information that may be relevant to gaining as comprehensive an understanding of the subject and their concerns, as circumstance may allow. Consider the presence of risk and protective factors, warning signs, coping skills and support systems that may be relevant to the case.

What behaviors are causing concern for or about the subject?

- Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
- When, where and in what circumstances do the behaviors tend to occur?
- Is there a pattern to the behaviors or a change in pattern of behavior that is causing concern?
- If the behaviors have occurred previously, how has the subject dealt with the grievances? What kept them from acting violently?
- Has the subject previously come to someone's attention or raised concern in a way that suggested subject needs intervention or supportive services?
- Are the subject's behaviors causing others concern for the welfare of the subject or others?

Have there been any concerning, aberrant, threatening, or violent communications?

- Were there Directly Communicated Threats * (threats made directly) to targets or sources of grievances?
- Has there been Leakage * (communications to third parties about grievances, ideation, or intent to use violence, planning or preparation)?
- How (e.g., in person, letter, email, diary/journal, social media, website, etc.) and to whom (e.g., targets, peers, others) is the subject communicating?
- What is the "Intensity of Effort" ** (frequency and duration of contact, multiple means used, multiple recipients or targets of communication) in communications or attempts to address grievance?
- Do the communications provide insight about motives/grievances, ideation, planning, preparation, timing, targets, etc.?
- Has anyone been alerted or "warned away"?

What are the subject's motives and goals?

- Does the subject have a major grievance or grudge?
- Against whom? What is the relationship between the subject and any identifiable targets?
- Are there other motives that support use of violence such as desire for notoriety/fame?
- What do they seem to want to achieve with the behavior?
- Does the subject seem fixated (preoccupied, obsessed) on the grievance, target, or need for justice through violence? *Fixation* * may be exhibited through:
  - Increasing perseveration on person or cause (or need for resolution)
  - Increasingly strident opinion and negative characterization of target
  - Impact on family or other associates (of subject) if present and aware
  - Angry emotional undertone, accompanied by social or occupational deterioration
- What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result?

Has the subject shown any inappropriate interest in, fascination, or identification with other incidents or perpetrators of targeted violence (e.g., school/workplace attacks, mass murderers, terrorism, weapons, etc.)?

- Do they exhibit heightened interest, fascination, obsession, or fixation with acts of violence?
- Do they immerse themselves in exposure to violence through movies, videos, books, video games, social media, etc., to the detriment of other life activities or in ways that negatively impact themselves or others? Note: The concern is with the degree of exposure, modeling, identification with, or rehearsal of violence; and the associated lack of other interests or influences, not with incidental or occasional interest in such media.
- *Identification* * (strong desire or need to emulate/be like others) may be with:
  - Perpetrators of targeted violence or powerful figures (e.g., pseudo-commando, warrior, agent of change)
  - Grievances of other perpetrators
  - Weapons or tactics of other perpetrators
  - Effect or notoriety of other perpetrators
  - Ideologies or groups that support and encourage the use of violence to address grievances

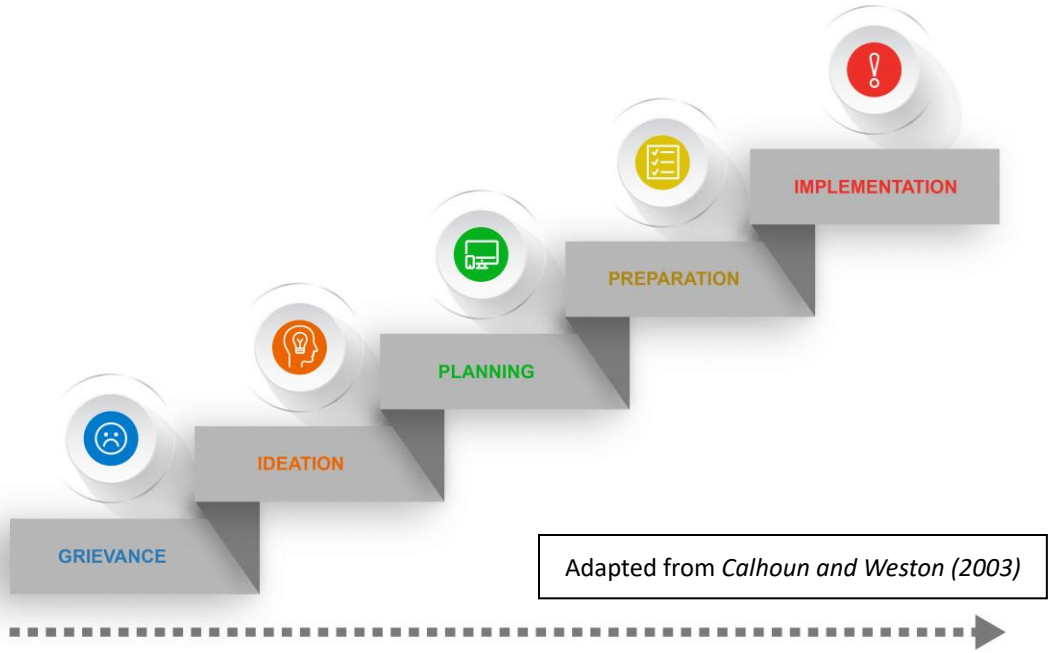
Having heightened interest in acts of violence does not necessarily indicate that the subject poses a threat or is otherwise in need of some assistance. Consider context, developmental age, and other factors that may contribute to perceived fascination or obsessive interest. However, if a subject shows some fascination or identification on any of these topics ***and*** has raised concern in other ways; such as by expressing an idea to do harm to others or to himself/herself, recently obtaining a weapon, or showing helplessness or despair; the combination of these facts should increase the team's concern about the subject.

Note: ** Denotes concepts from the work of Meloy, Hoffman, et al (2011) regarding proximal warning behaviors for violence.*
*** "Intensity of Effort" from work by Scalora, et al (2002) and Meloy (2011).*

Does the subject have (or are they developing) the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?

- Are there *Pathway warning behaviors* * (planning or preparation)?
  - Are they gathering information to support a plan for violence?
  - Does the subject have the means and methods (e.g., access to a weapon, tools, materials) to carry out an attack? Note: Weapons may not be limited to firearms. Consider knives/edge weapons, bombs, arson, vehicles, etc.
  - Are they trying to obtain or get access to the means (e.g., weapons, tools, materials) to carry out an act of violence?
  - Is the access to or possession of a weapon a new interest and/or related to grievances or violent intent?
  - Is the subject attempting to get proximity to targets, or otherwise create opportunity to cause harm?
  - Is the subject engaging in stalking or surveillance activities?
  - Are they practicing or rehearsing for the violence?
  - Have they developed the capability (skill and will) to cause harm?
- Where is the subject along the Pathway? How quickly are they moving?
- Are there changes in activity levels or rate of movement, or *Energy bursts* * (flurries of or changes in frequency/variety of activity)? Do certain circumstances or events tend to impact their movement?
- Is the subject's thinking and behavior organized sufficiently to engage in planning and preparation?
- Is there a history of violence that speaks to capacity or potential targets?
- Are there aspects of *Novel aggression* * (testing limits/boundaries or atypical aggression) when there is no history of violence?

These provide an indication of how far along the pathway the subject has progressed and may also help the team understand how quickly the subject is moving forward toward an attack – i.e., how imminent a threat there may be. Any development of capacity for attack-related behaviors should be a serious indication of potential violence.



Practice Note: ***It is often helpful to build a timeline of subject behaviors to help detect any patterns or changes in patterns of behavior. This is especially helpful in complex or longer-term cases.***

Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?

- Has the subject experienced a recent perceived loss, failure, or injustice?
- Do they experience shame or humiliation related to the loss, failure, or injustice?
- Is the subject having significant difficulty coping with a stressful event? Are there multiple stressors?
- Are there indications of *Last resort behaviors* * (Increasing desperation or distress, pressing subject into violence as a position of last resort)?
  - Desperation, despair, finality, or action imperative
  - Violence justified to address perceived grievance
  - Lack of perceived alternatives
  - Lack of concern for consequences of engaging in violence, or welcoming them to prove or draw attention to injustice (martyrdom)
  - Development of a "legacy token" (term from FBI referencing a communication created by subject and delivered (or staged for discovery) in which subject:
    - Claims credit for planning and acts, or
    - Articulates motivations and reasoning so others may understand grievances suffered, or
    - Perpetuates media coverage to enhance notoriety or infamy.

JACA

In *The Gift of Fear* (de Becker, 1997) noted that dangerousness is dynamic and situational and that four key factors influence the subject's movement from idea to action on the Pathway to Violence:

Justification: The subject feels justified in using violence to address grievances.

Alternatives: The subject perceives few or no alternatives to violence to address grievance, running out of options.

Consequences: The subject accepts the consequences of acting violently. Notes this is all the more significant when a subject *desires* the consequences to prove or draw attention to the injustices suffered (martyrdom).

Ability: The subject perceives their ability to engage in violence. Self-efficacy, the belief in our own ability is a strong predictor in human performance, including violence.

These concepts can contribute to recognizing last resort behaviors and escalation of risk.

Adapted from: de Becker, G (1997). *The Gift of Fear.*

- Has the subject engaged in behavior that suggests that he or she has considered ending their life?

  Many persons who have engaged in significant acts of targeted violence have been despondent and/or suicidal prior to their attacks or at the time of their attacks, hoping to kill themselves or be killed by responding police. Note that most people who are feeling hopeless, desperate, or even suicidal will not pose a threat of harm to others. However, these people are still in need of assistance and intervention.

Has the subject's behavior indicated or raised concern of need for intervention or supportive services?

- Does subject have difficulty coping?
- Are there symptoms of severe, acute, or **untreated** mental illness, such as:
  - Significant lack of contact with reality:
    - Hallucinations (especially command hallucinations)
    - Delusions (especially paranoid/persecutory or grandiosity)
    - Extreme wariness, distrust, or paranoia
  - Symptoms that impact subject's perceptions of grievances or how others respond to subject
  - Significant or sustained agitation or anxiousness
  - Significant or sustained depressed mood
  - Alcohol or other drug use/abuse
  - Pervasive patterns of maladaptive behavior
- Does subject have access to treatment resources?
  - Are they actively engaged in those services?
  - Compliant with the treatment plan and prescriptions?

Does the subject have protective factors, stabilizers, or buffers that inhibit use of violence?

Several factors may decrease risk or inhibit escalation to violence. Check for these protective factors to see if they are present and stable, absent, or diminishing, or need to be bolstered.

- Views violence as unacceptable, immoral
- Accepts responsibility for actions
- Demonstrates remorse for inappropriate behavior
- Respects reasonable limits and expectations
- Uses socially sanctioned means of addressing grievances
- Values life, job, relationships, freedom
- Fears loss of reputation, job, freedom, life
- Maintains, uses, and builds effective coping skills
- Treatment access, compliance, engagement
- Sustains trusted and valued relationships/support systems

A sustained, trusting, and valued relationship with at least one responsible person can be a key stabilizer and inhibitor to violence. That person can provide support, challenge distorted perceptions or violent ideation and help connect subject with support. Consider:

- Does the subject have at least a friend, colleague, family member, or other person that he or she trusts and can rely upon for support, guidance, or assistance?
- Is that trusted person someone that would work collaboratively with the team for the well-being of the subject of concern? Does that other person have skill and willingness to monitor, intervene, support subject?
- Is the subject emotionally connected to and engaged with other people?
- Is there a deterioration of support, increased withdrawal, or isolation from, or alienation by prior support systems?

Having someone that the subject trusts can be a protective factor, but it is important to understand the nature of the relationship. A connection with a responsible person can be a good influence on the subject. However, if the trusted person has a negative influence, then this can have a profound risk-enhancing effect. If the team decides that the subject in question poses a threat of harm, the team can solicit the help of this responsible person to assist in developing and implementing a management plan. The team should monitor the status of the relationship in case it should fall apart, and then become a potential risk factor for escalation.

Areas of Inquiry Regarding Potential Targets

Targets (and others impacted by the subject's behavior) may behave or respond in ways that indicate the level of threat they perceive, that increase their vulnerability or diminish their ability to protect themselves, or that reflect needs for assistance or support.

Are Targets (or others) indicating vulnerability or concern about, or impact by, the subject's behavior?

- Are those who know the subject concerned that he or she might act based on violent ideas or plans?
  The team should recognize that some people – such as parents, significant others, or anyone else who is very close with the person in question – may not see the potential for violence even if others do. Those in close relationships with a person may be too close to the person/situation to admit violence is possible or even likely.
- Are those who know the subject concerned about a specific target?
- Are they concerned for the well-being of the subject?
- Are targets or others around the subject engaging in protective actions (e.g. distancing, avoiding, minimizing conflict, modifying routines or behaviors, etc.) even if they do not define the subject as a threat.
- Are targets engaging in behavior or in situations that increase their:
  - Desirability: A source of subject's grievances or fuel fantasies for violence
  - Availability: The proximity or access between the subject and target
  - Vulnerability: Lack of protective factors or behaviors or coping abilities of the target.

FBI resources indicate that subjects are influenced in their choices of targets by several factors, including the **desirability**, **availability**, and **vulnerability** of potential targets. We may not always know what supports the perceived desirability of a target as we may not know the subject, their grievance/motives, or how a given target fuels their fantasies for violence. However, we can often help a target decrease their availability and vulnerability to reduce risk.

- Do targets have adequate coping and support resources?
- Are targets or others experiencing stress, trauma, or other symptoms that may benefit from intervention?

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding Environmental/Systemic Factors Impacting the Situation

These are factors that impact or stem from the school/workplace/family environment or systemic issues or challenges that may allow, encourage (or not discourage), or exacerbate the use of violence to address concerns, may inhibit reporting of concerns, or that may impact ability to effectively resolve concerns.

Are there Environmental/Systemic factors that are impacting the situation?

- Systemic, policy, or procedural problems
- Unfair, inconsistent, or biased disciplinary processes
- Silos, gaps, or delays in reporting of concerns
- Poor conflict management skills
- Poor supervisory skills and/or willingness to address
- Inadequate resources to address needs
- School/family/social climate concerns: e.g., harassment, bullying, bias, neglect, or abuse
- Lack of support or treatment resources in community
- Social influences of others in environment
  - Actively discourage or encourage/dare use of violence?
  - Deny/minimize the possibility of violence?
  - Passively collude with act?

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding Precipitating Events

Violence risk is dynamic and situational. It is important to consider not just the current situation involving the subject, target and environment/systems, but also those that may change in the near to mid-term, and whether those changes could make things better or worse for the case.

Are there Precipitating Events that may impact the situation currently and in the foreseeable future?

Common precipitants are related to loss, failures, or injustices, as well as events or circumstances that trigger memories of past grievances, or situations that create unexpected opportunities to act.

- Loss, failure, or injustice related to:
  - Work or school status or performance
  - Relationship/support
  - Health
  - Community/Identity (Rejection or ostracization of others with whom subject identifies)
- Key dates/events
  - Relational (e.g., anniversary, end of relationship, birthdays, holidays)
  - Employment/disciplinary action
  - Administrative action/order (Issuance, service, violation)
  - Court order (Issuance, service, violation)

  - Return to school or work following separation (e.g., holidays or breaks)
    Note that the Protecting America's Schools study found that 41% of violent acts occurred in the first week back following time away from the school.
- Triggers and reminders of any of the above
  - Consider impact of social media or mass media reminders!
- Opportunity (unexpected availability and vulnerability of target)
- Contagion effect of other high profile or locally significant acts of violence
- Case Management Interventions

  Note that even well designed and intended interventions can be a precipitant for change (a good thing when in the right direction!). Any intervention can:
  - Improve situation
  - Worsen situation
  - No discernable change in situation
  - Create new concern/situation

  It is important to monitor for the effect of interventions.

Key Areas of Inquiry Regarding the Integrity of the Assessment Process

What is the consistency, credibility, and completeness of information about the situation?

We must always be attentive to the consistency, credibility, completeness, accuracy, and gaps in our knowledge about a situation. Consider:

- Are the subject's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?
- Do collateral sources confirm or dispute what the subject says is going on and how they are dealing with it?
- Are there multiple sources? Are they providing consistent information?
  - Do sources have direct and unique knowledge of subject and/or situation?
  - Do any sources have ulterior motives?
- What gaps exist in understanding of the situation? What don't we know?
- What bias or misperceptions may be influencing witnesses, targets, or members of the threat assessment team? Consider sources of bias/distortion in our thought processes, for which we should monitor, these can include (but are not limited to):
  - Confirmation bias: Seeking and integrating information that supports/affirms our prior beliefs
  - Anchoring: Base final judgment on information gained early on – first impressions may bias future perspectives
  - Over-Confidence: Failure to spot limits of knowledge and therefore perceive less risk. Too much faith in ability
  - In-Group bias: Overestimate abilities, value, and credibility of people we know (or are like) more than people we do not know or who are different
  - Availability: Overestimate likelihood of events that have greater availability in memory due to being unusual, recent, or emotionally salient
  - Probability neglect: Overestimate risks of harmless or low probability events, while underestimate risks of high probability events even when they are not harmless (1/84 chance of dying in vehicle accident vs 1/5,000+ of dying in plane crash)
  - Fundamental attribution error: Place blame for own bad outcomes on external events. When others have bad outcomes, make judgements about them – failure to account for interactions between the person and the situation
  - Hindsight bias: Overestimate predictability of past events based on current knowledge of facts and outcome

Source: Daniel Kahneman (2013) Thinking Fast & Slow

Formulating an Assessment of the Case

General Considerations

The team should focus on the totality of the information gathered during the inquiry that is relevant to the situation being addressed. In forming its understanding and assessment of the situation, the team should:

- Focus on the facts of specific case.
- Focus on the behaviors involved rather than generalizations about traits.
- Focus on understanding of context of behavior.
- Examine progression of behavior over time.
- Corroborate critical information.

Consider the STEP Domains:

S Is the **Subject** engaging in behavior(s) that may pose a threat of violence, harm or significant disruption to self or others; or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention?

T Are **Targets/others** vulnerable to harm, in need of or protective actions, impacted by the situation, or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention?

E Are there **Environmental/systemic** issues contributing to or impacting upon the situation?

P Are there reasonably foreseeable **Precipitating events** that may impact the situation?

+ Are there actions the threat assessment team can facilitate (to address any concerns noted), beyond those already being effectively done?

Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger & Nolan (2020)

The team documents its sources, findings, and rationale, and then proceeds to develop, implement, and monitor an individualized threat management plan to reduce the risk that the subject poses.

Fostering Effective Case Discussions:

When the team discusses the case to make its assessment, it can be helpful to keep in mind the following tips:

- Keep the discussion focused on the facts of the case as well as considering the potential importance of the unknowns.
- Avoid the tendency to profile based on generalizations or stereotypes, focus on behavior.
- Make sure to factor in any context that helps to understand the threatening behaviors.
- Look at whether behavior is improving or deteriorating over time or if certain circumstances are impacting the situation.
- Try to corroborate critical information – check the facts among multiple sources, work to resolve discrepancies.
- All team members should actively engage and participate in the assessment process, sharing their perspectives and concerns with the team.
- Team members should be inquisitive and challenge assumptions that are often made in cases. Consider the basis for the information and/or the assumption, along with its credibility and relevance.
- Seek to minimize bias in decision-making.
- The team should not focus only on concerns and risks, but also on protective factors, strengths, resources, and capabilities of the persons involved, and the school community. This helps support active problem-solving and resource utilization.

