

Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board

Threat Assessment and Intervention Practical Guide

December 2023

*"Thus says the Lord: ... Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God ... Do not fear, for I am with you"*
Isaiah 43:1-3, 5



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SECTION 1 – PURPOSE

As people of faith, violence is one of the sad, troubling realities of our world, which we cannot deny or ignore. It is a reality that we are called to approach *thoughtfully and methodically* (because of the potential risks to human life), but also *pastorally* (because the human beings involved in violence are very frequently themselves struggling and/or in pain). We are committed to ensuring the safety of all concerned, while also providing appropriate support for those who may be going through very difficult times. This approach is pro-life and compassionate, but also protective and realistic, just as Jesus counselled His followers to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).

Our approach to potential (or actual) violence aims always to *prevent* violence, to contain and defuse it, and to bring healing where it has occurred.

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 Maintain the safety of students, staff, parents/caregivers, and other members of the school community.
- 1.2 Provide a consistent, systematic and timely response approach to identifying, assessing and responding to threats of violence against a student, school staff and/or school sites to ensure safety in our schools. Fair Notice, in the form of a letter that outlines a consistent and systematic approach, will be distributed to all families and staff at the beginning of each school year. (Appendix: Fair Notice Letter)
- 1.3 Outline the process for identifying and understanding the factors that contribute to targeted threats of violence and threatening situations and support the development of effective short and long-term intervention strategies to **reduce the risk of targeted violence**.
- 1.4 Promote a multidisciplinary approach to problem solving and intervention for students in crisis, with school board staff and community partner agencies.

The SMCDSB is part of a community-based response for effective and efficient intervention that responds to and reduces the risk of targeted violence in schools and the community at large.

This protocol document is not a substitute for training in the field of violence-threat assessment. Individuals should consult with other members of the school team who have been trained when a threat has been brought to their attention. The Threat Assessment and Intervention Practical Guide is intended to be used by members of the school community to address threats of violence.

Training will be offered on a regular basis as “Level 1 Threat Assessment Training”, in partnership with others in our community and as certified by the Center For Trauma Informed Practices (CTIP). Annual training will be offered to ensure all administrators and necessary staff are trained and prepared for potential threats in and out of our schools.

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

A **threat** is an indication of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, implied, posted on the Internet, made by gesture or reasonably inferred in the circumstance. Anonymous threats must also be reported. This means that even when there is no information about who made the threat, the threat is still investigated. All threats must be taken seriously, investigated and responded to in a timely manner to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in the school community.

A **threatening situation** is defined as an indication of impending harm or serious acts of violence against someone or something. Threats may be implied, verbal, written, drawn, posted on the internet, sent electronically or by information technology of any type, made by gesture or reasonably inferred from the surrounding circumstances of events. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.

A **threat assessment, or assessment of risk to others (ARTO)**, is the process of determining whether a student poses a risk to others, based on a threat that was made. While individuals may engage in behaviours that indicate a likelihood of violence, research indicates that few pose a risk to harm the target they have threatened. A multidisciplinary team engages in a data collection process including interviews and consultation with those who know the student. An “initial level of risk” is determined and risk-reducing interventions are developed to protect potential targets and the student of concern. The interventions should protect potential targets, the school and the community as well as support the individual who has made the threat.

Worrisome behaviours are those that cause concern for members of a school system but DO NOT meet the level of concern for a threat assessment. These behaviours may indicate that a student is at risk for engaging violent behaviours towards others. This may include unexpected or any inappropriate behaviour beyond what is developmentally appropriate such as: significant changes in typical or daily behaviours or functioning, violent content in drawings, pictures or stories/journals, vague threatening statements, unusual interest in fires, significant shift to anti-social behaviour or aggressive behaviour (More examples are included in Appendix A). **Worrisome behaviours are addressed through the SMCDSD School Team referral process with the support of Student Services staff and other Board level staff.**

PBA's – Plausibility, Baseline and Attack Related Behaviours:

Plausibility are threats that are realistic and reflect behaviours that can be carried out. An example of a threat that is not plausible is when a primary student threatens to shoot the school with a tank. A threat that may be plausible is when a student tells someone that they have access to a parent's hunting rifle.

Baseline behaviours reflect the day-to-day actions, behaviours that are typical of the student and/or expected. A change in baseline are behaviours, including verbalizations, that indicate an increase in concerning or unusual behaviours, beyond the scope of the student's normal behaviours (baseline) and direct actions (attack-related) that increase the possibility of a violence incident to occur.

