

VIOLENCE THREAT/RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA)

Background

Respect for self and others, contributing to the common good, accepting accountability for one's own actions, seeking and granting forgiveness, acting morally and legally as a person formed in the Catholic tradition, and the promotion of self-discipline are behaviours integral to fulfilling the mission of STAR Catholic Schools. It is from this foundation that a distinctive vision of the call for desired behaviours of students, staff and parents within our Catholic Schools emerges.

STAR Catholic Schools is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in schools where students, staff, parents and others feel safe. As a Division, we are committed to maintaining an acceptable standard of student behaviour and decorum in the school creating an environment where educators can teach and students can learn. To this end, the following protocol shall be used for responding to student threats/high-risk behaviours.

Definitions

High Risk Behaviours: Behaviours which express a plausible intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something.

Immediate Risk Situations: Situations involving high risk that require immediate police interventions and a protective school response.

Risk Assessment: The process of determining if a threat maker poses a risk to the target he/she have threatened

Violence-Threat Risk Assessment, Stage I (VTRA): The primary purpose of the Stage I VTRA is data collection and initiation of immediate risk-reduction interventions. A Stage I VTRA typically includes the Principal or designate, the school counselor and a police officer. Input from other community partners will be gathered as part of the process.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment, Stage II (VTRA): A Stage II VTRA may be requested by the Stage I VTRA team when a more comprehensive response including risk evaluation, long-term intervention and treatment planning are needed. The Assistant Superintendent assigned as School Ops will convene the Stage II VTRA team which may include the Director of Student Services, Learning Coach, mental health services professional(s), physician(s), child protection staff and other community organizations who are members of the VTRA protocol.

Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol: A formal agreement signed by each of the participating partners which is representative of their commitment to the VTRA process as well as their participation and support.

Worrisome Behaviours: Behaviours which cause concern and may indicate that a child/youth, who is not overly threatening or violent, may be moving towards a greater risk of violent behaviour.

Procedures

1. Any person in a school having knowledge of high-risk student behaviour or having reasonable grounds to believe there is a potential for high risk-behaviour should immediately report the information to the Principal and/or designate.
2. No action should be taken against a person who makes a report unless it is made maliciously or without reasonable grounds. In cases where a report is made maliciously, the person shall be dealt with according to Division procedures and the police where applicable.
3. At the start of every school year, students, parents and staff will be provided with information about the protocol and procedures so that “fair notice” is given that high-risk/threatening/violent behaviours will not be tolerated.
4. Schools will respond to high-risk/threat related behaviours. High risk-behaviours will be taken seriously, assessed accordingly and responded to appropriately.
5. When a student exhibits immediate risk behaviours, the Principal or designate should contact the police without delay and take steps to ensure the safety of all those in school by activating established security procedures. The Principal should notify the Assistant Superintendent or designate and the Director of Student Services as soon as possible following contact with police.
6. Violence Threat Risk Assessments (VTRA) should be initiated by schools for the following:
 - Serious violence or violence with the intent to harm and kill
 - Verbal/written threats to kill others (“Clear direct and plausible”)
 - The use of technology (e.g. Computer, mobile phone) to communicate threats to harm/kill others or cause serious property damage (e.g. “Burn this office down”)
 - Possession of weapons (including replicas)
 - Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices)
 - Fire setting
 - Sexual intimidation or assault
 - Ongoing issues with bullying and/or harassment
 - Gang related intimidation and violence

- Hate incidents motivated by factors including, but not limited to: race, culture, religion and/or sexual orientation
7. The Principal should notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student making a threat at the earliest opportunity.
 8. When a student exhibits high risk behaviours the Principal or designate should:
 - 8.1. Initiate Stage I of the Violence Threat Risk Assessment. Stage I involves data collection only: determining the facts of the incident, who was involved and any mitigating factors.
 - 8.2. Upon completing Stage I, the Principal or designate shall contact the Assistant Superintendent (School Ops) and the Director of Student Services to review the findings of Stage I and decide if it is necessary to proceed to Stage II of the protocol. Stage II involves engaging the support of the appropriate protocol partners and conducting a comprehensive risk evaluation by a multi-disciplinary team.
 9. The Principal or designate should submit the completed Stage I VTRA form to the Director of Student Services to be kept on file if a Stage II VTRA is called. Any further recommendations from the Stage II team will be added to the Stage I report form during the Stage II meeting
 10. The Violence Threat Risk Assessment Notice is completed by the Principal and placed in the student's cumulative record.
 11. When dealing with students who exhibit worrisome behaviours, staff should consult with the counselor or Family School Liaison Worker (FSLW), inform the Principal and contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). Student Services staff are routinely called on to provide advice and support regarding worrisome student behaviours.
 12. The Director of Student Services is responsible to ensure the effective implementation of Violence Threat/Risk Assessment Protocol in the Division.

Reference: Section 12, 24, 25, 45, School Act
Leduc and Area Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol
Wild Rose Community Threat and Risk Assessment Protocol
WRPS Combined Violence Threat Risk Assessment Agreement
Section 264.1(1) Criminal Code of Canada