Classifying Priority/Level of Concern

The team may use a classification system to prioritize cases. Teams are encouraged not to focus only on dangerousness/risk of the subject of concern, but rather the overall level of concern associated with a case. Many in the threat assessment field advocate the use of "Level of Concern" or "Priority" over "Risk" as a means of categorizing and prioritizing cases (e.g., Scalora et al, 2002; Meloy et al, 2011; Amman et al, 2017).

> *The concept of level of concern is particularly applicable to threat assessment in dynamic, operational conditions, because it is judged on what information is currently available, which may be quite incomplete. A risk judgement, by contrast, requires all relevant information to have been gathered. Secondly, concern levels can reflect circumstance* (Meloy, et al, 2017; page 258).

An effective classification approach considers a holistic view of the case (e.g., using the STEP framework) and incorporates several factors including:

- The nature, severity and immediacy of any threats posed by the subject or the capacity for becoming a threat,
- The impact of the situation on targets and others (i.e., nature, severity, immediacy of harm),
- The nature and level of interventions necessary to prevent or mitigate harm/impact and assist those involved.

Following is a sample priority classification:

Priority 1 (Critical/Imminent): Subject poses an imminent threat of serious violence or harm to self/others and has or may reasonably have significant impact on others. Requires immediate law enforcement and school administration notification, subject containment, target protection and safety planning, implementation of crisis response and notification protocols, ongoing assessment and management plan, and active monitoring.

Priority 2 (High): Subject poses, or is rapidly developing capability for, a threat of serious violence or harm to self or others; or is in urgent need of hospitalization or treatment. Targets/others are impacted. Typically involves environmental/systemic factors and consideration for precipitating events. Requires immediate notification of school administration and law enforcement, subject containment, target protection and safety plan, activation of crisis response protocols as appropriate, ongoing assessment and management plan, and active monitoring. Referrals as appropriate.

Priority 3 (Moderate): Subject does not pose a threat of serious violence or harm though risk cannot be ruled-out. Subject may be developing capability for harm and is engaging in aberrant or concerning behaviors that indicate need for assistance/intervention. Targets/others likely concerned and impacted. Environmental/systemic or precipitating factors may be present. Consider law enforcement/security notification as appropriate. Requires ongoing assessment and management plan, and active monitoring. Referrals as appropriate.

Priority 4 (Low)*:* Subject does not indicate a threat of violence or harm to self or others; would or may benefit from intervention or assistance with concerns. Target, environmental/systemic, or precipitating events may be present at low levels. May involve some ongoing assessment management with passive monitoring and/or periodic active monitoring, Referrals as appropriate; Close case if no team interventions or monitoring indicated.

Priority 5 (Routine/No Known Concerns): Subject does not indicate a threat of violence or harm to self or others; or need for assistance or intervention. No impact on others, environmental factors, or precipitants that need team intervention. Close case.

Managing Threatening Situations

Considerations in Case Management

Based on the information gathered through the inquiry and a comprehensive and holistic assessment of the situation (e.g., STEP), the team will then develop a case management plan, as necessary. The plan should be individualized and specific to the facts and situation of the case in question, and provide for an integrated, holistic, and collaborative response to the case. The team will work so that recommended interventions are coordinated and so that different entities work together toward the same goals – the health, safety, and well-being of the school community. Good case management is informed by research where possible, but mostly by practice and experience as case management is often more art than science.

An engagement model works well with most cases, especially those involving internal threats. Most subjects who come to the attention of threat assessment teams are persons who are struggling or at a crisis point and are looking for assistance. Many have distanced themselves from others or feel alienated from others and typically respond positively to someone who will hear their concerns, not over-react to emotional venting, will engage in problem-solving, and who demonstrates care for them and their situation. While this model generally works well, there are some cases in which such direct engagement may inflame or escalate the situation. Therefore, each situation should be evaluated based on its own case facts to best determine whether such direct engagement would be appropriate.

Teams should use the least intrusive interventions that fit the needs of the case. Interventions that create distance (e.g., changes in class/work assignments, suspension, expulsion, termination) can make further assessment, intervention and monitoring difficult. That is not to say to avoid those interventions, but to be mindful that when they are used, the team should consider how to sustain monitoring of their effect.

Finally, when considering who will facilitate interventions, remember that in addition to role or skill, personalities and chemistry can impact the effectiveness of the intervention. A given team member may be very skilled, but just not able to relate to certain subjects or targets. Work together for the best approach based on available resources, setting ego aside. Intervention strategies selected should be the ones with the greatest potential for addressing short-term crises as well as longer-term preventive power.

See the sample Threat Assessment and Management Form (Part IV) in the Resource section for an example of an approach to using the STEP framework to guide a holistic approach to case management, and delineating responsibility for completion of tasks.

While holding students and staff accountable for their actions, school administrators must be fair and reasonable in disciplinary responses. It is important for threat assessment teams to recognize that even fair and reasonable discipline can be perceived as another grievance to which the subject may react. In such cases, the disciplinary response could lead to escalation in threatening behavior. The most punitive responses may or may not prevent acts of violence. Suspension, expulsion, or termination can create the risk of triggering either an immediate or a delayed violent response unless such actions are coupled with containment and support. A student who is expelled, or a staff member who has been terminated, may conclude: “I have lost everything. I have only a short time to act. I will give them what they deserve.” In addition, a student who is suspended or expelled is often under less supervision than if he or she were to remain in a school setting.

That is not reason to withhold appropriate and fair consequences for inappropriate behavior, but rather when the situation arises, for threat assessment teams to have considered and planned for those contingencies. Administrative leave, suspension, expulsion, or termination options that focus solely on accountability and controlling the person do not address the ongoing challenges of:

- Moving person away from thoughts and plans of, and capacity for, violence and/or disruption
- Connecting person to resources (where needed)
- Mitigating organizational/systemic factors
- Monitoring persons when they are no longer connected to organization

Use accountability and separation strategies equitably, and with intentionality, awareness of limitations, and plan for contingencies based on responses to the interventions.

Utilize key relationships to engage with subject, target, and witnesses.
Engagement (communication, interaction, and empathy) can help build key relationships with subjects, targets and witnesses and can foster more effective:

- Information gathering and assessment
- Redirect from violence/targets
- Problem solving/support
- Set boundaries/limitations
- Admonishment/confrontation
- Intervention/referral
- Monitoring
- Deterrence

Consider the goals for the engagement and use that to inform the best approach, by whom, when and where to engage.

Consider involving someone the subject/target trusts
A key to establishing an effective working relationship with the person of concern (as well as some targets and witnesses) is to identify a responsible person they already trust. One key step to defusing a potentially violent situation involving someone with a grievance is to allow him or her to feel "heard" and validated. Even if they cannot get their way – which oftentimes they cannot – feeling as if someone has understood their position can go a long way toward moving the subject away from thoughts and plans of violence. Examples of a trusted ally include:

- Threat Assessment Team member
- Teacher
- School counselor
- School nurse
- Parent/family member
- SRO/Law enforcement officer
- Coach
- Outside counselor
- Pastor
- Other

An Integrated and Holistic Approach to Case Management

Effective case management integrates interventions, where appropriate and feasible, across the (relevant) domains:

S De-escalate, assist, refer, correct, contain, or control the **Subject** who may pose a threat of violence, harm or significant disruption to self or others; or otherwise indicate a need for assistance or intervention.

T Decrease vulnerabilities, provide support and assistance for the **Target**/others impacted or otherwise indicating a need for assistance or intervention

E Address **Environmental**/systemic issues to minimize impact, escalation, or recurrence

P Prepare for and mitigate against **Precipitating events** that may impact the situation.

+ Are there actions the threat assessment team can or should facilitate (to address any concerns noted), beyond those already being effectively done?

Source: Deisinger (1996); Deisinger & Nolan (2020)

Subject-based strategies or interventions
Schools regularly use many of the following examples of interventions or strategies to address situations involving concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior. Teams should consider a broad range of interventions that may de-escalate, assist, refer, contain, control or redirect the subject **away from** plans and preparation for violence; and **toward** engaging with others,

problem solving, adapting, and improving their coping skills and well-being. Examples of subject-based strategies or interventions include (but are not limited to):

- Check-in/Check-out to maintain channel of communication and engagement:
  - Gather information
  - Build rapport and relationship
  - Decrease isolation
  - De-escalate volatile reactions
  - Provide feedback and mentoring
  - Monitor reactions to grievances, interventions, and precipitating events.
- Problem solving about legitimate grievances
- Parental/Family involvement
- Referral for assistance or support services:
  - Academic/work assistance
  - Special education: IEP Accommodations
  - Alternative schooling/work
  - Social skills training
  - Conflict resolution training/anger management
  - Behavioral contracting
  - Modifications of classroom assignment or work schedule
  - Modification of work schedule or assignments
  - Alternative schooling/home schooling
  - Involvement in extra-curricular activities
  - Performance improvement plans
  - Peer coaching/mentoring
- Welfare/Well-being checks
- Counseling/mental health services
  - Check-in/check-out with school counseling staff
  - On-going support assistance with school counseling staff
  - Outpatient counseling/mental health care.
  - Emergency psychiatric evaluation
- Independent medical/psychological evaluations
  - Clinical violence risk and “Direct Threat” evaluation
  - Fitness for duty evaluation
- Referral for Disciplinary Hearing and Measures
  - Subject confrontation or warning
  - Administrative orders for no contact or communication
  - In- school detention /after-school detention
  - Suspension
  - Termination/expulsion
- Referral/Notification to Law Enforcement or Criminal Justice Services
  - Law enforcement/juvenile justice involvement
  - Court issued protective orders
  - Diversion programs

Target-Based Case Management Strategies

In addition to interventions focused on addressing the behavior of the individual(s) of concern, effective threat management teams also attempt to minimize risk and negative impact on identified or identifiable targets and seek to maintain contact (where appropriate) to help monitor the actions and impact of the subject of concern.

Where targets are identified or identifiable, or others are impacted, consider ways to help them reduce their vulnerability to harm where possible. Consider things the target can do (or be coached or supported in) that increase their safety.

Strategies for Targets/Others

Examples of target-based case management strategies include (but are not limited to):

- Setting clear limits and boundaries with subjects regarding communications and contacts
- Monitor communications for changes/escalations by subject
- Avoid contact with or response to subject – do not reinforce subject's attempts to get a response

  Document all contacts from/with subject. Maintain a log of contacts/communications from subject noting date/time/means of contact, nature of contact, witnesses, and impact on the target (including any protective actions they have taken). See the following link to an interactive guide for an example of an incident log: www.familyjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Stalking-Incident-Log.pdf
- Minimize reactivity to subject actions
- Feeling unsafe can lead to emotionally reactive responses that can satisfy, inflame, or enrage subject
- Minimize public information especially with social media and phone

  Safety planning: See the following link to an interactive guide for safety planning regarding relational violence: www.loveisrespect.org/for-yourself/safety-planning/interactive-safety-plan
- Maintain/enhance situational awareness
- Vary routine – be careful about consistent habits
- Develop contingency plans for avoidance or escape (from the subject), shelter, situational awareness, and personal safety.
- Utilize support systems – being/feeling like a target can be stressful. Use support systems/counseling.

Organizational Strategies for Reducing Target Vulnerability

Consider things the school/organization can do that may increase target safety. Examples include:

- Engagement/liaison with Target – have a team member assigned as a point of contact for support and assistance
- Change work/class schedule: hours/location
- Change/enhance security in work/class location
- Notice to staff – staff can help monitor if subject is present or posing a threat to target
- Security staffing
- Safety escorts
- Fear management
  - Sometimes victims are so debilitated by fear, they feel helpless and unable to take steps to help themselves. They need support, encouragement, and intervention.
  - Sometimes targets are unaware or in denial about the level of danger they are in, and not nearly as concerned for their safety as they should be given the circumstances – provide feedback about concerns to help them understand risks to them and others.
- Counseling/EAP Counseling referrals

Environmental/Systemic Case Management Strategies

Cases often help teams identify environmental or systemic gaps that impacted on situations. As part of building a better and safer community, holistic threat management also considers necessary or desired modification of the environment. For example, a student may react inappropriately to a poorly developed and burdensome procedure or policy. The student's behavior must be addressed, but if the procedure or policy tends to provoke discord because it is objectively unfair or unreasonable, then that procedure or policy may be reviewed and revised to be more useful and helpful. The team may have discovered a delay in reporting concerns that was brought about by witnesses not knowing where or how to report concerns, indicating need for more/better awareness or training.

Sometimes situations get out of hand due to poor conflict management, not just by the subject, but by the group or subset of the school. The group may benefit from support/training in dealing effectively with conflict.

- Address systemic, policy, or procedural problems
- Address reporting gaps/delays
- Intervene with associates that support violent behavior
- Enhance conflict management skills of groups
- Bullying prevention/intervention programs
- Enhance supervisory skills and accountability
- Enhance school/work climate – build a safe, caring, and connected community
  - Emphasize fairness and respect
  - Effective communication
  - People rewarded, supported, and held accountable
  - Prevention and early intervention with inappropriate behaviors
  - Build engagement for mutual safety and well-being

School/Work Climate

Threat assessment teams work best in schools that have an overall positive or safe climate, where students and employees feel respected and feel that situations are handled fairly, and that bad behavior – like bullying – is addressed quickly. Schools can enhance their overall climate by surveying everyone in school – students, staff, and parents – to see how safe and respectful the school feels to them. The school can then use the findings in making changes to improve how safe, connected, and respectful the school feels.

Connection through human relationships is a central component of a culture of safety and respect. This connection is the critical emotional glue among students, and between students and adults charged with meeting students' educational, social, emotional, and safety needs. Schools strive for a climate that fosters safety and well-being and connection, where students have a positive connection to each other, and at least one adult. That adult provides a safe place where a student can turn for support and advice, and with whom that student can share concerns openly and without fear of shame or reprisal.

Schools in which students feel able to talk to teachers, deans, secretaries, coaches, custodians, counselors, nurses, school safety officers, bus drivers, principals, and other staff support communication between students and adults about concerns and problems. In one simple example, during staff meetings in a school in a California School District, the names of students are posted, and school faculty members are asked to put stars next to the names of those students with whom they have the closest relationships or know best. Staff members then focus on establishing relationships with those students with few stars next to their names – i.e., those students with the fewest adult connections in the school. This is a small and easy way to help improve connectedness in a school.

Threat assessment is only one component of an overall strategy to reduce school violence and implemented within the larger context of strategies to ensure schools are safe and secure environments. The principle objective of school violence-reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within the school. Several school safety strategies can support and enhance a positive climate. Examples include:

- Effective communication among and between school staff, students, and parents/guardians of students
- School climate assessments and intervention with identified issues
- Emphasis on school connectedness
- Strong, but caring, stance against the code of silence
- Bullying/harassment prevention and intervention
- School-law enforcement partnerships including well-trained school resource officers
- Collaborative relationships with mental health, social services, and other community-based resources

- Planning and preparation to deal with, respond to, and recover from potential crises
- Physical security and crime prevention through environmental design

Monitoring for the Impact of Precipitating Events on Case Management

The threat assessment team members recognize that cases do not occur in a vacuum and that life continues while they are assessing and intervening with a given case. The team maintains an ongoing, longitudinal approach to anticipating, monitoring for, and (to the extent possible) managing the impact of potential precipitating events such as:

- Minimize unnecessary precipitants where possible (look to systemic issues that unnecessarily impact case)
- Consider impact of timing and location of interventions
- Monitor and plan for Loss/Injustice
- Monitor and plan for Key dates/events in the process of case management
- Anniversaries
- Hearings
- Court dates
- Service of notice about outcomes
- Monitor for reactions to administrative/court actions
- Monitor reactions to case management/interventions
- Monitor for contagion effect of other high profile or locally significant acts of violence

LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO INFORMATION SHARING AND RECORD KEEPING

A broad range of legal issues can impact cases, including but not limited to:

- Constitutional protections on free speech, due process, search, and seizure
- Civil rights concerns related to race, ethnicity, sex, disability, etc.
- Federal and State Healthcare Privacy Laws
- Federal and State Education Privacy Laws, e.g., FERPA (Family Educational Rights Privacy Act)
- Federal and State Disability Laws
- Federal and State Employment Laws
- Federal and State Intelligence/Fusion Center Privacy Policies
- State Threat Assessment Laws, Regulations, Standards
- Record-Keeping and Open Records Laws
- Standards of Practice/Tort Law
- School Policies

While none of these interfere with being able to deal with threats impacting the school or workplace, some can be complex, and the guidance of legal counsel is strongly suggested. For example:

- A student/employee should only be removed if the threatening behaviors engaged in by the subject are a violation of the relevant Code of Conduct /school board policy, and when all applicable disciplinary procedures are followed. However, in the event that the applicable disciplinary procedures are not available to school-based staff and the school administration or threat assessment team believes that the subject poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services as provided in 28 C.F.R. § 35.139, the Direct Threat standard may be utilized. The Direct Threat standard states that the law does not require a public entity (e.g., a school):

> *…to permit an individual to participate in or benefit from the services, programs, or activities of that public entity when that individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.*
>
> *In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, a public entity must make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence, to ascertain: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services will mitigate the risk.*

- A determination that a person with a disability poses a direct threat may ***not*** be based on generalizations or stereotypes about the effects of a disability and must be based on an individualized assessment.

Before applying the direct threat standard or other complex legal standards, the school administrator should contact the school division's Director of Special Education, or, where available, legal counsel.

While the law does not often limit our ability to deal with threat cases, misunderstanding of the laws DOES impact cases, such as in terms of people's willingness to report or respond effectively to concerns. Staff may not know when they can and cannot share information about a subject with the threat assessment team.

Team members should have a working knowledge of foundational issues, and access to legal counsel (with training and experience in the relevant bodies of law) to provide guidance.

FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act):

Key points about FERPA:

- FERPA does not impede the work of a threat assessment team when handling any cases of threats or concern about potential violence or self-harm. However, **misunderstanding** of FERPA **can** impede threat management efforts.
- FERPA protects the privacy of information in a student's educational **records**. It prohibits the inappropriate disclosure of student educational information beyond those who have a legitimate educational interest, i.e., a need to know.
- FERPA pertains only to the privacy of records; it does not extend to communications, observations, and other forms of information that team members may need to share. This means that team members are free to ask – and faculty and staff are free to share – their observations about a student, verbal communications with that student, and anything else not written down.
- FERPA allows sharing of information (within the school) with school officials having a legitimate educational interest. Information from an educational record can be shared with other school staff, who have a need to know. Certainly, a threat assessment team has a need to know! Schools must define who they consider to be a school official in their FERPA statement and should identify Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management (BTAM) Team members as such school officials.
- FERPA also includes exceptions that allow information sharing in the case of emergency situations and/or situations where public safety is a concern. Guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education (which enforces FERPA) following the mass casualty incident at Virginia Tech has made clear that it is up to individual schools to decide whether there is an emergency or public safety concern. The team should articulate and document the nature of the emergency and/or threat to public safety.
- FERPA does not pertain to school law enforcement unit records (i.e., records created and maintained by and primarily for a law enforcement purpose). Records created and maintained under the umbrella of the institution's school resource officer or other designated law enforcement entity would not be educational records, **unless shared with school officials**.
- FERPA allows for sharing of education records (and information from those records) when a student applies for enrollment or transfer. This allows for sharing of BTAM information between schools or schools/colleges, where there is an articulable need to know.

- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that FERPA does not permit a private right of action, meaning that individuals cannot be sued for violations of FERPA. The law provides that federal funding **could be withheld,** or fines could be assessed in cases where a pattern or practice of violations is present (as opposed to isolated violations, which are not individually sanctionable). To date, there have been no instances where an institution has received such sanctions for violating FERPA. Rather, it is more likely that an institution would receive a corrective notice, and additional training from the U.S. Department of Education if it were found to have shared information in violation of FERPA.