Attack related/Substantive behaviours are behaviours/actions that are consistent with the threat that has been made and indicate that an individual may have the means and may be in the process of planning to carry out the threat.

IOC - Individual of Concern - Refers to the individual who has made a threat or threatening behaviour

VTRA - Violent Threat Risk Assessment - A term used to describe a school's response to a threat or threatening behaviour.

SECTION 3 - REPORTING OF THREATS AND THREATENING SITUATIONS

Student safety and well-being is everyone's responsibility. All school staff must make sure that all students understand the importance of reporting threats and threatening situations. All threats of violence and threatening behaviour by a student or member of the school community must be reported to the principal/vice-principal or designate, who will make a decision about how to proceed and if the threat assessment and intervention protocol should be activated.

The most important points to emphasize with students are:

- All threats of violence will be taken seriously;
- Students can go to any teacher or staff member to report a threatening situation;
- Students need to report all threatening situations; and
- Reporting threatening situations is a social responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all.

Unless made in malice and without reasonable grounds, punitive action will not be taken against the person(s) reporting. No one will be punished for reporting a threat when they are genuinely concerned. Confidentiality will be maintained, whenever possible, for anyone reporting a threat.

SECTION 4 – CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY & ADDRESSING BIAS

It is important for teams to be aware of the possibility of bias (cultural, gender, and other types) in threat assessment and intervention activities due to:

- Questions and how they are phrased (ensuring appropriate understanding of the content and awareness of cultural differences that may influence interpretation);
- Developmental or intellectual challenges or other mitigating factors;
- Past experiences, including but not limited to, racism, trauma, discrimination, poverty, and conflict;
- Distrust of authority figures that create additional stressors which increase the perception of a higher level of risk,
- Understanding of the English language and awareness, or lack of awareness, of cultural differences.

A neutral translator ([Professional Service](#)) rather than a family, community member, etc. should be used to translate in the first language of the individual being interviewed. Ideally, those involved in the threat assessment and intervention should be familiar with the cultural backgrounds of the parties being interviewed. Additional support or consultation should be accessed if this is not the case. When needed, support from someone who is not familiar with the threat assessment and

intervention process may be asked to consult with the team to provide guidance related to the possibility of bias in the process.

SECTION 5 – STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Threat Assessment and Intervention process applies to all students, including those with identified special needs. Threat assessments, however, will not be activated when students with special needs engage in threat-making or aggressive behaviours that are consistent with their past and baseline behaviours.* (This could be documented in the students' Safety Plan.) However, if a student with special needs moves beyond their typical baseline behaviour and there is an increase in threats and/or threatening behaviour, the Threat Assessment and Intervention process should be activated, beginning with Site Specific Screening.

The process of data collection and assessment is not modified other than to ensure that the interviewing strategies used will address the needs of the student with special needs. It will also help to determine and guide the interventions and supports needed for the student.

****A note of Caution:*** Sometimes the multidisciplinary threat assessment team may underreact to a serious threat posed by a student with special needs. This occurs when they assume that the student's behaviours are caused by, or a result of, a formal diagnosis. It is important to remember that students with special needs may resort to violence towards others as a means of reacting to challenging situations. It is important to determine the underlying reason for a change in their behaviour. Plausibility (likeliness), baseline (elevated) and attack-related (increased aggression) behaviours (PBAs) must always be assessed.

SECTION 6 – ACTIVATION OF THE THREAT ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION PROCESS

A threat assessment will be activated when there are threats, or evidence of threatening behaviours, that include, but are not limited to:

- Serious violence with intent to harm or kill;
- Verbal/written threats of serious violence to harm or kill others (clear, direct and plausible);
- Use of technology to communicate threats to harm/kill others;
- Hate motivated violence
- Possession of weapons (including replicas);
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices);
- Fire setting;
- Sexual assault;
- Criminal Harassment;
- Gang-related occurrences;

- Hate incidents such as, but not limited to: gender, race, religion, culture, sexual identity or expression;
- Suicidal ideation or suicidal attempts that include evidence of serious violence towards individuals or groups.