For more information, see **www.ed.gov** and search for FERPA or the Family Policy Compliance Office, which oversees FERPA. You can contact that office directly with questions.

For further information about laws relevant to information sharing and privacy, see the
Information Sharing Guide for K-12 Public Schools,
available from the
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
on the DCJS website: www.dcjs.virginia.gov.

Exercise about FERPA:

Consider the following to test your understanding of FERPA:

A teacher approaches you (member of TAT) very concerned about an interaction they just had with a student after a class. During that conversation, the student engaged in behaviors and made statements that led the teacher to believe that the student was a serious threat to the safety of themselves and others at school.

Based on the information shared, you concur there appears to be a significant threat.

When you ask the name of the student, the teacher becomes very cautious and says they are not sure if they can provide that information, that they don't want to violate privacy law and be sued by the student's family.

What mistakes, if any, are being made?

Here are the main mistakes:

1. The teacher's conversation with the student is not covered by FERPA as it is not an educational record. However, if the teacher wrote up an incident report that contained information that identified the student (or would reasonably identify them) and that report was maintained by the school, then THAT report would likely be an educational record and subject to FERPA protections. The teacher would still be able to disclose their personal observations.
2. A member of the threat assessment team is generally a school official with a legitimate educational interest. The teacher can share any educational record with a school official that is pertinent to their duties. Note that schools are required to define "educational/school officials" and that definition MAY include School Resource Officers and even other local or state law enforcement who serve on the Threat Assessment Team. However, certain criteria need to be met for an external law enforcement officer to meet the definition of a school official. If they do, they can receive information from a student's educational record (for threat assessment purposes) without release of the student or their parent, or a subpoena.
3. The teacher articulated a public safety concern (and you concurred) which gives articulable basis for sharing of information, including, if needed, to share information outside the school with those that can help prevent harm (e.g.., parents, law enforcement, mental health). Note that, per FERPA, for such disclosures the school must document the disclosure, to whom it was made, and for what purposes.
4. There is no private right to action under FERPA. Neither you nor the teacher can be sued for an individual FERPA violation, EVEN IF, you had made a mistake.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

When it comes to accessing information that a health provider may have about a subject, that information is generally more difficult to access than information protected by FERPA. Federal (e.g., HIPAA) and state laws, protect information shared between a doctor and patient, and limit information that can be lawfully shared with others. Keeping that information confidential helps patients trust their doctors and disclose more to facilitate more effective treatment. Teams do not want to unduly compromise the safety that confidentiality provides; however, serious safety concerns always trump privacy concerns.

For school health professionals, HIPAA likely does not apply, as the records of school health services are more likely covered under FERPA, unless they involve treatment records. However, state medical records privacy laws likely impact on what licensed health care providers in schools can share. The state privacy laws are generally consistent with HIPAA.

Again, consult with your legal counsel – but following is what legal experts advise about HIPAA and state confidentiality laws:

- HIPAA protects the confidentiality of information in health records. In addition, state laws also protect the confidentiality of mental health information and discussions between a patient and a mental health professional.
- HIPAA and state laws generally include exceptions where information can be shared in situations where a patient is a threat to themselves or others. In such situations where a mental health professional is aware that his/her patient has threatened harm to themselves or to someone else, the mental health professional may have a duty to warn someone or to do something to protect the victim in question.
- Under HIPAA and state laws, confidentiality is held by the client or patient, not the mental health professional. The threat assessment team can always ask the person in question for their permission to access their mental health records and talk with their mental health professional. If approached with sincerity for their well-being and assurance that the team can best help the person in question with full information, it is quite likely that the person will consent. The team will need to get the person's permission in writing.
- While HIPAA and state laws may prevent a mental health professional from disclosing information to the threat assessment team, it does **not** prohibit mental health professionals from ***receiving information*** about a patient. The team can provide the information it knows to an individual's therapist or counselor. In many cases, a treating mental health professional may only have partial information about a patient/client. Receiving information from the team about an individual may enhance the treatment that the mental health professional is able to provide.
- If the team provides information to a mental health professional, it can then ask the mental health professional whether the new information received from the team elevates their concern about the patient to the point where they now have a duty to warn or a duty to protect. If so, the mental health professional may be able to share information with the team.
- Finally, access to mental health information can be helpful in threat assessment cases, but it may not provide more detail than the team is able to access through others who know or have observed the person in question. It is more important to consider incorporating any treating mental health professional into an individual case management plan.

Record Keeping

There are many issues related to the creation, storage, access, sharing, and destruction of records, so be sure to obtain guidance from legal counsel. However, as the recipient and screener of all potentially threat-related information, it is helpful for the threat assessment team to maintain a centralized database of everyone who has come to the team's attention. It need not be complicated; a simple spreadsheet (one that can be searched for names, terms, etc.) would suffice. However, given the amount of information and the importance of accessing it easily and quickly, it is recommended that a database be used.

This database can be used to store all information gathered throughout the threat assessment and management process. Or the database can be used as more of an incident-tracking system that holds the names and other identifiers of everyone who is reported to the team. This system would enable the team to cross-reference the case file that contains the information relevant to that person and incident. Either way, even if a report does not seem to be a legitimate threat now or the case is closed quickly, the individual's name should still be noted in the database. If, at a later time, the individual's name comes up again, the

team will find information from this earlier report in the database after "pinging" the system — that is, searching the database for the name in question — and therefore be more informed about the individual's pattern of behavior.

The database provides a simple and organized way to store, search, and retrieve information so that the threat assessment team can quickly know if a certain individual has come across the radar screen previously.

In addition to the database, other records maintained by the team may include:

- Documentation of the subject's exact words and actions, including date, time, behaviors, impact, and witnesses
- Documentation of personal reactions and protective actions taken
- Copies of emails, memos, voicemails, and other communications pertaining to the case
- Agenda and minutes of team staffing and consultations.

Threat assessment team records should not be stored in counseling/mental health files, disciplinary files, or the centralized scholastic records of a student. Each of those may have related documentation and the Central file should reference a threat assessment, but not include full details. Those should be stored in a secure, centralized location that is accessible to members of the team but that restricts unauthorized persons from having access. Typically, that is either on a secure computer server to which members of the team have access (and no one else) or in secure hard copy files in the office area of the school administrator having oversight of the threat assessment team, but not accessible to others.

Fortify your position

Effective threat assessment and management efforts are accompanied by thorough documentation that demonstrates the team's good faith efforts to identify, investigate, assess, and manage threatening situations. The team can remember this with the acronym FORT. Engage in actions and accompanying documentation that demonstrates that the team was:

Fair – sought to understand situations and give individuals an opportunity to be heard and understood

Objective – sought information based on facts and observations of the case and not speculation or bias

Reasonable – engaged in responses that were effective and proportionate to the situation, and

Timely – quickly and responsively addresses reports of threatening behavior

Source: © G. Deisinger (1996)

By maintaining records and preserving evidence throughout the threat assessment and management process, the team establishes and preserves a legal and behavioral justification for interventions to address potential threats and support the health, safety, and well-being of the school community.

Records retention and disposition

Teams are encouraged to retain records of threat assessment and management cases as long as is allowed under relevant laws or regulations regarding retention of such records. Individuals may pose an ongoing threat after leaving school, graduating, or losing employment.

Student Threat Assessment Records

Student threat assessment records shall be retained for five (5) years after student graduates, completes a Board of Education program, transfers, or withdraws. Student threat assessment records should be disposed of using confidential destruction methods as referenced below.

Non-Student Threat Assessment Records

Non-student threat assessment records shall be retained for five (5) years after the event or incident documented. While the retention schedule does not require confidential destruction of these records, given the sensitive nature of the information that may be involved, non-student threat assessment records should be disposed of using confidential destruction methods as referenced below.

In instances where an employee, as part of a threat assessment process, has undergone evaluation or treatment by a medical professional, there may be health records that document any long-term health risk, as well as any health treatment or examination given to an employee by a medical professional to facilitate the threat assessment and management process. Records may include, but is not limited to health assessments, medical clearance or release-to-duty notices, reports, and other health records related to a threat case. Such employee health records that are part of a threat assessment case shall be retained for 30 years after separation from employment. Employee health records that are part of threat assessment records should be disposed of using confidential destruction methods as referenced below.

Destruction of records

Destruction of confidential or privacy-protected paper records must be done by shredding, pulping, or incineration. Electronic records must be overwritten with meaningless data or the storage media must be physically destroyed. Commercial software applications are available that electronically shred records from media. Deletion of confidential or privacy-protected information in electronic storage media is not acceptable. Note that this guidance does not cover all records that may be related to a threat assessment case and that retention and disposition schedules may vary based on the specific type of record involved (e.g., disciplinary, special education, health care plan, etc.). Schools are referred to the Library of Virginia Records Retention and Disposition Schedules, especially GS-03 Personnel Records and GS-21 Public School records. Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/index.htm

Resources

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DEFINITIONS

Bullying: Any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. Bullying includes cyber bullying but does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Direct Threat: Defined under law as one in which a person poses a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services. A determination that a person with a disability poses a direct threat may not be based on generalizations or stereotypes about the effects of a particular disability and must be based on an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment relying on current medical evidence or on the best available objective evidence, to determine: the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk.

Duty to Warn/Protect: A legal duty of a mental health professional with knowledge of a potential act of violence by someone in his care, directed at a third party. This knowledge requires him to act reasonably to protect the potential victim from the threat.

Fixation: An extreme preoccupation with another person, an activity, or an idea. In threat assessment and management cases, it is often observed to involve a grievance, personal cause, or a public figure.

Intervention: A strategy or approach that is intended to prevent violence or other harm, and enhance the health, safety, or well-being of the school community.

Intimacy Effect: The closer the interpersonal relationship between a person of concern and a target, the greater the likelihood is of violence. This intimacy can be based upon the person of concern's perception of the relationship, including delusional perceptions.

Monitoring: Checking on the status of the case.

- **Active Monitoring** involves the threat assessment team deliberately and dynamically engaging with persons involved in the case and school/community systems to check-in regarding the status of case, subject/target responses to interventions, needs of the school community, impact of environmental/systemic factors or precipitating events, etc.
- **Passive Monitoring** involves encouraging and supporting persons involved in the case, or other members of the community to report any further issues or concerns to the threat assessment team, as necessary.

Pathway to Violence: One of several models proposed to describe a progression from grievance to attack. Steps along the pathway include a highly personalized grievance, violent ideation, research and planning, specific preparations for violence, breaches of security or other boundaries, and attack. It is possible that an individual's pathway may differ or not exist at all.

- **Grievance:** A real or perceived sense of loss, mistreatment, or injustice, often fueling a feeling of being wronged, shamed, or humiliated.
- **Ideation:** Expressing thoughts or fantasies regarding the use of violence to address a real or perceived grievance.
- **Planning:** Giving thought and consideration not only to the idea and intent of committing violence, but also to the who, what, when, where, and how of doing so. May involve gathering information regarding their grievances, their targets, means of causing harm, equipment, etc., or research other incidents of targeted violence to learn from other perpetrators.
- **Preparation:** Attempts to prepare for the violence and to develop or acquire the capability to cause harm to the intended target(s)/victim(s). They obtain or try to obtain the means, refine methods, facilitate, or take advantage of opportunity and proximity to targets to fulfill their plans.
- **Implementation:** The subject initiates the operationalized plan once reaching a point where they perceive themselves as capable of doing so. Capability is based on the subject's perceived skill and will to cause harm.

Protective Factor: Characteristics or conditions that may help to decrease a person's risk for violence.

Proximal Warning Behaviors: Dynamic and/or changing patterns of behavior that may be evidence of increasing or accelerating risk.

- **Directly Communicated Threat:** An unambiguously stated or written threat to either a target or to law enforcement expressing intent to commit violence.
- **Energy Burst:** An increase in frequency, duration, or variety of warning behaviors related to a target, even if the behaviors themselves appear relatively innocuous, usually in the days or weeks before an attack.
- **Fixation Warning Behavior:** An extreme preoccupation with another person, an activity, or an idea. In threat assessment and management cases, it is often observed to involve a grievance, personal cause, or a public figure.
- **Identification Behavior:** Actual or virtual behavior demonstrating a psychological desire to be a pseudo-commando, adopt a warrior mentality, identify with military or law enforcement paraphernalia, identify with past attackers, or to associate with advancing a particular cause or belief.
- **Last Resort Behavior:** Communications or actions indicating increasing desperation or distress, or that the person of concern perceives no alternatives to violence.
- **Leakage:** Communications or expressions, in any form which do not directly threaten but otherwise reveal clues related to a subject's grievances, ideas, intentions, plans or preparations, about committing violence.
- **Novel Aggression**: This is an act of aggression which appears unrelated to any "pathway" behavior and which is committed for the first time or is atypical. A person of concern may be engaging in this behavior to test their ability to engage in a violent act and it could be thought of as experimental aggression.
- **Pathway Warning Behavior**: Any behavior that is part of research, planning, preparation, or implementation of an attack.

Risk Assessment: A calculation, based upon known variables, of a person's risk for engaging in violence. Risk level is often based upon static factors rather than warning behaviors, and frequently requires in-person evaluations in a clinical setting. This technique is not commonly used by threat assessors.

Risk Factor: Characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may engage in violence. Violence risk is most often the result of multiple risk factors converging at a moment in time. Risk factors may encompass biological, psychological, and/or social factors in the individual, family, and environment. Risk of violence is highest when multiple factors are present or escalating, when protective factors and healthy coping techniques have diminished, and when the individual has access to lethal means.

Self-Harm/Self-Directed Violence: Behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself. Self-harm behaviors can be either non-suicidal or suicidal.

Stalking: A pattern of behaviors or course of directed at another person with the intent to place, or when he knows or reasonably should know that the conduct places that other person in reasonable fear of death, criminal sexual assault, or bodily injury to that other person or to that other person's family or household member.

Suicide: Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with an intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Suicide Attempt: A self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to die. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries. A mixture of ambivalent feelings, such as a wish to die and a desire to live, is a common experience with most suicide attempts. Therefore, ambivalence is not a reliable indicator of the seriousness or level of danger of a suicide attempt or the person's overall risk.

Suicidal Behavior: Suicide attempts, injury to oneself associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

Suicidal Ideation: Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior that may result in death. A desire to be dead without a plan or the intent to end one's life is still considered suicidal ideation and shall be taken seriously.

Suicide Contagion: The process by which suicidal behavior or a suicide completion influences an increase in the suicide risk of others. Identification, modeling, and guilt are each thought to play a role in contagion. Although rare, suicide contagion can result in a cluster of suicides within a community.

Target: The general definition of a target is a person, thing, or place that is the focus of an attack. In threat assessment and management casework it is a point of fixation for intended violence. This can include people, buildings, organizations, or more general concepts.

Targeted Violence: An incident of violence where a potential assailant chooses a target(s) prior to a violent act.

Threat: A concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual may pose a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others. The threat may be expressed or 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.

Violent Extremism: Violent action for which the impetus of the attack is born out of an ideological system, usually intended to enact some change or disrupt activities deemed unacceptable by followers of that ideology.

Warning Signs: Characteristics or behaviors that are associated with a current or escalating risk of violence. These tend to be dynamic, acute, and often associated with new stresses, events, losses, or failures.

Comparison of Safe School Initiative (2002) and Protecting America's Schools (2019)

	Safe School Initiative (2002)	**Protecting America's Schools (2019)**
INCIDENTS	**n = 37**	**n = 41**
Years studied	1974–2000	2008–2017
Multiple attackers	8%	0%
Weapons	**97% firearm; 3% bladed; 8% had additional weapons**	**61% firearms; 39% bladed; 7% had additional weapons**
Handguns	*67% of 36 firearms attacks*	72% of 25 firearms attacks
Long Guns	*50% of 36 firearms attacks*	36% of 25 firearms attacks
Firearm from a residence	*73% of 36 firearms attacks*	76% of 25 firearms attacks
Victims specifically targeted	46%	56%
Subject committed suicide	13%	17%
ATTACKERS	**n = 41**	**n = 35 (of 41)**
Gender	100% male	83% male
Age	11-21	12-18
Status	95% current students	90% current students
History of any arrest	27%	31%
Violent crime	17%	17%
Subject abuse/neglected	27%	23%
Mental health diagnosis before	17%	40%
Mental health symptoms		
Depression	61%	63%
Suicidal thoughts/gestures	78%	63%
Suicide attempts	10%	11%
Substance use/abuse	49%	49%
Perceived as loners	34%	26%
History of Violence	31%	51%
Stressors	98%	100%
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE		
Academic performance		
Positive	27%	51%
Neutral	37%	14%
Negative	5%	31%
Unknown	17%	20%
Suspended (at least once)	27%	51%
Expelled (at least once)	10%	17%
Bullied by other students	71%	80%
Subject bullied other students	34%	37%
BEHAVIORS		
At least one person knew	83%	77%
A peer	83%	77%
An adult	7%	14%
Concerning behaviors observed	93%	100%

VIRGINIA RESOURCES

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) – Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS)
www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/k-12

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety is dedicated to supporting our constituents in the K-12 environment through training, with resources and technical assistance, and by guiding best practices. One of the many important components for K-12 schools is Safety and Security. Visitors will find information on School Security Officers, the annual School Safety Audit, and other school safety topics in this section of the website. A variety of resources (including this guidance document) can also be obtained through the VCSCS site, under the K-12 resources located at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/k-12-resources-and-curriculum

Virginia Department of Education
www.doe.virginia.gov

The mission of the Virginia Department of Education is to lead and facilitate the development and implementation of a quality public education system that meets the needs of students and assists them in becoming educated, productive, responsible, and self-reliant citizens.

Suicide Prevention Resources: www.doe.virginia.gov/support/prevention/suicide/index.shtml
Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools
Model Policy to Address Bullying in Virginia's Public Schools

Virginia State Police – Virginia Fusion Center (VFC)
http://fusion.vsp.virginia.gov

The Virginia Fusion Center (VFC) was created as a partnership between the Virginia State Police and Virginia Department of Emergency Management to improve the Commonwealth of Virginia's preparedness against terrorist attacks and to deter criminal activity. The VFC provides a vital conduit for information exchange allowing it to communicate with its partners. The primary mission of the Virginia Fusion Center is to fuse together key counterterrorism and criminal intelligence resources from local, state, and federal agencies as well as private industries in a secure, centralized location, to facilitate information collection, prioritization, classification, analysis, and sharing, in order to better defend the Commonwealth against terrorist threats and/or attack and to deter criminal activity. The Virginia Fusion Center can be an important resource for school Threat Assessment Teams. The VFC can be accessed through local law enforcement agencies or by contacting the Fusion Center directly.
Virginia Fusion Center (Primary): 804-674-2196
Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center (serving the northern Virginia Capital Region): 703-802-2746
Website: http://fusion.vsp.virginia.gov/sar This site can be used for reporting suspicious activity that may be related to targeted violence.

Virginia Statewide Hotline *(formerly The Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline):*

The Statewide Hotline is operated 24/7/365 in-house through the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance, Virginia's leading voice on sexual and intimate partner violence. The Statewide Hotline provides direct access 24/7/365 to advocates with specialized training in sexual and domestic violence who provide lifesaving, trauma-informed services and practical tools for safety and healing. The scope of services for survivors are:

- Toll free, confidential, 24/7/365 hotline for victims, friends or family, allied professionals, and the public.
- Trained sexual and domestic violence advocates who provide crisis intervention, risk assessment and safety planning, support, and information and referrals to community-based services.
- Compassionate and culturally appropriate services to all callers.
- Bi-lingual staff and access to language interpretation services.
- Answer calls on behalf of more than 24 sexual and domestic violence agencies during evening, weekend, and holiday hours; trainings; staff meetings; and inclement weather.
- Specialized services to incarcerated individuals who are victims of sexual violence.
- Culturally appropriate and sensitive services to the LGTBQ community through the LGTBQ Partner Abuse and Sexual Assault Helpline and in collaboration with the Virginia Anti-Violence Project.

Call: 1-800-838-8238

Text: 804-793-9999

Chat (Confidential instant messaging): www.vadata.org/chat

NATIONAL RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Adverse Childhood Experiences: How ACEs Affect Our Lives and Society

Interactive graphics: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/phl/resource_center_infographic.html
Downloadable report: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/phl/images/ACES_Infographic_Accessible.pdf

Connecting the Dots: Overview of Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence

Available at: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/sites/vetoviolence.cdc.gov.apps.connecting-the-dots/themes/ctd_bootstrap/asset/connecting_the_dots.pdf

Dating Matters: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships

Toolkit: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/dating-matters-toolkit/explore-component#/
Training for Educators Manual: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/sites/vetoviolence.cdc.gov.apps.dating-matters-toolkit/themes/dmh_ng_bootstrap/assets/pdf/Educator-Training-Manual-Combined-PDF.pdf

National Center for School Safety

www.nc2s.org

The National Center for School Safety (NCSS) is housed at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. The Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded center launched in October of 2019. Its mission is to bring together a multi-disciplinary team of researchers and practitioners to develop a comprehensive and accessible training and technical assistance resource for the school safety community nationwide.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)

http://safesupportiveschools.ed.gov/index.php?id=01

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to: provide training and support to state administrators; school and district administrators; institutions of higher education; teachers; support staff at schools; communities and families; and students and seek to improve schools' conditions for learning through measurement and program implementation, so that all students can realize academic success in safe and supportive environments. The NCSSLE website includes information about training and technical assistance, products and tools, and the latest research findings.

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

www.nrcdv.org

The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence is an independent, non-profit organization that serves as a comprehensive source of information for those wanting to educate themselves and help others on the many issues related to domestic violence.

National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)

www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac

A resource of the U.S. Secret Service, NTAC provides resources and training regarding research and practice regarding threat assessment in K-12 schools, building positive school climates, and bystander intervention

Police Foundation Averted School Violence Database

www.avertedschoolviolence.org

The Averted School Violence Data Collection Platform, developed with support from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) of the U.S. Department of Justice, gathers data on incidents of averted school and campus violence for comparison with incidents of completed acts of violence. They invite submissions regarding cases of averted violence and provide summary analyses of their findings.

School Safety.gov

www.schoolsafety.gov

SchoolSafety.gov was created by the federal government to provide schools and districts with actionable recommendations to create a safe and supportive learning environment where students can thrive and grow.

Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC)

www.stalkingawareness.org

The Stalking Prevention, Awareness, and Resource Center (SPARC) ensures first responders and other allied professionals have the specialized knowledge to identify and respond to the crime of stalking. As a comprehensive national resource center, SPARC provides a multi-faceted approach to programming. SPARC assists multi-disciplinary professionals with information, resources, and policy and protocol development through our technical assistance endeavors. SPARC also provides local, regional, statewide, and national trainings.

U.S. Department of Education – *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (34 CFR Part 99)*

https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/node/548

School Resource Officers, School Law Enforcement Units, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is available at: https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/SRO_FAQs.pdf

Workplaces Respond to Domestic Sexual Violence: A National Resource Center

www.workplacesrespond.org

Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, the Center offers internet-based information for those interested in providing effective workplace responses to victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking. The site contains a workplace policy creation tool offering choices of model language.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP)

www.atapworldwide.org

The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) was founded in 1992 as a non-profit organization comprised of law enforcement, prosecutors, mental health professionals, corporate security experts, probation and parole personnel, and others involved in the area of threat and violence risk assessment. The purpose of ATAP is to afford its members a professional and educational environment to exchange ideas and strategies to address such issues as stalking, threats, and homeland security. The primary focus of this organization is to provide the necessary knowledge, tools, and support to better prepare our membership to handle these types of situations. The ATAP's commitment is to expertly address these issues through seminars and training and networking with other professionals working in this field.

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

www.nasponline.org

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a professional association representing more than 25,000 school psychologists, graduate students, and related professionals throughout the United States and an additional 25 countries worldwide. As the world's largest organization of school psychologists, NASP works to advance effective practices to improve students' learning, behavior, and mental health. Our vision is that all children and youth thrive in school, at home, and throughout life. The NASP website has several resources regarding threat assessment, suicide prevention and postvention, and other topics.

RESOURCES REGARDING SCHOOL CLIMATE AND SAFETY

ONLINE SAFETY AND CYBERBULLYING

NetSmartz Workshop Online Program, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.netsmartz.org/Parents

This program provides online resources for parents and guardians, educators, law enforcement, teens, tweens, and kids. Information is provided on specific topics, such as cell phones, cyberbullying, and sexting, with accompanying tips and pointers on how to discuss these topics with children.

OnGuardOnline Web Page, Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0038-onguardonline

OnGuardOnline is the FTC's web page for providing free online security tips and resources. The home page provides a link for educators and parents, videos and games, and ways to share the information. Resources for educators are broken down by audience, which includes elementary, middle school, and high school teachers, community educators, and IT professionals.

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND BULLYING

Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms Online Toolkit
ED and the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)
https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/creating-safe-and-respectful-environment-our-nations-classrooms-training-toolkit
This toolkit is designed for trainers to assist teachers in creating a positive school environment and meaningful relationships with students. Two modules of instruction are provided with accompanying resources such as a trainer's guide, PowerPoint presentation, and handouts.

ED School Climate Surveys Web Page, ED and NCSSLE
https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls
This page provides the adaptable ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) and associated web-based platform. EDSCLS allows states, local districts, and schools to collect and act on school climate data. Information is provided on measures, administration, data reports, data interpretation, and a national benchmark study.

Stop Bullying Website, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying
The section on cyberbullying, which is part of a larger website on bullying, describes what cyberbullying is, how to prevent it, and how to report incidents. Included within the section on preventing cyberbullying is a segment on understanding school rules. Here, staff and teachers can find sample policies and rules on use by social media students.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center, ED
www.pbis.org
The PBIS TA Center provides information to states, districts, and schools on how to establish, scale up and sustain the PBIS framework. Resources are categorized into those for schools, families, community, evaluation, research, and training.

School Climate and Emergencies Web Page, REMS TA Center
http://rems.ed.gov/K12PPStep02.aspx
On this web page, factors that contribute to a positive school climate are discussed. In addition, suggestions are given on how to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment, use multi-tiered interventions and support, and promote social and emotional competencies. Additional related resources are also provided.

INFORMATION SHARING AND PRIVACY

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A Guide for First Responders and Law Enforcement, FBI, and ED
www.fbi.gov/file-repository/ferpa-guide.pdf/view
This two-page document describes what FERPA is, information that schools can provide to law enforcement, and the conditions under which schools can non-consensually disclose information.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule: A Guide for Law Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and FBI
www.fbi.gov/file-repository/hipaa-guide.pdf/view
This short guide details what the HIPAA Privacy Rule is, who must comply with the HIPAA Privacy Rule, and who is not required to comply with this rule. The resource also discusses the circumstances under which a HIPAA-covered entity may disclose protected health information (PHI) to law enforcement.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

***Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans*, Federal Government**
http://rems.ed.gov/K12GuideForDevelHQSchool.aspx
This guide is aimed at the K-12 community and was created by the U.S. Department of Education; the U.S. Department of Justice, led by the FBI; U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Department of Health and Human Services. The resource describes principles of emergency management planning, and a process for developing, implementing, and continually refining an EOP. The guide includes inclusive planning considerations throughout, such as identifying individuals who can access a person with access and functional needs in an emergency.

The Role of Districts in Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans: A Companion to the School Guide
(the District Guide)
https://rems.ed.gov/docs/District_Guide_508C.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2019).

DATA ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE, CRIME, AND SAFETY

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) School Associated Violent Death Study
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/savd.html
CDC reports that track school-associated violent deaths annually, from 1992.

Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings from the School Survey on Crime and Safety 2017–18
https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019061.pdf
A supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey that collects information on a national level related to incidents of criminal victimization of students aged 12–18

Federal Bureau of Investigation
www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-us-2016-2017.pdf (2017)
Several resources including studies regarding active shooter incidents.

Indicators of School Crime and Safety
https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019047.pdf (2018)
Annual report from U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education that provides data on crime and violence in schools from a variety of sources.

National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org/Press-Media/Media-Gallery/image
Mental Health Facts: Children & Teens Fact Sheet

U.S. Department of Education: Reports on State Implementation of Gun-Free Schools Act
www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/gfsa
Reports that are issued annually by the U.S. Department of Education, providing information related to expulsions on students who bring firearms to school.

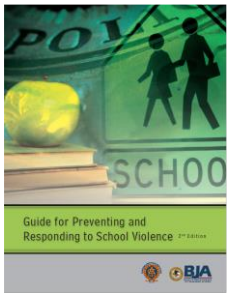
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Resources
Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results
www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/virginia-school-safety-audit-program

Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey Technical Reports
www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/school-safety-survey/secondary-school-climate-survey

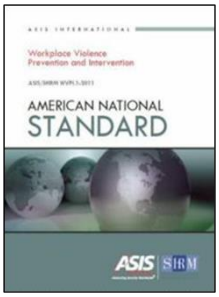
Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)
Provides survey data on a variety of issues including fighting in school and gun possession in and out of schools.
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2017/ss6708.pdf (2017 annual report)

Youth Risk Behaviors Survey: Trends Report for 2007–2017
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trendsreport.pdf

KEY THREAT ASSESSMENT RESOURCES

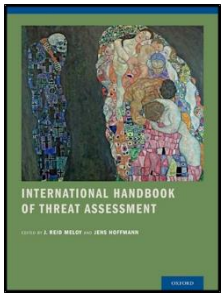


Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence 2nd Edition (2009)
www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/schoolviolence2.pdf



Workplace Violence and Active Assailant-
Prevention, Intervention, and Response Standard:
American National Standard (2011)

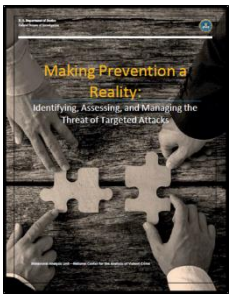
Available for purchase at:
www.asisonline.org/publications/sg-asis-shrm-workplace-violence-prevention-and-intervention-standard



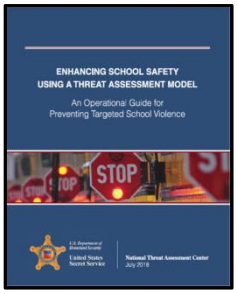
International Handbook of Threat Assessment (2014)

Note: 2nd Edition to be released in 2020

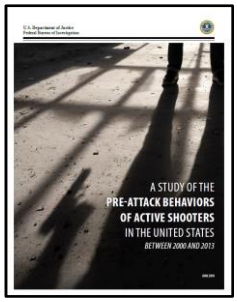
Available (for purchase)



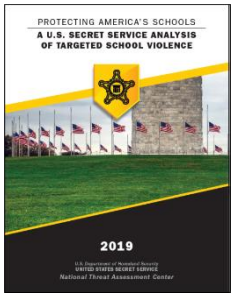
Making Prevention a Reality:
Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks (2017)
www.fbi.gov/file-repository/making-prevention-a-reality.pdf



Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model:
An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence (2018)
www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf



A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States
www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf



Protecting America's Schools:
A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence (2019)
www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/usss-analysis-of-targeted-school-violence.pdf

CHECKLIST FOR IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

☐ **School Board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams:**

- ☐ Including the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students
- ☐ Consistent with the model policies developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety in accordance with § 9.1-184
- ☐ Include procedures for referrals for evaluation or treatment, when appropriate to:
  - ☐ Community services boards
  - ☐ Health care providers
- ☐ Policies are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance with relevant laws and standards of practice

☐ **Superintendent shall establish a threat assessment structure for the school division.**

- ☐ A threat assessment team shall be established for each school (teams may serve more than one school)
  - ☐ Each threat assessment team shall include persons with expertise in:
    - ☐ School administration
    - ☐ Instruction
    - ☐ Counseling
    - ☐ Law Enforcement, and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer
  - ☐ Each threat assessment team may include persons with expertise in:
    - ☐ Human Resources
    - ☐ School Safety
    - ☐ Special Education
    - ☐ Community resources_____
    - ☐ Other_____
  - ☐ Each team has a designated team leader
  - ☐ Where resources allow, each core member has a designated backup
  - ☐ Duties of threat assessment teams shall include:
    - ☐ Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self
    - ☐ Identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported
    - ☐ Implement policies adopted by the local school board pursuant to subsection A
    - ☐ Collect and report quantitative data on its activities to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
- ☐ Superintendent may establish a Committee charged with oversight of threat assessment teams
  - ☐ May be a new committee
  - ☐ May be a duty added to an existing committee
  - ☐ May have additional duties, e.g., division-level threat management
  - ☐ If established, committee shall include persons with expertise in:
    - ☐ School Administration
    - ☐ Education
    - ☐ Mental Health/Counseling
    - ☐ Law Enforcement
    - ☐ Human Resources

☐ **Define prohibited, concerning, aberrant and threatening behaviors**

- ☐ Establish policy defining prohibited behaviors, such as
  - ☐ Bullying
  - ☐ Harassment
  - ☐ Threats of violence
  - ☐ Threats of bombing or incendiary devices
  - ☐ False reports
  - ☐ Retaliation against others for reporting concerns
  - ☐ Bringing firearm or other dangerous instrument to school
  - ☐ Violence
  - ☐ Other:_____
- ☐ Provide examples of concerning/aberrant behaviors that may include, but not be limited to:
  - ☐ Unusual withdrawal or isolation of subjects from peers and family members
  - ☐ Sullen or depressed behavior from an otherwise friendly and positive person
  - ☐ Atypical or out-of-context outbursts of verbal or physical aggression
  - ☐ Increased levels of agitation, frustration, or anger
  - ☐ Confrontational, accusatory, or blaming behavior
  - ☐ An atypical interest in or increasing fascination with weapons or acts of violence; and/or
  - ☐ Fixation on violence as means of addressing a grievance.

☐ **Establish and identify reporting mechanisms**

- ☐ Establish one or more reporting mechanisms, such as:
  - ☐ On-line reporting form on school website
  - ☐ Dedicated email address
  - ☐ Dedicated phone number
  - ☐ Mobile application
  - ☐ Other:_____
- ☐ Provide option for anonymous reporting
- ☐ Establish process for timely monitoring and screening of reports
- ☐ Provide training and awareness programs to identify reporting options and encourage reporting, emphasizing:
  - ☐ Everyone's role and responsibility to report concerns, as a caring community
  - ☐ Examples of behaviors/concerns to be reported
  - ☐ How to report concerns
  - ☐ Reports are wanted
  - ☐ Concerns will be assessed and addressed appropriately
  - ☐ Regular updates/refresher training regarding all the above

☐ **Define Processes for Law Enforcement Notification and/or Intervention**

- ☐ Immediate notification upon identification of high/imminent threat posed
- ☐ Processes for notification when certain criminal acts have occurred
  - ☐ On school grounds
  - ☐ On school bus
  - ☐ At school activities
- ☐ Memoranda of understanding/agreement regarding involvement on threat assessment teams
- ☐ Process for connectivity with community Crisis Intervention Team or Crisis Response Team.

☐ **Establish Threat Assessment Procedures**

- ☐ Implement triage/screening process
  - ☐ Must include at least 2 members of threat assessment team
  - ☐ Review relevant information to determine need for further actions
    - ☐ Report(s) of concerning, aberrant or threatening behavior
    - ☐ Records and resources to which team has lawful and ethical access
    - ☐ Initial interviews of relevant persons (e.g., reporting party, witnesses, others impacted, subject of concern)
  - ☐ May close case at initial triage/screening if <u>all</u> the following criteria are met:
    - ☐ No identified concerns or Low Level of Concern
    - ☐ Any needs for support/assistance are being adequately met OR addressed with referral
    - ☐ All members of triage process concur with both prior conclusions
  - ☐ All other reports of concern to full threat assessment team
- ☐ Implement full threat assessment process
  - ☐ Gather information from relevant records and resources to which team has lawful and ethical access, e.g.:
    - ☐ Threat assessment team records
    - ☐ School records
    - ☐ Law enforcement records
    - ☐ Open source social media
  - ☐ Conduct interviews of relevant persons, as appropriate, e.g.:
- ☐ Reporting party
    - ☐ Witnesses
    - ☐ Others impacted by situation
    - ☐ Staff
    - ☐ Peers
    - ☐ Parents/guardians or family members
  - ☐ Collaborate with other relevant processes, such as:
    - ☐ Bullying prevention
    - ☐ Suicide Prevention
    - ☐ Student Conduct/Staff discipline
    - ☐ Title IX
  - ☐ Conduct comprehensive and contextually based assessment of case
    - ☐ Consider relevant domains of STEP framework
    - ☐ Consider key areas of inquiry and any other relevant information
    - ☐ Utilize supplemental threat assessment tools/protocols as appropriate
  - ☐ Determine Level of Concern
  - ☐ Determine needs for notification to and engagement with:
    - ☐ School administration
    - ☐ Law enforcement
    - ☐ Parents/Guardians
    - ☐ Social services (e.g., Child Protective Services)

☐ **Establish Threat Management Procedures**

- ☐ Identify relevant programs, services and resources for staff, students and others who may pose a concern
  - ☐ Within the school
  - ☐ Within the division
  - ☐ In the community
  - ☐ Available remotely (e.g., web-based resources, tele-health services)
- ☐ Establish and implement a holistic and individualized case management strategy
  - ☐ Address relevant domains of STEP framework
  - ☐ Assign responsibility for tasks for intervention, further inquiry, or monitoring
  - ☐ Determine timeline for review and re-assessment
- ☐ Review relevant information to determine need for further actions

☐ **Support and Enhance Safe and Positive School Climate**

- ☐ Support and enhance caring, connection, communication, and conflict resolution
- ☐ Maintain standards of behavior for staff, students, and visitors
- ☐ Apply discipline fairly and consistently
- ☐ Assess school climate on regular basis
- ☐ Utilize climate assessment to identify areas for concern
- ☐ Engage staff, students, and parents/guardians in developing and implementing approaches

☐ **Training of Stakeholders**

- ☐ Orientation and training for all new threat assessment team members
  - ☐ Relevant school and division threat assessment policies, procedures, and guidelines
  - ☐ Basic threat assessment training consistent with DCJS guidelines and curricula
  - ☐ Refresher training consistent with DCJS guidelines and curricula at least every three years
  - ☐ Continuing education in threat assessment related topics through professional disciplines as resources allow
- ☐ School administrators
  - ☐ Legal and policy requirements
  - ☐ Relevant school and division threat assessment policies, procedures, and guidelines
  - ☐ Overview of threat assessment and management process
- ☐ Staff training and awareness
  - ☐ Legal and policy requirements
  - ☐ Safe and positive school climate
  - ☐ Recognition of concerning, aberrant and threatening behavior
  - ☐ Facilitating reporting of concerns
- ☐ Student awareness, as developmentally appropriate
  - ☐ Safe and positive school climate
  - ☐ Recognition of concerning, aberrant and threatening behavior
  - ☐ Facilitating reporting of concerns
- ☐ Parent/Guardian awareness
  - ☐ Recognition of concerning, aberrant and threatening behavior
  - ☐ Facilitating reporting of concerns