It is important to note that, depending on the immediacy and severity of the behaviour, the local police must be called, as per the [Police School Board Protocol](#), alongside the process of initiating the Threat Assessment process. This could include behaviours listed or behaviours that are motivated by hate and/or bias including, but not limited to: race, culture, religion, and/or sexual or gender diversity.

When responding to a report of a threat, the school members of the threat assessment team will initially do a site-specific screening to assess plausibility, change in baseline behaviours and explore attack-related behaviours to determine whether or not to continue with the complete threat assessment process. When situations are unclear, there should be consultation with others who are well versed in the threat assessment process.

Activation of the Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol by Community Partners:

There are times when a community partner receives information about a student that would warrant activation of the Threat Assessment and Intervention process. Community partners should follow their internal procedures to activate a Threat Assessment. In the absence of an internal procedure or in the case of a community partner, contact should be made with the principal of the school to share information about the threat or threatening situation.

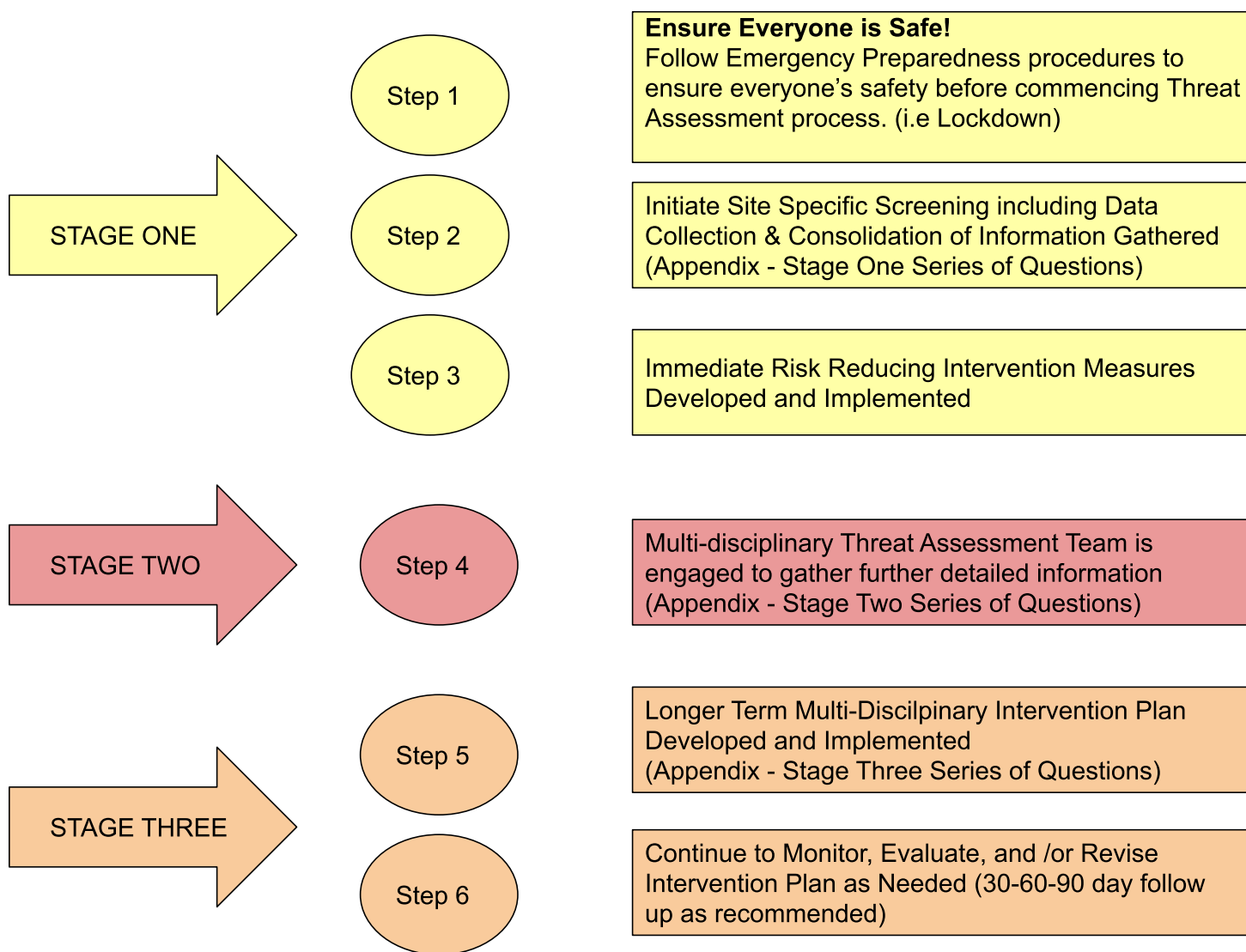
NOTIFICATION: Consent is not required to respond to an emergency situation. Where there is a risk that someone may be harmed it is important that the situation be addressed as quickly and effectively as possible. Applicable emergency procedures and protocols will be followed.