☐ **Other:**_____

☐_____

☐_____

☐_____

☐_____

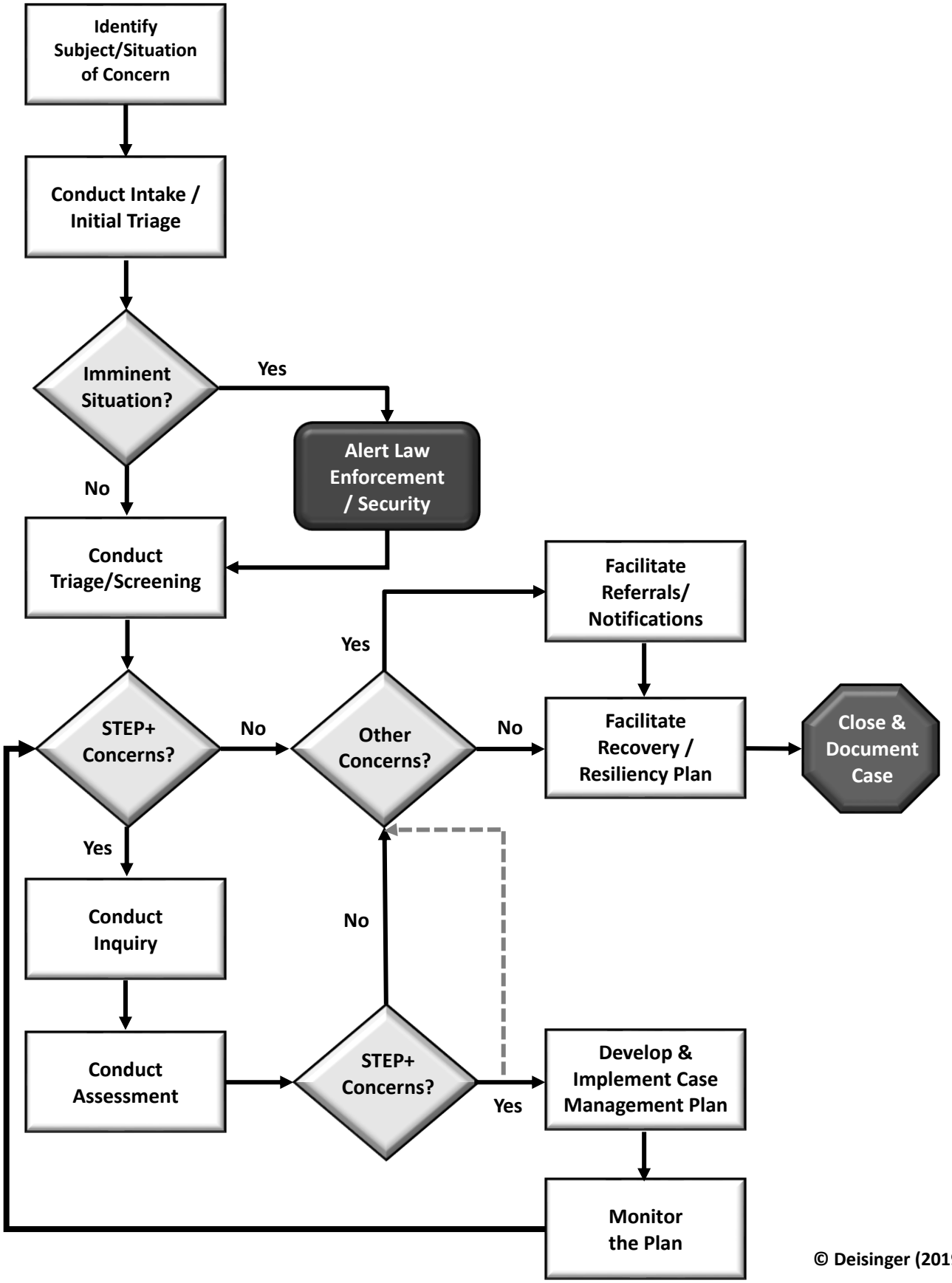
☐_____

☐_____

☐_____

☐_____

THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROCESS FLOWCHART



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SELECT VIRGINIA LAWS RELATED TO THREAT ASSESSMENT

Section / Statute	Page
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety	
§ 9.1-184. Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety created; duties.	91
School Threat Assessment Teams	
§ 22.1-79.4. Threat assessment teams and oversight committees.	92
§ 22.1-280.2:3. School boards; safety and security personnel.	§ 22.1-280.2:3. School boards; safety and security personnel.92
Information Sharing and Confidentiality	
§ 19.2-389. Dissemination of criminal history record information.	93
§ 19.2-389.1. Dissemination of juvenile record information.	93
§ 32.1-127.1:03. Health records privacy.	93
§ 9.1-136. Criminal penalty for violation.	93
§ 16.1-300. Confidentiality of Department [of Juvenile Justice] records.	93
§ 16.1-301. Confidentiality of juvenile law-enforcement records; disclosures to school principal and others.	94
§ 16.1-305.2. Disclosure of notice of the filing of a petition and certain reports by division superintendent.	94
§ 16.1-309. Penalty.	94
§ 22.1-288.2. Receipt, dissemination, and maintenance of records of certain law-enforcement information.	95
§ 2.2-3705.2. Exclusions to application of chapter; records relating to public safety.	95
§ 2.2-3705.4. Exclusions to application of chapter; certain records of educational institutions.	96
Civil Immunity of School Staff	
§ 8.01-47. Immunity of persons investigating or reporting certain incidents at schools.	96
§ 8.01-220.1:2. Civil immunity for teachers under certain circumstances.	96
§ 22.1-303.1. Immunity from civil liability for certain individuals.	96
Notifications to School Authorities, Law Enforcement or Parents/Guardians	
§ 22.1-279.3:1. Reports of certain acts to school authorities.	97
§ 18.2-60. Threats of death or bodily injury to a person or family member, or persons on school property.	98
§ 16.1-247.1. Custodial interrogation of a child; parental notification and contact.	99
§ 19.2-83.1. Report of arrest of school employees and adult students for certain offenses.	99
§ 22.1-207.2:1. Anti-bullying or suicide prevention materials; parental right to review.	99
§ 22.1-272.1. Responsibility to contact parent of a student at imminent risk of suicide.	100
§ 22.1-279.3:2. Public elementary and secondary school students; protective orders; notification.	100
§ 22.1-279.6. Board of Education guidelines and model policies for codes of student conduct;	100
§ 22.1-291.3. Notice of duty to report child abuse or neglect.	101
School Climate; Education and Training for School Staff	
§ 22.1-23.3. Treatment of transgender students; policies	101
§ 22.1-291.4. Bullying and abusive work environments prohibited.	102
§ 22.1-276.01. Definitions.	102
§ 22.1-279.9. Development of programs to prevent crime and violence.	102
§ 22.1-298.6. Mental health awareness training.	102
Substantial Risk Orders	
§ 19.2-152.13. Emergency substantial risk order.	102
§ 19.2-152.14. Substantial risk order.	104
§ 19.2-152.7:1. Definitions	105
Records Retention and Disposition	
§ 42.1-82. Duties and powers of Library Board.	105
§ 42.1-86.1. Disposition of public records.	105
Library of Virginia: Records Retention and Disposition Schedule	106

Note that the following references to the *Code of Virginia* may include only the subsections of *Code* relevant to school threat assessment teams or functions. Threat assessment team members and other school staff should be familiar with their full duties under the relevant statutes.

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

§ 9.1-184*. Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety created; duties.*

A. From such funds as may be appropriated, the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (the Center) is hereby established within the Department. The Center shall:

1. Provide training for Virginia public school personnel in school safety, on evidence-based antibullying tactics based on the definition of bullying in § 22.1-276.01, and in the effective identification of students who may be at risk for violent behavior and in need of special services or assistance;
2. Serve as a resource and referral center for Virginia school divisions by conducting research, sponsoring workshops, and providing information regarding current school safety concerns, such as conflict management and peer mediation, bullying as defined in § 22.1-276.01, school facility design and technology, current state and federal statutory and regulatory school safety requirements, and legal and constitutional issues regarding school safety and individual rights;
3. Maintain and disseminate information to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation;
4. Develop a case management tool for the collection and reporting of data by threat assessment teams pursuant to § 22.1-79.4;
5. Collect, analyze, and disseminate various Virginia school safety data, including school safety audit information submitted to it pursuant to § 22.1-279.8, collected by the Department;
6. Encourage the development of partnerships between the public and private sectors to promote school safety in Virginia;
7. Provide technical assistance to Virginia school divisions in the development and implementation of initiatives promoting school safety, including threat assessment-based protocols with such funds as may be available for such purpose;
8. Develop a memorandum of understanding between the Director of the Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to ensure collaboration and coordination of roles and responsibilities in areas of mutual concern, such as school safety audits and crime prevention;
9. Provide training for and certification of school security officers, as defined in § 9.1-101 and consistent with § 9.1-110;
10. Develop, in conjunction with the Department of State Police, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, and the Department of Education, a model critical incident response training program for public school personnel and others providing services to schools that shall also be made available to private schools in the Commonwealth;
11. In consultation with the Department of Education, provide schools with a model policy for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including procedures for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students; and
12. Develop a model memorandum of understanding setting forth the respective roles and responsibilities of local school boards and local law-enforcement agencies regarding the use of school resource officers. Such model memorandum of understanding may be used by local school boards and local law-enforcement agencies to satisfy the requirements of § 22.1-280.2:3.

B. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall cooperate with the Center and, upon request, assist the Center in the performance of its duties and responsibilities.

School Threat Assessment Teams

§ 22.1-79.4*. Threat assessment teams and oversight committees.*

A. Each local school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including the assessment of and intervention with individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students consistent with the model policies developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (the Center) in accordance with § 9.1-184. Such policies shall include procedures for referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment, when appropriate.

B. The superintendent of each school division may establish a committee charged with oversight of the threat assessment teams operating within the division, which may be an existing committee established by the division. The committee shall include individuals with expertise in human resources, education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement.

C. Each division superintendent shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team that shall include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement, and, in the case of any school in which a school resource officer is employed, at least one such school resource officer. Threat assessment teams may be established to serve one or more schools as determined by the division superintendent. Each team shall (i) provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self; (ii) identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; and (iii) implement policies adopted by the local school board pursuant to subsection A.

D. Upon a preliminary 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 division superintendent or his designee. The division superintendent or his designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude school division personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.

E. Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall collect and report to the Center quantitative data on its activities using the case management tool developed by the Center.

F. Upon a preliminary determination by the threat assessment team that an individual poses a threat of violence to self or others or exhibits significantly disruptive behavior or need for assistance, a threat assessment team may obtain criminal history record information, as provided in §§ 19.2-389 and 19.2-389.1, and health records, as provided in § 32.1-127.1:03. No member of a threat assessment team shall redisclose any criminal history record information or health information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team.

§ 22.1-280.2:3*. School boards; safety and security personnel.*

A. The school board in each school division in which the local law-enforcement agency employs school resource officers, as defined in § 9.1-101, shall enter into a memorandum of understanding with such local law-enforcement agency that sets forth the powers and duties of such school resource officers. The provisions of such memorandum of understanding shall be based on the model memorandum of understanding developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety pursuant to subdivision A 12 of § 9.1-184, which may be modified by the parties in accordance with their particular needs. Each such school board and local law-enforcement agency shall review and amend or affirm such memorandum at least once every two years or at any time upon the request of either party. Each school board shall ensure the current division memorandum of understanding is conspicuously published on the division website and provide notice and opportunity for public input during each memorandum of understanding review period.

B. The chief local law-enforcement officer for any local school division in which a public elementary or secondary school does not employ a school resource officer, as defined in § 9.1-101, shall designate a law-enforcement officer to receive, either in-person or online, the training set forth in subsection E of § 22.1-279.8. Such officer shall serve as the law-enforcement liaison for the school administrator described in subsection E of § 22.1-279.8 in each public elementary or secondary school that does not employ a school resource officer.

Information Sharing and Confidentiality

§ 19.2-389*. Dissemination of criminal history record information.*

A. Criminal history record information shall be disseminated, whether directly or through an intermediary, only to:

25. Members of a threat assessment team established by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4, by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805, or by a private nonprofit institution of higher education, for the purpose of assessing or intervening with an individual whose behavior may present a threat to safety; however, no member of a threat assessment team shall redisclose any criminal history record information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose that such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team;

§ 19.2-389.1*. Dissemination of juvenile record information.*

Record information maintained in the Central Criminal Records Exchange pursuant to the provisions of § 16.1-299 shall be disseminated only:

(x) To members of a threat assessment team established by a school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4, by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805, or by a private nonprofit institution of higher education, to aid in the assessment or intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety; however, no member of a threat assessment team shall redisclose any juvenile record information obtained pursuant to this section or otherwise use any record of an individual beyond the purpose that such disclosure was made to the threat assessment team;

§ 32.1-127.1:03*. Health records privacy.*

A. There is hereby recognized an individual's right of privacy in the content of his health records. Health records are the property of the health care entity maintaining them, and, except when permitted or required by this section or by other provisions of state law, no health care entity, or other person working in a health care setting, may disclose an individual's health records.

Pursuant to this subsection:

3. No person to whom health records are disclosed shall redisclose or otherwise reveal the health records of an individual, beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made, without first obtaining the individual's specific authorization to such redisclosure.

D. Health care entities may, and, when required by other provisions of state law, shall, disclose health records:

35. To a threat assessment team established by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4, by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805, or by a private nonprofit institution of higher education:

§ 9.1-136*. Criminal penalty for violation.*

Any person who willfully and intentionally requests, obtains, or seeks to obtain criminal history record information under false pretenses, or who willfully and intentionally disseminates or seeks to disseminate criminal history record information to any agency or person in violation of this article or Chapter 23 (§ 19.2-387 et seq.) of Title 19.2, shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

§ 16.1-300*. Confidentiality of Department [of Juvenile Justice] records.*

A. The social, medical, psychiatric and psychological reports and records of children who are or have been (i) before the court, (ii) under supervision, or (iii) receiving services from a court service unit or who are committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice shall be confidential and shall be open for inspection only to the following:

6. Any other person, agency, or institution, including any law-enforcement agency, school administration, or probation office by order of the court, having a legitimate interest in the case, the juvenile, or in the work of the court.

§ 16.1-301*. Confidentiality of juvenile law-enforcement records; disclosures to school principal and others.*

B. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the chief of police or sheriff of a jurisdiction or his designee may disclose, for the protection of the juvenile, his fellow students and school personnel, to the school principal that a juvenile is a suspect in or has been charged with (i) a violent juvenile felony, as specified in subsections B and C of § 16.1-269.1; (ii) a violation of any of the provisions of Article 1 (§ 18.2-77 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2; or (iii) a violation of law involving any weapon as described in subsection A of § 18.2-308… In addition to any other disclosure that is permitted by this subsection, the principal in his discretion may provide such information to a threat assessment team established by the local school division. No member of a threat assessment team shall (a) disclose any juvenile record information obtained pursuant to this section or (b) use such information for any purpose other than evaluating threats to students and school personnel. For the purposes of this subsection, "principal" also refers to the chief administrator of any private primary or secondary school.

§ 16.1-305.2*. Disclosure of notice of the filing of a petition and certain reports by division superintendent.*

Except as otherwise provided in this section, a division superintendent shall not disclose information contained in or derived from a (i) notice of petition received pursuant to § 16.1-260 or (ii) report received pursuant to § 66-25.2:1. If the juvenile is not enrolled as a student in a public school in the division to which the notice or report was given, the superintendent shall promptly so notify the intake officer of the juvenile court in which the petition was filed or the Director of the Department who sent the report and may forward the notice of petition or report to the superintendent of the division in which the juvenile is enrolled, if known.

If the division superintendent believes that disclosure of information regarding a petition to school personnel is necessary to ensure the physical safety of the juvenile, other students or school personnel within the division, he may at any time prior to receipt of the notice of disposition in accordance with § 16.1-305.1, disclose the fact of the filing of the petition and the nature of the offense to the principal of the school in which the juvenile who is the subject of the petition is enrolled. The principal may further disseminate the information regarding a petition, after the juvenile has been taken into custody, whether or not the child has been released, only to those students and school personnel having direct contact with the juvenile and need of the information to ensure physical safety or the appropriate educational placement or other educational services.

If the division superintendent believes that disclosure of information regarding a report received pursuant to § 66-25.2:1 to school personnel is necessary to ensure the physical safety of the juvenile, other students, or school personnel within the division he may disclose the information to the principal of the school in which the juvenile is enrolled. The principal may further disseminate the information regarding such report only to school personnel as necessary to protect the juvenile, the subject or subjects of the danger, other students, or school personnel.

§ 16.1-309*. Penalty.*

A. Except as provided in §§ 16.1-299, 16.1-300, 16.1-301, 16.1-305 and 16.1-307, any person who (i) files a petition, (ii) receives a petition or has access to court records in an official capacity, (iii) participates in the investigation of allegations which form the basis of a petition, (iv) is interviewed concerning such allegations and whose information is derived solely from such interview or (v) is present during any court proceeding, who discloses or makes use of or knowingly permits the use of identifying information not otherwise available to the public concerning a juvenile who is suspected of being or is the subject of a proceeding within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court pursuant to subdivisions A 1 through 5 or subdivision A 7 of § 16.1-241 or who is in the custody of the State Department of Juvenile Justice, which information is directly or indirectly derived from the records or files of a law-enforcement agency, court or the Department of Juvenile Justice or acquired in the course of official duties, is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

B. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any law-enforcement officer or school employee who discloses to school personnel identifying information concerning a juvenile who is suspected of committing or has committed a delinquent act that has met applicable criteria of § 16.1-260 and is committed or alleged to have been committed on school property during a school-sponsored activity or on the way to or from such activity, if the disclosure is made solely for the purpose of enabling school personnel to take appropriate disciplinary action within the school setting against the juvenile. Further, the provisions of this section shall not apply to school personnel who disclose information obtained pursuant to §§ 16.1-305.1 and 22.1-288.2 if the disclosure is made in compliance with those sections

§ 22.1-288.2*. Receipt, dissemination, and maintenance of records of certain law-enforcement information.*

A. A division superintendent shall disseminate the notice or information regarding an adjudication of delinquency or conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of § 16.1-260, contained in a notice received by him pursuant to § 16.1-305.1 to school personnel responsible for the management of student records and to other relevant school personnel, including, but not limited to, the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. The principal shall further disseminate such information to licensed instructional personnel and other school personnel who (i) provide direct educational or support services to the student and (ii) have a legitimate educational interest in such information.

B. A parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of a student in a public school and, with consent of a parent or in compliance with a court order, the court in which the disposition was rendered, shall be notified in writing of any disciplinary action taken with regard to any incident upon which the adjudication of delinquency or conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of § 16.1-260 was based and the reasons therefor. The parent or guardian shall also be notified of his or her right to review, and to request an amendment of, the student's scholastic record, in accordance with regulations of the Board of Education governing the management of scholastic records.

   Every notice of adjudication of delinquency or conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of § 16.1-260 received by a superintendent, and information contained in the notice, which is not a disciplinary record as defined in Board of Education regulations, shall be maintained by him and by any others to whom he disseminates it, separately from all other records concerning the student. However, if the school administrators or the school board takes disciplinary action against a student based upon an incident which formed the basis for the adjudication of delinquency or conviction for an offense listed in subsection G of § 16.1-260, the notice shall become a part of the student's disciplinary record.

C. When a superintendent receives notice of the filing of a petition from the intake officer in accordance with § 16.1-260, or upon request of a court services unit for information made in conjunction with the preparation of a social history report pursuant to § 16.1-273, the superintendent shall provide information regarding the student's educational and attendance status to the intake officer or court services unit, as the case may be. Whenever a division superintendent receives notice of a student's commitment to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the superintendent or his designee shall participate in the development of a reenrollment plan as provided in § 16.1-293.

§ 2.2-3705.2*. Exclusions to application of chapter; records relating to public safety. (Freedom of Information Act)*

The following information contained in a public record is excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except where such disclosure is prohibited by law. Redaction of information excluded under this section from a public record shall be conducted in accordance with § 2.2-3704.01:

4. Information concerning security plans and specific assessment components of school safety audits, as provided in § 22.1-279.8.

   Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prevent the disclosure of information relating to the effectiveness of security plans after (i) any school building or property has been subjected to fire, explosion, natural disaster, or other catastrophic event or (ii) any person on school property has suffered or been threatened with any personal injury.

13. Records received by the Department of Criminal Justice Services pursuant to §§ *9.1-184*, *§ 22.1-79.4*, and 22.1-279.8 or for purposes of evaluating threat assessment teams established by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805 or by a private nonprofit institution of higher education, to the extent such records reveal security plans, walk-through checklists, or vulnerability and threat assessment components.

14. Information contained in (i) engineering, architectural, or construction drawings; (ii) operational, procedural, tactical planning, or training manuals; (iii) staff meeting minutes; or (iv) other records that reveal any of the following, the disclosure of which would jeopardize the safety or security of any person; governmental facility, building, or structure or persons using such facility, building, or structure; or public or private commercial office, multifamily residential, or retail building or its occupants:
    a. Critical infrastructure information or the location or operation of security equipment and systems of any public building, structure, or information storage facility, including ventilation systems, fire protection equipment, mandatory building emergency equipment or systems, elevators, electrical systems, telecommunications equipment and systems, or utility equipment and systems;

b. Vulnerability assessments, information not lawfully available to the public regarding specific cybersecurity threats or vulnerabilities, or security plans and measures of an entity, facility, building structure, information technology system, or software program;
c. Surveillance techniques, personnel deployments, alarm or security systems or technologies, or operational or transportation plans or protocols;

§ 2.2-3705.4. ***Exclusions to application of chapter; educational records & certain records of educational institutions.***

The following information contained in a public record is excluded from the mandatory disclosure provisions of this chapter but may be disclosed by the custodian in his discretion, except as provided in subsection B or where such disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law. Redaction of information excluded under this section from a public record shall be conducted in accordance with § 2.2-3704.01:

8. Information held by a threat assessment team established by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4 or by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805 relating to the assessment or intervention with a specific individual. However, in the event an individual who has been under assessment commits an act, or is prosecuted for the commission of an act that has caused the death of, or caused serious bodily injury, including any felony sexual assault, to another person, such information of the threat assessment team concerning the individual under assessment shall be made available as provided by this chapter, with the exception of any criminal history records obtained pursuant to § 19.2-389 or § 19.2-389.1, health records obtained pursuant to § 32.1-127.1:03, or scholastic records as defined in § 22.1-289. The public body providing such information shall remove personally identifying information of any person who provided information to the threat assessment team under a promise of confidentiality.

Immunity of School Staff

§ 8.01-47. ***Immunity of persons investigating or reporting certain incidents at schools.***

In addition to any other immunity he may have, any person who, in good faith with reasonable cause and without malice, acts to report, investigate or cause any investigation to be made into the activities of any student or students or any other person or persons as they relate to conduct involving bomb threats, firebombs, explosive materials or other similar devices as described in clauses (vi) and (vii) of subsection A of § 22.1-279.3:1, alcohol or drug use or abuse in or related to the school or institution or in connection with any school or institution activity, or information that an individual poses any credible danger of serious bodily injury or death to one or more students, school personnel, or others on school property shall be immune from all civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as the result of the making of such a report, investigation or disclosure.

§ 8.01-220.1:2. ***Civil immunity for teachers under certain circumstances.***

A. Any teacher employed by a local school board in the Commonwealth shall not be liable for any civil damages for any acts or omissions resulting from the supervision, care or discipline of students when such acts or omissions are within such teacher's scope of employment and are taken in good faith in the course of supervision, care or discipline of students, unless such acts or omissions were the result of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

B. No school employee or school volunteer shall be liable for any civil damages arising from the prompt good faith reporting of alleged acts of bullying or crimes against others to the appropriate school official in compliance with §§ 22.1-279.6 and 22.1-291.4 and specified procedures.

C. This section shall not be construed to limit, withdraw, or overturn any defense or immunity already existing in statutory or common law, to affect any claim occurring prior to the effective date of this law, or to prohibit any person subject to bullying or a criminal act from seeking redress under any other provision of law.

§ 22.1-303.1. ***Immunity from civil liability for certain individuals.***

Any teacher who, in good faith, participates in conducting a peer review of another teacher or a person who conducts a review of a teacher as a mentor teacher shall be immune from civil liability for any act, omission or statement made in the performance of these duties unless such act, omission or statement was made in bad faith or with malicious intent.

Notifications to school authorities, law enforcement or parents/guardians

§ 22.1-279.3:1*. Reports of certain acts to school authorities.* [Updated July 1, 2022]

A Reports shall be made to the division superintendent and to the principal or his designee on all incidents involving (i) alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, an imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, including the theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications; (ii) the assault and battery that results in bodily injury of any person on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; (iii) the sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person, abduction of any person as described in § 18.2-47 or § 18.2-48, or stalking of any person as described in § 18.2-60.3, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; (iv) any written threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; (v) the illegal carrying of a firearm, as defined in § 22.1-277.07, onto school property; (vi) any illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, as defined in § 18.2-85, or explosive or incendiary devices, as defined in § 18.2-433.1, or chemical bombs, as described in § 18.2-87.1, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; (vii) any threats or false threats to bomb, as described in § 18.2-83, made against school personnel or involving school property or school buses; or (viii) the arrest of any student for an incident occurring on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, including the charge therefor.

B. Except as may otherwise be required by federal law, regulation, or jurisprudence, each principal: (i) shall immediately report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in subdivision A 1 that may constitute a felony offense; (ii) shall immediately report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in subdivisions A 3 through 7, except that a principal is not required to but may report to the local law-enforcement agency any incident described in subdivision A 4 committed by a student who has a disability; (iii) may report to the local law-enforcement agency any other incident described in subsection A that is not required to be reported pursuant to subdivision 1 or 2; and (iv) shall immediately report any act enumerated in subdivisions A 1 through 5 that may constitute a criminal offense to the parents of any minor student who is the specific object of such act. Further, the principal shall report whether the incident has been reported to local law enforcement pursuant to this subsection and, if the incident has been so reported, that the parents may contact local law enforcement for further information, if they so desire.

C. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 12 (§ 16.1-299 et seq.) of Chapter 11 of Title 16.1, local law-enforcement authorities shall report, and the principal or his designee and the division superintendent shall receive such reports, on offenses, wherever committed, by students enrolled at the school if the offense would be a felony if committed by an adult or would be a violation of the Drug Control Act (§ 54.1-3400 et seq.) and occurred on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity, or would be an adult misdemeanor involving any incidents described in subsection A, and whether the student is released to the custody of his parent or, if 18 years of age or more, is released on bond. As part of any report concerning an offense that would be an adult misdemeanor involving an incident described in subsection A, local law-enforcement authorities and attorneys for the Commonwealth shall be authorized to disclose information regarding terms of release from detention, court dates, and terms of any disposition orders entered by the court, to the superintendent of such student's school division, upon request by the superintendent, if, in the determination of the law-enforcement authority or attorney for the Commonwealth, such disclosure would not jeopardize the investigation or prosecution of the case. No disclosures shall be made pursuant to this section in violation of the confidentiality provisions of subsection A of § 16.1-300 or the record retention and redisclosure provisions of § 22.1-288.2. Further, any school superintendent who receives notification that a juvenile has committed an act that would be a crime if committed by an adult pursuant to subsection G of § 16.1-260 shall report such information to the principal of the school in which the juvenile is enrolled.

D. The principal or his designee shall submit a report of all incidents required to be reported pursuant to this section to the superintendent of the school division. The division superintendent shall annually report all such incidents to the Department of Education for the purpose of recording the frequency of such incidents on forms that shall be provided by the Department and shall make such information available to the public.

In submitting reports of such incidents, principals and division superintendents shall accurately indicate any offenses, arrests, or charges as recorded by law-enforcement authorities and required to be reported by such authorities pursuant to subsection C.

A division superintendent who knowingly fails to comply or secure compliance with the reporting requirements of this subsection shall be subject to the sanctions authorized in § 22.1-65. A principal who knowingly fails to comply or secure

compliance with the reporting requirements of this section shall be subject to sanctions prescribed by the local school board, which may include, but need not be limited to, demotion or dismissal.

The principal or his designee shall also notify the parent of any student involved in an incident required pursuant to this section to be reported, regardless of whether disciplinary action is taken against such student or the nature of the disciplinary action. Such notice shall relate to only the relevant student's involvement and shall not include information concerning other students.

Whenever any student commits any reportable incident as set forth in this section, such student shall be required to participate in such prevention and intervention activities as deemed appropriate by the superintendent or his designee. Prevention and intervention activities shall be identified in the local school division's drug and violence prevention plans developed pursuant to the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Title IV — Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act).

E. A statement providing a procedure and the purpose for the requirements of this section shall be included in school board policies required by § 22.1-253.13:7.

The Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to implement this section, including, but not limited to, establishing reporting dates and report formats.

F. For the purposes of this section, "parent" or "parents" means any parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of a child.

G. This section shall not be construed to diminish the authority of the Board of Education or to diminish the Governor's authority to coordinate and provide policy direction on official communications between the Commonwealth and the United States government.

H. Nothing in this section shall require delinquency charges to be filed or prevent schools from dealing with school-based offenses through graduated sanctions or educational programming before a delinquency charge is filed with the juvenile court.

§ 18.2-60. ***Threats of death or bodily injury to a person or family member, or persons on school property.***

Full Title: Threats of death or bodily injury to a person or member of his family; threats of death or bodily injury to persons on school property; threats of death or bodily injury to health care providers; penalty.

A. 1. Any person who knowingly communicates, in a writing, including an electronically transmitted communication producing a visual or electronic message, a threat to kill or do bodily injury to a person, regarding that person or any member of his family, and the threat places such person in reasonable apprehension of death or bodily injury to himself or his family member, is guilty of a Class 6 felony. However, any person who violates this subsection with the intent to commit an act of terrorism as defined in § 18.2-46.4 is guilty of a Class 5 felony.

2. Any person who communicates a threat, in a writing, including an electronically transmitted communication producing a visual or electronic message, to kill or do bodily harm, (i) on the grounds or premises of any elementary, middle or secondary school property, (ii) at any elementary, middle or secondary school-sponsored event or (iii) on a school bus to any person or persons, regardless of whether the person who is the object of the threat actually receives the threat, and the threat would place the person who is the object of the threat in reasonable apprehension of death or bodily harm, is guilty of a Class 6 felony.

B. Any person who orally makes a threat to kill or to do bodily injury to (i) any employee of any elementary, middle or secondary school, while on a school bus, on school property or at a school-sponsored activity or (ii) any health care provider as defined in § 8.01-581.1 who is engaged in the performance of his duties in a hospital as defined in § 18.2-57 or in an emergency room on the premises of any clinic or other facility rendering emergency medical care, unless the person is on the premises of the hospital or emergency room of the clinic or other facility rendering emergency medical care as a result of an emergency custody order pursuant to § 37.2-808, involuntary temporary detention order pursuant to § 37.2-809, involuntary hospitalization order pursuant to § 37.2-817, or emergency custody order of a conditionally released acquittee pursuant to § 19.2-182.9, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

A prosecution pursuant to this section may be either in the county, city, or town in which the communication was made or received.

§ 16.1-247.1. *Custodial interrogation of a child; parental notification and contact.* [Enacted July 1, 2020]

A. Prior to any custodial interrogation of a child by a law-enforcement officer who has arrested such child pursuant to subsection C, C1, or D of § 16.1-246, the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall be notified of his arrest and the child shall have contact with his parent, guardian, or legal custodian. The notification and contact required by this subsection may be in person, electronically, by telephone, or by video conference.

B. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection A, a custodial interrogation may be conducted if (i) the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian is a codefendant in the alleged offense; (ii) the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian has been arrested for, has been charged with, or is being investigated for a crime against the child; (iii) if, after every reasonable effort has been made to comply with subsection A, the child's parent, guardian, or legal custodian cannot be located or refuses contact with the child; or (iv) if the law-enforcement officer conducting the custodial interrogation reasonably believes the information sought is necessary to protect life, limb, or property from an imminent danger and the law-enforcement officer's questions are limited to those that are reasonably necessary to obtain such information.

§ 19.2-83.1. *Report of arrest of school employees and adult students for certain offenses.*

A. Every state official or agency and every sheriff, police officer, or other local law-enforcement officer or conservator of the peace having the power to arrest for a felony, upon arresting a person who is known or discovered by the arresting official to be a full-time, part-time, permanent, or temporary teacher or other employee in any public school division in this Commonwealth for a felony or a Class 1 misdemeanor or an equivalent offense in another state shall file a report of such arrest with the division superintendent of the employing division as soon as practicable. The contents of the report required pursuant to this section shall be utilized by the local school division solely to implement the provisions of subsection B of § 22.1-296.2 and § 22.1-315.

B. Every state official or agency and every sheriff, police officer, or other local law-enforcement officer or conservator of the peace having the power to arrest for a felony, shall file a report, as soon as practicable, with the division superintendent of the school division in which the student is enrolled upon arresting a person who is known or discovered by the arresting official to be a student age 18 or older in any public school division in this Commonwealth for:

1. A firearm offense pursuant to Article 4 (§ 18.2-279 et seq.), 5 (§ 18.2-288 et seq.), 6 (§ 18.2-299 et seq.), 6.1 (§ 18.2-307.1 et seq.), or 7 (§ 18.2-308.1 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2;
2. Homicide, pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-30 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2;
3. Felonious assault and bodily wounding, pursuant to Article 4 (§ 18.2-51 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2;
4. Criminal sexual assault, pursuant to Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2;
5. Manufacture, sale, gift, distribution, or possession of Schedule I or II controlled substances, pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2;
6. Manufacture, sale, or distribution of marijuana pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-247 et seq.) of Chapter 7 of Title 18.2;
7. Arson and related crimes, pursuant to Article 1 (§ 18.2-77 et seq.) of Chapter 5 of Title 18.2;
8. Burglary and related offenses, pursuant to §§ 18.2-89 through 18.2-93;
9. Robbery pursuant to § 18.2-58;
10. Prohibited criminal street gang activity pursuant to § 18.2-46.2;
11. Recruitment of juveniles for criminal street gang pursuant to § 18.2-46.3;
12. An act of violence by a mob pursuant to § 18.2-42.1; or
13. Abduction of any person pursuant to § 18.2-47 or § 18.2-48.

§ 22.1-207.2:1. *Anti-bullying or suicide prevention materials; parental right to review.*

5. Each school board shall develop and implement policies that ensure that parents have the right to review any audio-visual materials that contain graphic sexual or violent content used in any anti-bullying or suicide prevention program. Such policies shall require that prior to using any such material, the parent of the child participating in such a program shall be provided written notice of his right to review the material and his right to excuse his child from participating in the part of such program utilizing such material.

§ 22.1-272.1*. Responsibility to contact parent of a student at imminent risk of suicide.*

Notice to be given to social services if parental abuse or neglect; Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Health, to develop guidelines for parental contact.

A. Any person licensed as administrative or instructional personnel by the Board of Education and employed by a local school board who, in the scope of his employment, has reason to believe, as a result of direct communication from a student, that such student is at imminent risk of suicide, shall, as soon as practicable, contact at least one of such student's parents to ask whether such parent is aware of the student's mental state and whether the parent wishes to obtain or has already obtained counseling for such student. Such contact shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines required by subsection C.

B. If the student has indicated that the reason for being at imminent risk of suicide relates to parental abuse or neglect, this contact shall not be made with the parent. Instead, the person shall, as soon as practicable, notify the local department of social services of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or the state Department of Social Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline, as required by § 63.2-1509. When giving this notice to the local or state department, the person shall stress the need to take immediate action to protect the child from harm.

C. The Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Health, shall develop guidelines for making the contact required by subsection A. These guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to, (i) criteria to assess the suicide risks of students, (ii) characteristics to identify potentially suicidal students, (iii) appropriate responses to students expressing suicidal intentions, (iv) available and appropriate community services for students expressing suicidal intentions, (v) suicide prevention strategies which may be implemented by local schools for students expressing suicidal intentions, (vi) criteria for notification of and discussions with parents of students expressing suicidal intentions, (vii) criteria for as-soon-as-practicable contact with the parents, (viii) appropriate sensitivity to religious beliefs, and (ix) legal requirements and criteria for notification of public service agencies, including, but not limited to, the local or state social services and mental health agencies. These guidelines may include case studies and problem-solving exercises and may be designed as materials for in-service training programs for licensed administrative and instructional personnel.

§ 22.1-279.3:2*. Public elementary and secondary school students; protective orders; notification.*

Any school principal who receives notice that a circuit court, general district court, juvenile and domestic relations district court, or magistrate has issued a protective order pursuant to § 16.1-253, 16.1-253.1, 16.1-253.4, or 16.1-279.1, subsection D of § 18.2-60.3, or Chapter 9.1 (§ 19.2-152.7:1 et seq.) of Title 19.2 for the protection of any child who is enrolled at a public elementary or secondary school in the Commonwealth where such principal is employed, or any other order prohibiting contact with such a child, including an order issued as a condition of pretrial or posttrial supervision, shall subsequently notify licensed instructional personnel and other school personnel who (i) provide direct educational or support services to the protected child or the child subject to the order, (ii) have a legitimate educational interest in such information, and (iii) are responsible for the direct supervision of the protected child or the child subject to the order that such order has been issued.

§ 22.1-279.6*. Board of Education guidelines and model policies for codes of student conduct; school board regulations.*

A. The Board of Education shall establish guidelines and develop model policies for codes of student conduct to aid local school boards in the implementation of such policies. The guidelines and model policies shall include (i) criteria for the removal of a student from a class, the use of suspension, expulsion, and exclusion as disciplinary measures, the grounds for suspension and expulsion and exclusion, and the procedures to be followed in such cases, including proceedings for such suspension, expulsion, and exclusion decisions and all applicable appeals processes; (ii) standards, consistent with state, federal and case laws, for school board policies on alcohol and drugs, gang-related activity, hazing, vandalism, trespassing, threats, search and seizure, disciplining of students with disabilities, intentional injury of others, self-defense, bullying, the use of electronic means for purposes of bullying, harassment, and intimidation, and dissemination of such policies to students, their parents, and school personnel; (iii) standards for in-service training of school personnel in and examples of the appropriate management of student conduct and student offenses in violation of school board policies; (iv) standards for dress or grooming codes; and (v) standards for reducing bias and harassment in the enforcement of any code of student conduct.

In accordance with the most recent enunciation of constitutional principles by the Supreme Court of the United States of America, the Board's standards for school board policies on alcohol and drugs and search and seizure shall include

guidance for procedures relating to voluntary and mandatory drug testing in schools, including which groups may be tested, use of test results, confidentiality of test information, privacy considerations, consent to the testing, need to know, and release of the test results to the appropriate school authority.

In the case of suspension and expulsion, the procedures set forth in this article shall be the minimum procedures that the school board may prescribe.