SECTION 7 - THE THREE STAGES OF THE THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The threat assessment process is activated when a threat or a threatening behaviour is reported to school administration (Principal or designate) by a member of the school community (student, staff, parent, community member, etc.).

There are typically three stages of the threat assessment. Once the site specific screening is completed, the principal or designate determines the immediacy and associated response to the threat. The Multi-disciplinary team then completes the process by developing and incorporating risk reducing interventions to ensure everyone's overall safety and well being.

The steps below summarize the process:



Stage One - Ensure Safety and Commence a Site-Specific Screening

Stage One School-Based Threat Assessment and Intervention Team:

The school team includes the school administrator (Principal or designate), other individuals who are trained in the Threat Assessment process and other staff who provide support to the student at school. (At any time, or when situations are unclear, a psychological services staff member, such as a school counsellor, and/or school superintendent could be consulted to review the data collected.)

Members of the school team will work to ensure that everyone in the school community is safe. The school team will begin the screening process as soon as a threat is reported.

A member of the school team should locate the individual who made a threat, identify potential targets and begin with an initial screening for a potential threat assessment. The screening should include anyone with significant and relevant information about the individual or individuals who made the threat, the threat itself, potential targets or the situation. Record precise information about the threat - including exact wording and account of the threat (e.g., verbal, written, spoken, physical, implied, in-person, on social media, written note, email, call, text) and how reported (by a student, parent, community member, etc.)

- Note the circumstances in which the threat was made
- Isolate or monitor the individual who made the threat
- Ensure safety of potential target
- Data collection should begin immediately following the notification of threat and is typically completed within one to two hours. The focus is on ensuring safety and implementation of risk-reducing measures.
- Interview the student who made the threat as well as others involved, i.e. witnesses

Interviews and data collection should be done immediately following the notification of a threatening situation and are **typically completed within one to two hours**. (Appendix: Immediate Data Collection Questions)

Members of the school-based team will assess the **plausibility** (how likely the threat will be carried out), **a change in baseline behaviours** (consider if the behaviour is significantly different from past/typical behaviour for the student) and **attack-related behaviours** (behaviours/actions that are consistent with the threat that has been made) to determine whether a threat assessment is required. This assessment should be able to determine if the threat or threatening situation presents as worrisome or substantive (high risk) behaviour. (Appendix A - Worrisome VS Substantive Behaviour)

If the information collected indicates worrisome behaviours, the school team will proceed with developing and implementing immediate strategies that include risk-reducing measures as well as additional supports for the student. (This could be done in the form of a team meeting including the team, the parent and the student.)

If the information collected indicates a substantive/immediate/imminent risk, the team should proceed to Stage Two of the process.

Stage Two - Initiate Multi-Disciplinary Team and Continue to Collect Data

Stage Two Board-Based Multidisciplinary Assessment and Intervention Team

The multidisciplinary team includes the school team from Stage 1 and a member of the Psychological Services team (School Counsellor, Psychologist/Psychological Associate, possibly a Behaviour Analyst), and a member of any other community agencies or organizations who may be connected to the student and family.

The Multidisciplinary Team will be initiated and asked to review the data already collected and engage in additional data collection. The goal is to identify potential risk enhancers or additional factors that may contribute to the risk of violence to others, and to implement risk-reducing interventions.

- Parents/caregivers of the students involved are contacted, unless there are concerns about a student's safety in the home. If this is the case, contact child protection services.
- Consultation may also occur with school staff who have a knowledge of the student. As the team is larger, it will involve broader and deeper data gathering
- Police are contacted

The team will continue with the investigation and continue gathering responses to more in-depth questioning. (Appendix - Detailed Data Collection - Behaviour, Relationships, Interests, Characteristics and Typology)

Once more detailed information has been gathered, the Threat Assessment and Intervention Team will meet to review the information, decide if more information is needed and start to develop an Intervention Plan along with a timeline for implementation.