D. Each school board shall include in its code of student conduct policies and procedures that include a prohibition against bullying. Such policies and procedures shall (i) be consistent with the standards for school board policies on bullying and the use of electronic means for purposes of bullying developed by the Board pursuant to subsection A and (ii) direct the principal to notify the parent of any student involved in an alleged incident of bullying of the status of any investigation within five school days of the allegation of bullying.

Such policies and procedures shall not be interpreted to infringe upon the First Amendment rights of students and are not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that such expression does not cause an actual, material disruption of the work of the school.

G. The Board of Education shall establish standards to ensure compliance with the federal Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Part F-Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994), as amended, in accordance with § 22.1-277.07.

This subsection shall not be construed to diminish the authority of the Board of Education or to diminish the Governor's authority to coordinate and provide policy direction on official communications between the Commonwealth and the United States government.

§ 22.1-291.3*. Notice of duty to report child abuse or neglect.*

Each public school board and each administrator of every private or parochial school shall post, in each of their schools, a notice, pursuant to § 63.2-1509, that: (i) any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school who has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, including any child who may be abandoned, is required to report such suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to local or state social services agencies or the person in charge of the relevant school or his designee; and (ii) all persons required to report cases of suspected child abuse or neglect are immune from civil or criminal liability or administrative penalty or sanction on account of such reports unless such person has acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose. The notice shall also include the Virginia Department of Social Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline.

School Climate; Education and Training for School Staff

§ 22.1-23.3*. Treatment of transgender students; policies.* [Enacted July 1, 2020]

A. The Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies concerning the treatment of transgender students in public elementary and secondary schools that address common issues regarding transgender students in accordance with evidence-based best practices and include information, guidance, procedures, and standards relating to:

1. Compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws;
2. Maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination and harassment for all students;
3. Prevention of and response to bullying and harassment;
4. Maintenance of student records;
5. Identification of students;
6. Protection of student privacy and the confidentiality of sensitive information;
7. Enforcement of sex-based dress codes; and
8. Student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities. Activities and events do not include athletics.

B. Each school board shall adopt policies that are consistent with but may be more comprehensive than the model policies developed by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection A.

Note that the *Code of Virginia* also requires that:

1. The Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies pursuant to subsection A of § 22.1-23.3 of the *Code of Virginia*, as created by this act, no later than December 31, 2020.
2. Each school board shall adopt policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3 of the *Code of Virginia,* as created by this act, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.

§ 22.1-291.4. *Bullying and abusive work environments prohibited.*

A. Each school board shall implement policies and procedures to educate school board employees about bullying, as defined in § 22.1-276.01, and the need to create a bully-free environment.

B. Each school board shall adopt policies to:

1. Prohibit abusive work environments in the school division;
2. Provide for the appropriate discipline of any school board employee who contributes to an abusive work environment; and
3. Prohibit retaliation or reprisal against a school board employee who alleges an abusive work environment or assists in the investigation of an allegation of an abusive work environment.

§ 22.1-276.01. *Definitions.*

A. For the purposes of this article, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Bullying" means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. "Bullying" includes cyber bullying. "Bullying" does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

"Disruptive behavior" means a violation of school board regulations governing student conduct that interrupts or obstructs the learning environment.

§ 22.1-279.9. *Development of programs to prevent crime and violence.*

All school boards shall develop, in cooperation with the local law-enforcement agencies, juvenile and domestic relations court judges and personnel, parents, and the community at large, programs to prevent violence and crime on school property and at school-sponsored events, which shall include prevention of hazing. Activities designed to prevent the recurrence of violence and crime, including hazing, may include such interventions as education relating to Virginia's criminal law, school crime lines, peer mediation, conflict resolution, community service requirements, and any program focused on demonstrating the consequences of violence and crime. School boards are encouraged to develop and use a network of volunteer services in implementing these prevention activities.

§ 22.1-298.6. *Mental health awareness training.* [Enacted July 1, 2020]

A. Each school board shall adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and other relevant personnel, as determined by the school board, employed on a full-time basis, to complete a mental health awareness training or similar program at least once.

B. Each school board shall provide required personnel the training required by subsection A and may contract with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, a community services board, a behavioral health authority, a nonprofit organization, or other certified trainer as defined in § 37.2-312.2 to provide such training. Such training may be provided via an online module.

Substantial Risk Orders

§ 19.2-152.13. *Emergency substantial risk order.* [Enacted July 1, 2020]

A. Upon the petition of an attorney for the Commonwealth or a law-enforcement officer, a judge of a circuit court, general district court, or juvenile and domestic relations district court or a magistrate, upon a finding that there is probable cause

to believe that a person poses a substantial risk of personal injury to himself or others in the near future by such person's possession or acquisition of a firearm, shall issue an ex parte emergency substantial risk order. Such order shall prohibit the person who is subject to the order from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm for the duration of the order. In determining whether probable cause for the issuance of an order exists, the judge or magistrate shall consider any relevant evidence, including any recent act of violence, force, or threat as defined in § 19.2-152.7:1 by such person directed toward another person or toward himself. No petition shall be filed unless an independent investigation has been conducted by law enforcement that determines that grounds for the petition exist. The order shall contain a statement (i) informing the person who is subject to the order of the requirements and penalties under § 18.2-308.1:6, including that it is unlawful for such person to purchase, possess, or transport a firearm for the duration of the order and that such person is required to surrender his concealed handgun permit if he possesses such permit, and (ii) advising such person to voluntarily relinquish any firearm within his custody to the law-enforcement agency that serves the order.

B. The petition for an emergency substantial risk order shall be made under oath and shall be supported by an affidavit.

C. Upon service of an emergency substantial risk order, the person who is subject to the order shall be given the opportunity to voluntarily relinquish any firearm in his possession. The law-enforcement agency that executed the emergency substantial risk order shall take custody of all firearms that are voluntarily relinquished by such person. The law-enforcement agency that takes into custody a firearm pursuant to the order shall prepare a written receipt containing the name of the person who is subject to the order and the manufacturer, model, condition, and serial number of the firearm and shall provide a copy thereof to such person. Nothing in this subsection precludes a law-enforcement officer from later obtaining a search warrant for any firearms if the law-enforcement officer has reason to believe that the person who is subject to an emergency substantial risk order has not relinquished all firearms in his possession.

D. An emergency substantial risk order issued pursuant to this section shall expire at 11:59 p.m. on the fourteenth day following issuance of the order. If the expiration occurs on a day that the circuit court for the jurisdiction where the order was issued is not in session, the order shall be extended until 11:59 p.m. on the next day that the circuit court is in session. The person who is subject to the order may at any time file with the circuit court a motion to dissolve the order.

E. An emergency substantial risk order issued pursuant to this section is effective upon personal service on the person who is subject to the order. The order shall be served forthwith after issuance. A copy of the order, petition, and supporting affidavit shall be given to the person who is subject to the order together with a notice informing the person that he has a right to a hearing under § 19.2-152.14 and may be represented by counsel at the hearing.

F. The court or magistrate shall forthwith, but in all cases no later than the end of the business day on which the emergency substantial risk order was issued, enter and transfer electronically to the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) established and maintained by the Department of State Police (Department) pursuant to Chapter 2 (§ 52-12 et seq.) of Title 52 the identifying information of the person who is subject to the order provided to the court or magistrate. A copy of an order issued pursuant to this section containing any such identifying information shall be forwarded forthwith to the primary law-enforcement agency responsible for service and entry of the order. Upon receipt of the order by the primary law-enforcement agency, the agency shall forthwith verify and enter any modification as necessary to the identifying information and other appropriate information required by the Department into the VCIN, and the order shall be served forthwith upon the person who is subject to the order. However, if the order is issued by the circuit court, the clerk of the circuit court shall forthwith forward an attested copy of the order containing the identifying information of the person who is subject to the order provided to the court to the primary law-enforcement agency providing service and entry of the order. Upon receipt of the order by the primary law-enforcement agency, the agency shall enter the name of the person subject to the order and other appropriate information required by the Department into the VCIN and the order shall be served forthwith upon the person who is subject to the order. Upon service, the agency making service shall enter the date and time of service and other appropriate information required into the VCIN and make due return to the court. If the order is later dissolved or modified, a copy of the dissolution or modification order shall also be attested and forwarded forthwith to the primary law-enforcement agency responsible for service and entry of the order. Upon receipt of the dissolution or modification order by the primary law-enforcement agency, the agency shall forthwith verify and enter any modification as necessary to the identifying information and other appropriate information required by the Department into the VCIN and the order shall be served forthwith.

G. The law-enforcement agency that serves the emergency substantial risk order shall make due return to the circuit court, which shall be accompanied by a written inventory of all firearms relinquished.

H. Proceedings in which an emergency substantial risk order is sought pursuant to this section shall be commenced where the person who is subject to the order (i) has his principal residence or (ii) has engaged in any conduct upon which the petition for the emergency substantial risk order is based.

I. A proceeding for a substantial risk order shall be a separate civil legal proceeding subject to the same rules as civil proceedings.

§ 19.2-152.14*. Substantial risk order.* [Enacted July 1, 2020]

A. Not later than 14 days after the issuance of an emergency substantial risk order pursuant to § 19.2-152.13, the circuit court for the jurisdiction where the order was issued shall hold a hearing to determine whether a substantial risk order should be entered. The attorney for the Commonwealth for the jurisdiction that issued the emergency substantial risk order shall represent the interests of the Commonwealth. Notice of the hearing shall be given to the person subject to the emergency substantial 9 of 11 risk order and the attorney for the Commonwealth. Upon motion of the respondent and for good cause shown, the court may continue the hearing, provided that the order shall remain in effect until the hearing. The Commonwealth shall have the burden of proving all material facts by clear and convincing evidence. If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person poses a substantial risk of personal injury to himself or to other individuals in the near future by such person's possession or acquisition of a firearm, the court shall issue a substantial risk order. Such order shall prohibit the person who is subject to the order from purchasing, possessing, or transporting a firearm for the duration of the order. In determining whether clear and convincing evidence for the issuance of an order exists, the judge shall consider any relevant evidence including any recent act of violence, force, or threat as defined in § 19.2-152.7:1 by such person directed toward another person or toward himself. The order shall contain a statement (i) informing the person who is subject to the order of the requirements and penalties under § 18.2-308.1:6, including that it is unlawful for such person to purchase, possess, or transport a firearm for the duration of the order and that such person is required to surrender his concealed handgun permit if he possesses such permit, and (ii) advising such person to voluntarily relinquish any firearm that has not been taken into custody to the law-enforcement agency that served the emergency substantial risk order.

B. If the court issues a substantial risk order pursuant to subsection A, the court shall (i) order that any firearm that was previously relinquished pursuant to § 19.2-152.13 from the person who is subject to the substantial risk order continue to be held by the agency that has custody of the firearm for the duration of the order and (ii) advise such person that a law-enforcement officer may obtain a search warrant to search for any firearms from such person if such law-enforcement officer has reason to believe that such person has not relinquished all firearms in his possession.

   If the court finds that the person does not pose a substantial risk of personal injury to himself or to other individuals in the near future, the court shall order that any firearm that was previously relinquished be returned to such person in accordance with the provisions of § 19.2-152.15.

C. The substantial risk order may be issued for a specified period of time up to a maximum of 180 days. The order shall expire at 11:59 p.m. on the last day specified or at 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the 180-day period if no date is specified. Prior to the expiration of the order, an attorney for the Commonwealth or a law-enforcement officer may file a written motion requesting a hearing to extend the order. Proceedings to extend an order shall be given precedence on the docket of the court. The court may extend the order for a period not longer than 180 days if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person continues to pose a substantial risk of personal injury to himself or to other individuals in the near future by such person's possession or acquisition of a firearm at the time the request for an extension is made. The extension of the order shall expire at 11:59 p.m. on the last day specified or at 11:59 p.m. on the last day of the 180-day period if no date is specified. Nothing herein shall limit the number of extensions that may be requested or issued. The person who is subject to the order may file a motion to dissolve the order one time during the duration of the order; however, such motion may not be filed earlier than 30 days from the date the order was issued.

D. Any person whose firearm has been voluntarily relinquished pursuant to § 19.2-152.13 or this section, or such person's legal representative, may transfer the firearm to another individual 21 years of age or older who is not otherwise prohibited by law from possessing such firearm, provided that:
   1. The person subject to the order and the transferee appear at the hearing;
   2. At the hearing, the attorney for the Commonwealth advises the court that a law-enforcement agency has determined that the transferee is not prohibited from possessing or transporting a firearm;
   3. The transferee does not reside with the person subject to the order;
   4. The court informs the transferee of the requirements and penalties under § 18.2-308.2:1; and

5. The court, after considering all relevant factors and any evidence or testimony from the person subject to the order, approves the transfer of the firearm subject to such restrictions as the court deems necessary.

The law-enforcement agency holding the firearm shall deliver the firearm to the transferee within five days of receiving a copy of the court's approval of the transfer.

E. The court shall forthwith, but in all cases no later than the end of the business day on which the substantial risk order was issued, enter and transfer electronically to the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) established and maintained by the Department of State Police (Department) pursuant to Chapter 2 (§ 52-12 et seq.) of Title 52 the identifying information of the person who is subject to the order provided to the court and shall forthwith forward the attested copy of the order containing any such identifying information to the primary law-enforcement agency responsible for service and entry of the order. Upon receipt of the order by the primary law-enforcement agency, the agency shall forthwith verify and enter any modification as necessary to the identifying information and other appropriate information required by the Department into the VCIN and the order shall be served forthwith upon the person who is subject to the order and due return made to the court. Upon service, the agency making service shall enter the date and time of service and other appropriate information required by the Department into the VCIN and make due return to the court. If the person who is subject to an emergency substantial risk order fails to appear at the hearing conducted pursuant to this section because such person was not personally served with notice of the hearing pursuant to subsection A, or if personally served was incarcerated and not transported to the hearing, the court may extend the emergency substantial risk order for a period not to exceed 14 days. The extended emergency substantial risk order shall specify a date for a hearing to be conducted pursuant to this section and shall be served forthwith on such person and due return made to the court. If the order is later dissolved or modified, a copy of the dissolution or modification order shall also be attested and forwarded forthwith to the primary law-enforcement agency responsible for service and entry of the order. Upon receipt of the dissolution or modification order by the primary law-enforcement agency, the agency shall forthwith verify and enter any modification as necessary to the identifying information and other appropriate information required by the Department of State Police into the Virginia Criminal Information Network, and the order shall be served forthwith and due return made to the court.

§ 19.2-152.7:1*. Definitions*

As used in this chapter:

"Act of violence, force, or threat" means any act involving violence, force, or threat that results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of death, sexual assault, or bodily injury. Such act includes, but is not limited to, any forceful detention, stalking, criminal sexual assault in violation of Article 7 (§ 18.2-61 et seq.) of Chapter 4 of Title 18.2, or any criminal offense that results in bodily injury or places one in reasonable apprehension of death, sexual assault, or bodily injury.

Records Retention and Disposition

§ 42.1-82*. Duties and powers of Library Board.*

A. The State Library Board shall:
   1. Issue regulations concerning procedures for the disposal, physical destruction or other disposition of public records containing social security numbers. The procedures shall include all reasonable steps to destroy such documents by (i) shredding, (ii) erasing, or (iii) otherwise modifying the social security numbers in those records to make them unreadable or undecipherable by any means.
   2. Issue regulations and guidelines designed to facilitate the creation, preservation, storage, filing, reformatting, management, and destruction of public records by agencies. Such regulations shall mandate procedures for records management and include recommendations for the creation, retention, disposal, or other disposition of public records.

B. The State Library Board may establish advisory committees composed of persons with expertise in the matters under consideration to assist the Library Board in developing regulations and guidelines.

§ 42.1-86.1*. Disposition of public records.*

A. No agency shall sell or give away public records. No agency shall destroy or discard a public record unless (i) the record appears on a records retention and disposition schedule approved pursuant to § 42.1-82 and the record's retention period has expired; (ii) a certificate of records destruction, as designated by the Librarian of Virginia, has been properly completed and approved by the agency's designated records officer; and (iii) there is no litigation, audit, investigation, request for

records pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (§ 2.2-3700 et seq.), or renegotiation of the relevant records retention and disposition schedule pending at the expiration of the retention period for the applicable records series. After a record is destroyed or discarded, the agency shall forward the original certificate of records destruction to the Library of Virginia.

B. No agency shall destroy any public record created before 1912 without first offering it to the Library of Virginia.

C. Each agency shall ensure that records created after July 1, 2006 and authorized to be destroyed or discarded in accordance with subsection a, are destroyed or discarded in a timely manner in accordance with the provisions of this chapter; provided, however, such records that contain identifying information as defined in clauses (iii) through (ix), or clause (xii) of subsection c of § 18.2-186.3, shall be destroyed within six months of the expiration of the records retention period.

Library of Virginia: Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

Under *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-82, the Library of Virginia (LVA) has the authority to issue regulations governing the retention and disposition of state and local public records. In keeping with the *Code's* mandate, LVA has developed records retention and disposition schedules outlining the disposition of public records (see § 42.1-86.1). General schedules apply to the records of common functions performed by or for all localities and state agencies. Specific schedules apply to records that are unique to an individual state agency.

Destruction of confidential or privacy-protected paper records must be done by shredding, pulping, or incineration. Electronic records must be overwritten with meaningless data or the storage media must be physically destroyed. Commercial software applications are available that electronically shred records from media. Deletion of confidential or privacy-protected information in electronic storage media is not acceptable.

Student Threat Assessment Records

Threat Assessments: Such records document individual threat assessments regarding students. Threats can include threats to self or to others. Records may include but are not limited to assessment results, anecdotal notes, and supporting documentation.

Retention Period: 5 Years after student graduates, completes Board of Education program, transfers, or withdraws
Disposition: Confidential Destruction
Source: Schedule GS-21 (page 20)
Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/GS-21.pdf

Staff Threat Assessment Records

Incident Reports: Such records document the occurrence of an incident, and any subsequent investigation, that involves the employees/facilities of an agency, and/or the public, and has reasonable possibility of legal consequences. Records may include but are not limited to investigative and interview notes, logs, and reports, as well as materials related to accident or illness reports related to a threat case.

Retention Period: 5 Years after event
Disposition: Non-confidential Destruction
Source: Schedule GS-03 (page 6)
Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/GS-03.pdf

Employee Health Records: In instances where an employee, as part of a threat assessment process, has undergone evaluation by medical professional, there may be records that documents any long-term health risk, as well as any health treatment or examination given to an employee by a medical professional of the agency or an agent of the agency for exposure to hazardous substances, or on-the-job injuries, or for the employee's general well-being. Records may include, but is not limited to health assessments, medical clearance or release to duty notices, reports, and other records related to accident or illness reports related to a threat case.

Retention Period: 30 Years after separation
Disposition: Confidential Destruction
Source: Schedule GS-03 (page 4)
Available at: www.lva.virginia.gov/agencies/records/sched_local/GS-03.pdf

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS

To ensure that threat assessment teams in Virginia's schools have the best resources, training, and information possible, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has retained an experienced Threat Management Consultant (TMC), as an independent contractor. The TMC will be available to school threat assessment teams when consultation or training is needed regarding 1) development of threat assessment processes, or 2) for issues related to management of cases.

Request for Service Process

For all needs related to threat assessment legislation, threat assessment teams, DCJS sponsored trainings, or curriculum, please continue to contact DCJS staff for assistance (see Contact Information below).

Please utilize the following process when threat assessment questions arise in your school division and you seek to access the services of our Threat Management Consultant (TMC).