Stage Three - Long-Term Support Intervention Plan Developed and Implemented

The board Multidisciplinary Assessment and Intervention Team will continue to be engaged in Stage Three. The goal is to develop and implement a longer term Intervention plan to support the individual as well as monitor, evaluate and revise the Intervention plan for up to 90 days as required.

- Follow the steps to ensure safety and implement risk reducing interventions. Whenever possible, the multidisciplinary team will work with students and families to support intervention planning to reduce the risk a student who has made a threat will engage in violence towards others.
- Consent is required to proceed with further assessment, intervention planning and support.
- There will be ongoing team meetings with the student and family, school staff and community agency staff to assist with assessment, planning, goal setting, intervention and progress monitoring.
- Referral to external agencies may be required to provide ongoing support.

SECTION 8 - PERSONAL AND SCHOOL PROPERTY SEARCH:

Legal References: Education Act: Section 264 Duties of Teacher; Education Act: Section 265 Duties of Principal; Education Act: Part XIII Behaviour, Discipline and Safety; R.R.O. Reg. 298

It is standard practice in the Threat Assessment and Intervention process to search the student locker as it may contain evidence that would indicate that the student is engaging in behaviours that are consistent with their threat.

A search of school property, therefore, such as desks and lockers is permissible by the school administrator. Board employees will only conduct a search of an individual's personal belongings such as knapsack, handbag, personal communication devices, personal computers and accessories, etc., with the individual's permission except when there are concerns of imminent risk of injury, serious bodily harm, or death.

At the beginning of each school year, through the Fair Notice letter and school Code of Conduct, principals will ensure that all members of the school community are made aware of the right of principals to search school property, such as lockers and desks, without notice to, or permission from the student or parent/guardian.

Education Act - 265.1a "It is the duty of the principal of a school, in addition to the principal's duties as a teacher, to maintain proper order and discipline in the school."

The Supreme Court of Canada in R. v. M.R.M. (1998) and the Ontario Court of Appeal in R. v. J.M.G. (1986) have stated that a Principal, who has reasonable grounds to do so, may conduct a search of a student or his/her possessions in carrying out his or her duties to maintain order and discipline in the school.

SECTION 9 - RESPONSIBLE INFORMATION SHARING

Legislation

In emergency situations, the privacy laws in Ontario allow educational institutions to responsibly disclose a student's personal information, including information about their mental, emotional or other health conditions, to parents or others who may be able to help in a crisis. Specifically, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) permit the disclosure of personal information in compelling circumstances affecting the health or safety of an individual, or where the disclosure is necessary to eliminate or reduce a significant risk of serious bodily harm.

The decision to disclose a student's personal information without consent is made on a case-by-case basis after careful consideration of all of the circumstances including the individual's right to privacy and the need to ensure the safety of all.

Further information about privacy law and its application to emergency situations can be found in the document: Practice Tool for Exercising Discretion: Emergency Disclosure of Personal Information by

Universities, Colleges and other Educational Institutions, October 2008 and is available on the Privacy Commissioner's website, <https://www.oipc.bc.ca/guidance-documents/1464>.

Guidelines

- School counsellor, school psychological services staff and Police services can participate in a threat assessment and intervention meeting and share information that is relevant to the incident, to the understanding of the risk enhancers, and/or to generating interventions without consent of the student(s) or parents/guardians.
- A threat assessment meeting must be held within 48 hours of a principal becoming aware of a threatening situation. When there is a risk that someone may be harmed, it is important that the incident be addressed as quickly and effectively as possible. In these circumstances, information may be shared with signed community partners without consent of the student(s) or parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians of the student of concern must receive notification at the earliest opportunity that a threatening situation has occurred and that a threat-risk assessment meeting is being conducted.

APPENDIX A - Worrisome VS Substantive Behaviours

Worrisome Behaviours - Worrisome behaviours are those that cause concern for members of a school system but DO NOT meet the threshold to proceed further with the threat assessment process. Worrisome behaviours are addressed through the SMCDSD in-school team process, with proper signed consents, to review information and develop an intervention plan.

Social Functioning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• abrupt change in social group• arguing with friends• association with negative peer group• no friends• isolated• withdrawn from social activities• excessive time on computer• reduced eye contact• change in verbal communication• change in clothing/inappropriate Clothing Emotional Functioning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• angry outbursts• emotional outbursts• overly emotional (cannot control tears, fears, frustration)• change in body language• negative outlook• despair about the future• inability to make decisions• unexpected happiness/giddiness	Academic Functioning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• skipping school• decline in marks• lack of participation in class• excessive time on computer• failure to complete/hand in assignments• opposition to authority• discussions/focus on weapons in work• focus on death, violence in Assignments Physical Well-Being <ul style="list-style-type: none">• unkempt appearance• change in appearance• weight loss or gain• change in sleep pattern	Behavioural Functioning <ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-injurious behaviour: cutting, mutilation, hair pulling• drug or alcohol use• interest/participation in negative activities (computer, violent games, weapons)• doodling, religious imaging, occult images• increase in physical activity• impulsive• giving away personal property• change in body language• opposition to authority• discussions about weapons• fire setting
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Substantive, Credible or High Risk Behaviours - Substantive behaviours are those that cause concern for members of the school system and meet the threshold to proceed with the threat assessment and intervention process.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- possession of weapon/replica,
- bomb threat/plan,
- verbal/written threat to kill/injure,
- Internet website/social media threats to kill or injure self/others,
- fire setting,
- threats of violence or physical bullying,
- hate motivated violence targeting a particular student/group,
- serious harm is threatened, implied, suggested and is plausible.

APPENDIX B - DETERMINING LEVEL OF CONCERN

Following a thorough assessment of all contextual information and risk factors, the multi-disciplinary threat assessment and intervention team will make a determination as to the level of threat or risk posed by the student. They will determine if the risk is LOW, MODERATE or HIGH. The following guide may be helpful in determining level of concern by the team:

LOW LEVEL OF CONCERN - “Low” categorization does not imply ‘no risk’, but indicates the student is at little risk for violence, and monitoring of the matter may be appropriate.

- Threat is vague and indirect
- Threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail and/or lacks realism
- Available information suggests student is unlikely to carry out the threat or become violent
- Behaviour of concern is within the general range for typical or baseline behaviour for the individual in question

Action: Ongoing monitoring may be appropriate

MODERATE LEVEL OF CONCERN - “Moderate” categorization indicates the student is at an elevated risk for violence, and those measures currently in place for further measures, including monitoring, are required in an effort to manage the individual’s future risk.

- Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low-level threat
- Wording in the threat and information gathered suggest that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (ie. possible time and place)
- No clear indication that the individual of concern has made preparatory steps (ie. seeking a weapon), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive reference pointing to that possibility
- There may be a specific statement indicating that the threat is not empty (ie. I’m serious)
- Moderate or lingering concern about the student’s potential to act violently.
- Behaviour of concern represents an increase in baseline behaviour

Action: A plan to monitor, support and decrease risk factors for violent behaviour MUST be developed.

HIGH LEVEL OF CONCERN - “High” categorization of risk indicates the student is at high or imminent risk for violence, and immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring.

- Threat is specific and plausible
- Concrete steps have been taken toward acting on the threat (i.e. The individual has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance).
- Strong concern about the individual’s potential to act violently.
- Behaviour of concern represents a significant increase in baseline behaviour.

Action: Immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring. Measures are also needed to manage the individual’s future risk for violent behaviour.

APPENDIX C - Responding to Student Threat Making Behaviour

Any person who is concerned about behaviours or situations that may pose a risk or threat to others will report this to the school principal or designate. Principal or designate determines the next steps in addressing the reported threat or threatening situation and appropriate action as needed.

Immediately Call 911 if there are immediate safety concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weapon possession that poses serious threat to others - Plan for serious assault - Homicidal/suicidal behaviour that threatens safety - Fire setting resulting in harm 	Worrisome (Low risk) Behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violent content - Drawings and pictures - Stories/journals - Vague threatening statements - Unusual interest in fires - Significant change in anti-social behaviour - Significant change in baseline behaviour 	Substantive (High Risk) Behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possession of weapon/replica - Bomb threat/plan - Verbal/written threat to kill/injure - Internet website threats to kill or injure self/others - Fire Setting - Threatens violence - Hate motivated violence targeting a particular student/group
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STAGE ONE - PRINCIPAL INFORMED - NOW WHAT?