For assistance related to a specific threat assessment case or a more advanced threat management issue, please see below:

- School division staff will complete and submit a "Request for Service" form to DCJS staff who will review the request to determine the course of action. If the involvement of the Threat Management Consultant (TMC) is deemed appropriate for the request, DCJS staff will initiate that process. DCJS staff may consult with the requesting school or with the TMC, to determine the appropriateness of requests for service. DCJS retains the sole discretion as to whether such requests fall under the scope of this project.
- If authorized, DCJS staff will notify the TMC of the approved request for service, including the authorized type or amount of service (e.g., training or consultation on project x for up to 2 hours). The approved request for service provided to the TMC will include the name, affiliation and contact information for the person(s) requesting service.
- DCJS will pay for the TMC's time/service (as an independent contractor) at no expense to the school (for the services authorized).
- DCJS staff will notify the requesting school regarding the status of the request and will provide the TMC's contact information to the requesting school.
- When providing consultation regarding specific threat cases, the TMC will provide the school with the relevant confidentiality agreement and/or retention agreement to ensure lawful and ethical sharing of information necessary to facilitate the consultation. The TMC will provide DCJS with a copy of such agreement(s).
- The TMC will provide DCJS with a summary of services provided. The TMC will not provide DCJS or other persons not directly involved with the case any confidential information related to case consultations.
- Barring an exigent situation (e.g., active emergent case), such requests for service will generally be initiated within 5 business days of the authorized request being forwarded to the TMC. Where this is not feasible due to existing commitments, the TMC will coordinate with the school for a reasonable timeline to meet the request.
- The TMC will (where reasonably able) provide timely availability for consultation regarding exigent situations, usually the same day the request is received.
- Even where schools/campuses have previously used the technical assistance services through this project, each new request for service will be routed through DCJS rather than contacting the TMC directly.

Contact Information

For assistance related to this guidance or any K-12 threat assessment and management issues, please contact:
Brad Stang, Threat Assessment Program Coordinator
brad.stang@dcjs.virginia.gov
(804) 997-1278

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

THREAT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT REQUEST FORM

To be completed by School Requesting Technical Assistance or Consultation

Date of Request:	
Requestor Name:	
Title:	
Affiliation (School):	
Phone Number:	
Email Address:	
Summary of Request:	
Signature of Requestor:	

FOR DCJS USE

Request Received:	
Reviewer:	
Authorized:	☐ Yes ☐ No
Forwarded to Consultant:	
Notice to Requestor:	

FOR CONSULTANT USE

Date Received:	
Date Requestor Contacted:	
Date Service Completed:	
Hours of Service:	

Form available at: www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/k-12-resources-and-curriculum

Sample Threat Assessment and Management Forms

The following pages provide sample forms to help schools document information related to all aspects of threat cases, from initial report/intake, triage, assessment, initial case management, case updates and case closure. Note that schools are NOT required to use these forms. Rather, they are provided as a resource to support schools in their efforts to identify, assess and manage potential threats to the school and its members.

All the forms are also available on the DCJS website at:
www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/threat-assessment-virginia

The forms are available for use in a downloadable PDF format to be used as they are, or in a WORD format.

School threat assessment teams are encouraged to download the forms, edit them to meet their policies and procedures, and use them as best meets their needs. Teams may use all, some, or none of these forms and may edit them to meet local needs.

Overview of Threat Assessment and Management Forms

Part I: Intake for Initial Report Concerned
This form is to document initial reports. The first page is to document the incident/concern that occurred. The items about the incident are intended to gain a full understanding of what occurred and if there are any obligations for further notifications.

The next two pages are to document the persons involved in the potential case, i.e., the subject(s), target(s)/others impacted, and witnesses. If necessary, use additional copies to document information about additional persons involved.

Part II: Triage
This form has three pages. The first is for documenting standard record checks. Note these items should be updated to reflect the record sources and access of the school's threat assessment team. The second page is a summary checklist of key issues for consideration of need for further assessment or intervention. The purpose of the triage is to determine if there is need for further review and action by the full team or if the concern can be reasonably resolved at triage or by referral to existing resources. The third page is for documentation of any required notifications, additional information, and the findings of the triage process.

Part III: Threat Assessment
There are two pages for this form which provides key areas for inquiry regarding each of the STEP domains, and a checklist of key factors that will inform assessment and case management considerations. The key areas and items reflect the content of the Guidelines for Threat Assessment in this *Guide.* This form may also be used to update key areas/information during ongoing case reviews.

Part IV: Initial Case Management Plan
This form uses the STEP framework to outline the case management plan. The teams should identify tasks, team members responsible for overseeing completion of the tasks, and a date/time the task is due for update to the team.

Part V: Case Update
Like the initial Case Management form, this uses the STEP framework for modification to the case management plan, including both updates such as new information or outcomes of prior action items, and new or ongoing tasks for each of the domains. The teams should identify tasks, team members responsible for overseeing completion of the tasks, and a date/time the task is due for update to the team. This form can be used to document each review of the case.

Part VI: Case Closure
Teams may use this form to document a thorough, diligent and deliberate review of the case to ensure that any concerns using the STEP framework have been sufficiently addressed to the point that the case is stable at a Routine/No Known Concern or Low Level of Concern.

THREAT ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT FORM

PART I: INTAKE for INITIAL REPORT OF CONCERN

Date Reported:		**Day of Week:** ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday			**Time:** ☐ AM ☐ PM
Taken by:		**School:**		**Position:**	

REPORTING PARTY:

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other:_____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Building/Program:**	
Home Address:			**Phone:**	

INCIDENT:

Date Occurred:		**Day of Week:** ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday				**Time:** ☐ AM ☐ PM
Location:	☐ School Property [☐ In School Building ☐ School Grounds] ☐ School Bus ☐ School Sponsored Activity ☐ Other:					
School:			**Building/Program:**			
Address:			**City:**		**State:**	
Concern Types:	☐ Harm to Others ☐ Abduction ☐ Stalking ☐ Bullying ☐ Suicidal/Self-Harm ☐ Aberrant Communication/Behavior ☐ Assault [☐ Physical ☐ Sexual) ☐ Bomb/Arson ☐ Weapon ☐ Harassment ☐ Mental Health ☐ Disruptive / Suspicious Behavior					
Nature:	☐ Act ☐ Threat ☐ Concern	**Modes:**	☐ In Person ☐ Phone ☐ Text ☐ Email ☐ Letter ☐ Social Media ☐ Internet ☐ Other :			
Persons(s) injured: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown		**Persons(s) require medical attention?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown				
Weapon involved: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown		**Type of Weapon:** ☐ Firearm[☐ Rifle/Shotgun ☐ Pistol] ☐ Edged ☐ Explosive ☐ Other:				
Weapon referenced: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown		**Type of Weapon:** ☐ Firearm[☐ Rifle/Shotgun ☐ Pistol] ☐ Edged ☐ Explosive ☐ Other:				
Law Enforcement Involved: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown		**Agency:**		**Arrest/Custody of Subject:** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown		

Details of the incident/nature of concerns. Note what occurred, who was involved, where and when, if others were impacted or harmed, etc.

If threats/concerning statements were communicated, provide direct quotes where possible, using quotation marks to indicate direct quotes. Attach original communications if available.

SUBJECT (1) Engaging in threatening, aberrant or concerning behavior:

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other: _____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Relationship to Target:**	
Emergency Contact:			**Relationship:**	☐ Parent ☐ Spouse/Partner ☐ Guardian ☐ Other:
Home Address:			**Phone:**	

SUBJECT (2) Engaging in threatening, aberrant or concerning behavior:

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other: _____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Relationship to Target:**	
Emergency Contact:			**Relationship:**	☐ Parent ☐ Spouse/Partner ☐ Guardian ☐ Other:
Home Address:			**Phone:**	

Note: If more than two subjects of concern in this incident, attach additional copies of this page with subject's information.

TARGET (1):

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other: _____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Relationship to Subject:**	
Emergency Contact:			**Relationship:**	☐ Parent ☐ Spouse/Partner ☐ Guardian ☐ Other:
Home Address:			**Phone:**	

TARGET (2):

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other: _____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Relationship to Subject:**	
Emergency Contact:			**Relationship:**	☐ Parent ☐ Spouse/Partner ☐ Guardian ☐ Other:
Home Address:			**Phone:**	

Note: If more than two targets in this incident, attach additional copies of this page with target's information.

PART I: INTAKE for INITIAL REPORT OF CONCERN – PERSONS INVOLVED

Witness (1):

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other: _____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Relationship to Subject:**	
Emergency Contact:			**Relationship:**	☐ Parent ☐ Spouse/Partner ☐ Guardian ☐ Other:
Home Address:			**Phone:**	
Witness Interview				

Witness (2):

Name:		☐ Unknown	**ID #:**	
Affiliation:	☐ Administrator ☐ Teacher ☐ Staff ☐ Student ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Contractor ☐ Other: _____ ☐ None/Unknown		**Status:**	☐ Current ☐ Former ☐ Prospective Grade:_____(if student)
School:			**Relationship to Subject:**	
Emergency Contact:			**Relationship:**	☐ Parent ☐ Spouse/Partner ☐ Guardian ☐ Other:
Home Address:			**Phone:**	
Witness Interview				

Note: If more than two witnesses in this incident, attach additional copies of this page.

Regarding:	**Case:**

PART II: TRIAGE – RECORDS CHECKS

RECORDS CHECKS (ALL):	**Checked** NS=Not Significant NA=Not Applicable	**Notes about Significant findings:**
Photo	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Threat Assessment Team history	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Criminal history	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Driver license information	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Vehicle/Parking information	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
SRO/SSO contacts	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Local Law Enforcement contacts	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Other Law Enforcement contacts	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Protective/No Contact Orders	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
No Trespass Notice	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Concealed weapons permit	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Weapons purchase permit	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Social media	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Online Search	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	

RECORDS CHECKS: School Staff

Disciplinary actions	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Grievances filed	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Title IX actions	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Application	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	

RECORDS CHECKS: Students

Class schedule	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Academic standing/progress	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
IEP/504	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Transfer records	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Conduct/Discipline	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Title IX actions	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ NS/NA	

OTHER RECORDS CHECKS:

Note: Complete a record check form for each subject and target.

Threat Assessment and Management Case Form — © Deisinger (2019); Licensed to Virginia Public Schools

Subject:		**Case:**
PART II: TRIAGE INQUIRY SUMMARY SHEET		
SUBJECT		Notes:
Behavior(s) causing concern/impacting others	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Concerning or Aberrant Communications	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Directly communicated threats	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Leakage: grievances, ideation/intent, planning, preparations, targets	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Identified grievances/motives for violence	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Fixation on grievances, targets, violent resolution, etc.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Interest or Identification with perpetrators, grievances, or violent acts	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
History of violence or novel aggression	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Last resort behaviors: Desperation, imperative, diminished alternatives	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Pathway behaviors – Planning	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Pathway behaviors – Preparing: means, methods, opportunity, proximity	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Stalking/unwanted contact, communication, or pursuit	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Energy bursts/changes in pattern(s) of disruptive/concerning behavior(s)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Last Resort behaviors/JACA	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Despondency, despair, isolation, and/or suicidality	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Significant cognitive, emotional, or psychological concerns	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Significant or multiple stressors/difficulty coping	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Lack of inhibitors/stabilizers to prevent violence	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Comments:		
TARGET / OTHERS		Notes
Identified targets (person/proxy, place, program, process, philosophy)	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Fearful of harm	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Protective actions/responding as if subject poses a safety concern	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Vulnerability: e.g., consistent routine, low situational awareness	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Need for assistance	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Comments:		
ENVIRONMENT		Notes
Organizational climate concerns: e.g., bullying, bias, poor conflict mgmt.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Systemic/procedural	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Report latency/failure	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Bullying/bias	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Lack of support, guidance, or resources	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Adverse social influences	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
High rates of violence, harassment, disruption, stress	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Disproportionate rate/severity of concerns	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Comments:		
PRECIPITATING EVENTS		Notes
Impending loss, failure	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Key dates/events	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Triggers/reminders	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Views intervention negatively	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Contagion influence	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Return from separation	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	
Other:	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	

Comments:

Subject:		**Case:**
NOTIFICATIONS	**Reason**	**Notes**
☐ Superintendent/Designee	☐ Student poses High/Imminent threat to self/others ☐ Other	
☐ Principal	☐ High/imminent threat ☐ Crime ☐ Other	
☐ Law Enforcement	☐ High/imminent threat ☐ Crime ☐ Other	
☐ Parent/Guardian	☐ Student poses High/Imminent threat to self/others ☐ Other	
☐ Other:	☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Other:	☐ Yes ☐ No	

NOTES:

CASE PRIORITY LEVEL:

☐ **Critical/Imminent**	☐ **High**	☐ **Moderate**	☐ **Low**	☐ **Routine/None**

TRIAGE RECOMMENDATION:

☐ No identified Concerns: **Close case**	☐ Non-TAT Concerns: **Referral(s)**	☐ Unknown/On-going Threat: **Initiate TAT Case**

BTAM CASE #

TRIAGE COMPLETED BY:

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date

Subject:	**Case:**
PART III: THREAT ASSESSMENT KEY AREAS FOR INQUIRY	
SUBJECT Key Areas for Inquiry	**Key Factors**
Is subject engaging in behaviors causing concern? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown **Concerns about nature, pattern, context, or change in frequency or intensity?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Others significantly impacted ☐ Patterned occurrence continues ☐ Changes in behavior/pattern
Is subject engaging in concerning, aberrant & threatening communications? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown **Indicating grievances, ideation, intent, planning, preparation, or targets?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Directly Communicated Threats ☐ Leakage ☐ Multiple communication modes ☐ Intent to engage in violence ☐ Warning others
Subject expressed motives and/or grievances with intended violence/harm? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Immersion **Fixation?** ☐ Grievances ☐ Targets/sources ☐ Violence
Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in violence? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	**Identification?** ☐ Incidents or perpetrators ☐ Grievances of perpetrators ☐ Weapons/tactics ☐ Notoriety or fame ☐ Violent Ideology
Does subject have (or developing) the capacity to engage in violence? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Violence History ☐ Novel Aggression ☐ Pathway behaviors? ☐ Planning & research ☐ Preparations ☐ Surveillance, stalking, rehearsal ☐ Energy Burst behaviors ☐ Rapid Escalation/Imminence
Subject experiencing/expressing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Last resort behaviors ☐ JACA behaviors? ☐ Justification ☐ Alternatives (lack of) ☐ Consequences ☐ Martyrdom ☐ Ability ☐ Legacy token
Subject's behavior indicates need for intervention/support services? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Depressed mood ☐ Hallucinations ☐ Delusions ☐ Extreme wariness/distrust ☐ Martyrdom ☐ Pervasive maladaptive behavior ☐ Untreated symptoms of MI ☐ Poor treatment compliance
Does subject have protective factors or stabilizers that inhibit violence? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown **Subject has positive, trusting, sustained relationship with positive figure?** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Views violence as unacceptable, immoral: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Accepts responsibility for actions: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Demonstrates remorse for inappropriate behavior: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Respects reasonable limits and expectations: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Uses socially sanctioned means of addressing grievances: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Values life, job, relationships, freedom: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Fears loss of reputation, job, freedom, life: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Maintains, uses, and builds effective coping skills: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown Treatment access, compliance, engagement: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Few/no protective factors ☐ Protective failures diminishing ☐ Loss of key support

Subject:	**Case:**
TARGET Key Areas for Inquiry	**Key Factors**
Are targets vulnerable, concerned, or impacted by subject's behavior? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Significant impact/fear ☐ Significant impart/fear ☐ Availability, access, proximity ☐ Vulnerability ☐ Few protective/coping skills ☐ Need for assistance
ENVIRONMENTAL/SYSTEMIC Key Areas for Inquiry	
Are there Environmental/Systemic factors that are impacting the situation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ School climate: bullying, bias ☐ Systemic/procedural ☐ Report latency/failure ☐ Poor Conflict management ☐ Unfair treatment ☐ Inadequate resources ☐ Adverse influences
PRECIPITATING EVENTS Key Areas for Inquiry	
Are there Precipitating Events that may impact situation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Impending loss, failure, injustice ☐ Key dates/events ☐ Triggers/reminders ☐ Views intervention as injustice ☐ Contagion influence ☐ Return from separation
PROCESS INTEGRITY Key Areas for Inquiry	
Are there concerns with consistency, credibility, or bias in information? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unknown	☐ Poor credibility of subject ☐ Poor credibility of sources ☐ Inconsistency between sources ☐ Significant gaps/unknowns
Other Relevant Information:	

CURRENT CASE PRIORITY LEVEL:

☐ **Critical/Imminent**	☐ **High**	☐ **Moderate**	☐ **Low**	☐ **Routine / None**

Case Status:

☐ No identified Concerns: **Close case**	☐ Non-TAT Concerns: **Referral(s)**	☐ On-going Threat: **Sustain TAT Case**

REFERRALS:

ASSESSMENT COMPLETED BY:

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date

Subject:	**Case:**

PART IV: INITIAL CASE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTERVENTION/TASK	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	DATE DUE
Subject Interventions		
Target Interventions		
Environment Interventions		
Precipitating Events (Monitoring/Interventions)		

Date for Next Review:

Print name of Team Leader: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Team Leader: _____

Subject:	**Case:**

PART V: CASE UPDATE (to be updated regularly while case is active)

INTERVENTION/TASK

Subject

Updates:	**Source**

Interventions	**Responsible Person**	**DUE**

Target Interventions

Updates:	**Source**

Interventions	**Responsible Person**	**Due**

Environment Interventions

Updates:	**Source**

Interventions	**Responsible Person**	**Due**

Subject:	**Case:**
Precipitating Events (Monitoring/Interventions)	
Updates:	**Source**

Interventions	**Responsible Person**	**Due**

Comments

CURRENT CASE PRIORITY LEVEL:

☐ **Critical/Imminent**	☐ **High**	☐ **Moderate**	☐ **Low**	☐ **Routine / None**

Case Status:

☐ No identified Concerns: **Close case**	☐ Non-TAT Concerns: **Referral(s)**	☐ On-going Threat: **Sustain TAT Case**

Date for Review:

REFERRALS:

Update COMPLETED BY:

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date

Subject:	**Case:**

PART VI: CASE CLOSURE

☐ **The Threat Assessment Team has completed necessary interventions and actions regarding this case.**

☐ **The Level of Concern for this case is currently Routine/None or Low.**

☐ **If at a Low Level of Concern, remaining issues or tasks are being adequately addressed and monitored by relevant resources within the school or community at this time.**

☐ **Any relevant referrals have been made and those resources are engaged as needed.**

☐ **The full Threat Assessment Team has reviewed and concurred with all the following regarding the domains of assessment and intervention:**

SUBJECT:

The subject is not known to be engaging in any behaviors that:

☐ Is posing a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others, or

☐ May reasonably pose a threat of violence, harm, or significant disruption to self or others, or

☐ Indicate a need for assistance or intervention.

TARGET/Others:

Targets or others are not known to:

☐ Have any significant ongoing concerns regarding their safety regarding this case

☐ Be engaging in any behaviors that place them at risk regarding this case

☐ Have any significant ongoing or further need for assistance or intervention.

ENVIRONMENT/SYSTEMIC CONCERNS:

There are no known:

☐ Environmental / systemic concerns significantly impacting this case currently.

☐ Environmental / systemic concerns that are reasonably likely to occur that would significantly impact upon this case, OR

PRECIPITATING EVENTS:

There are no known:

☐ Precipitating Events that are significantly impacting this case currently.

☐ Precipitating Events that are reasonably likely to occur that would significantly impact upon this case.

THERE ARE NO FURTHER IDENTIFIABLE ACTION STEPS. THIS CASE HAS BEEN RESOLVED AND IS CLOSED

Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date
Name	Position	Signature	Date

NOTES

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
www.dcjs.virginia.gov