Stage One: Site Specific Data Collection and immediate risk reducing intervention Within Hours	<p>Step 1: Make sure all students are safe and you know the whereabouts of the person who made the threat and potential targets.</p> <p>Step 2: Check locker, backpack as appropriate.</p> <p>Step 3: Initiate Stage One Site Specific Screening and collect and record information of the appropriate document..</p> <p>Step 4: Review findings with the School Team.</p> <p>Step 5: Decide who should be consulted and course of action(based on worrisome or substantive behaviour)</p> <p>Step 6: If worrisome, proceed with an in-school team meeting process including appropriate school and board staff to develop support strategies.</p>	<u>School Threat Assessment Team:</u> Principal (lead) VP or Designate Teacher (classroom, special education) Educational Asst And possibly: School Counsellor Superintendent Police
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STAGES TWO & THREE- IF NEEDED & ACTIVATED BY THE THREAT ASSESSMENT LEAD

Stage Two: Multidisciplinary Team Risk Evaluation Within hours with high level of concern, Within days with medium level of concern	<p>Step 1: For substantive behaviours, initiate contact with the multidisciplinary team members and share the results of the Stage one Site Specific Screening.</p> <p>Step 2: Continue to conduct interviews as required.</p> <p>Step 3: The Multidisciplinary will meet and proceed with Stage Two of the Threat Assessment and Intervention process.</p> <p>Step 4: Multidisciplinary Team reviews information on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Step 5: Board Team decides on next steps and immediate risk reducing interventions.</p>	<u>Board Threat Assessment Team:</u> School Board Central staff designated by SO (lead) Police Community Partner School Team (as appropriate)
Stage Three: Multidisciplinary intervention plan Within days	<p>Step 1: Consent is obtained to engage with appropriate professionals for further intervention and prevention planning.</p> <p>Step 2: The Team engages in long term planning (30-60-90 day review) to develop, implement, modify and monitor a comprehensive intervention plan as appropriate to support student achievement and well being.</p>	Stage Three Team: Student School/Board Staff Parents/Guardians Community Profess. as appropriate

APPENDIX D - Stage One - Site-Specific Screening

The initial screening data is used as a guide and to confirm why the Threat Assessment and Intervention process is being activated;

Locate, isolate and continue to observe the Individual of Concern (IOC) in a secured and supervised area until a Threat Assessment and Intervention team member is ready to interview them. The student's phone should be secured and placed in a safe location;

Locate the potential target(s) and determine whether they need to be immediately secured/protected or simply monitored until a Threat Assessment and Intervention team member is ready to interview/support.

In cases where the Individual of Concern (IOC) does not refer to using a weapon, the team should still look for evidence of planning or evidence that they may take action. Therefore, when the IOC states they will kill a particular target or targets, such as "When you step off school property I will kill you!" members of the team will still look for weapons and check for other sources that provide information about plausibility, baseline behaviour and potential actions.

Stage One Interview Questions:

It is helpful to conduct interviews and conversations together with another team member. Notes and recording of information collected is important so the information can be merged with any additional information collected later in the process, if a full Threat Assessment is required.

Details of Incident

- What is the threat? (report verbatim, as it was communicated)
- Who reported the threat or suspected threat?
- Where did the incident happen & when?
- How did it come to the Reporter's attention?
- What was the specific language of the threat, detail of the weapon, or gesture made
- Language analysis (i.e. what was stated?)
 - J: Justification for the threat
 - M: Means to carry out the threat
 - C: Consideration of consequences for the IOC (i.e., "I don't care if I live or die!")
 - C: Conditions that could lower the level of risk (unless you take that Twitter post down, I will stick my knife in your throat!)
- Who was present and under what circumstance did the incident occur?
- What was the motivation as described by the IOC or others as the perceived cause of the incident?
- What was the response of the target (if present) at the time of the incident?
- What was the response of others who were present at the time of the incident?

APPENDIX E - Stage One - Site Specific Screening Template

Record of Threat Assessment and Intervention

Date of incident (when threat made):		Date of threat assessment:	
Wording of threat or description of threatening situation:			
Location of incident:		School/principal in charge:	
Name of Individual of Concern (IOC):		Date of birth:	
Age		Identifies As	
Grade		School/institution	
Address		Phone	
Parent/caregiver name:		Phone/Address	
Parent/caregiver name:		Phone/Address	
Previous threat assessments?	Y or N		
Details of previous incidents:			
Stage One Interview Responses:			

APPENDIX F - Immediate Sources of Data Collection

Sources for interviews

<input type="checkbox"/> everyone who reported the threat	<input type="checkbox"/> targets
<input type="checkbox"/> witnesses	<input type="checkbox"/> individual of concern (IOC) person who made the threat)
<input type="checkbox"/> co-conspirators	<input type="checkbox"/> parents/caregivers--call all caregivers
<input type="checkbox"/> friends, co-workers, acquaintances	<input type="checkbox"/> teachers, other school staff (EAs, admin. Assistants, custodians, bus drivers, etc.)

Sources for hard data collection. Take pictures and/or screen shots as needed:

<input type="checkbox"/> locker	<input type="checkbox"/> backpack - ask the student to take out the contents)
<input type="checkbox"/> student's bedroom, garage, basement etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> social networking sites
<input type="checkbox"/> police record check	<input type="checkbox"/> desks
<input type="checkbox"/> vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/> school assignments
<input type="checkbox"/> current and previous school records/employment	<input type="checkbox"/> online journals, sites, computer
<input type="checkbox"/> writings, drawings, artwork, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> other

APPENDIX G - Stage Two Interview Guide

It is helpful to conduct interviews and conversations together with another team member. With Stage Two, information should be gathered in each of the categories listed below to understand the situation and determine next steps. Information in each of the categories is required in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the IOC and situation.

Attack-Related Behaviors

- Has the IOC researched information consistent with their threat-making or threat-related behaviour?
- Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intentions to attack a target currently or in the past?
- Has the IOC attempted to gain access to weapons or do they have access to the weapons they threat-ened to use?
- Has the IOC developed a plan, and how general or specific is it (time, date, identified target selection, site selection, journal of justifications, maps and floor plans)?
- Has the IOC been engaging in suspicious behaviour such as appearing to show an inordinate interest in alarm systems, sprinkler systems, video surveillance in work, schools, or elsewhere, schedules & locations of police or security patrol?
- Has the IOC engaged in rehearsal behaviours, including packing or brandishing fake but realistic-looking weapons, air rifles, pistols, or engaged in fire setting (i.e. lighting fire to cardboard tubes cut & taped to look like a pipe bomb, etc.)?
- Have others been forewarned of a pending attack (e.g. told not to come to work/school because “something big is going to happen”)?

Support system and situation for the individual of concern

- *Does the **IOC** have a healthy relationship with a mature adult(s)?*
 - If so, who are they?
- Does the **IOC** have inordinate knowledge versus general knowledge or interest in violent events, themes, or incidents, including prior work-, community-, or school-based attacks?
- How have they responded to prior violent incidents (local, national, etc)?
- Is there evidence of violence related interests?
- What themes are present in their writings, drawings, etc .?
- Social media activities and interests?
- Does the **IOC** have a history of trauma? Including car accidents, falls, exposure to violence, abuse, etc .
- Has the **IOC** been diagnosed with any mental health or neurodevelopmental disorders (learning disorder, intellectual disability etc.)?

Peer Dynamics

- Are others involved in the incident that may be intentionally or unintentionally contributing to the justification process?
- Who is in the IOC's peer group and where does the IOC fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader, and follower)?
- Who is in the target's peer group and where does the target fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader, and follower)?
- Is there a peer/friend/associate who could assist or is assisting with the plan or the obtaining of weapons necessary for an attack?

Family Dynamics And Living Situation

- How many homes does the **IOC** reside in (shared custody, cycles through multiple homes/residences)?
- Who lives in the family home/residence (full-time and part-time)?
- Has anyone entered or left the home who may be influencing the level of risk?
- Has the **IOC** engaged in violence or threats of violence towards their siblings, parent(s) caregiver(s), partners?
 - If so, what form of violence and to whom (including Frequency, Intensity, Recency (FIR))?
- What is the historical baseline at home/residence? What is the current baseline at home/residence? Is there evidence of evolution of violence at home/residence?
- Are parent(s), caregiver(s), or partner(s) concerned for their own safety or the safety of their children or others?
- Does the **IOC's** level or risk (at home, school, work, or the community) go up and down according to who is in the home (i.e., the **IOC** is low risk for violence when their father is home but high risk during the times their father travels away from home for work)?

Post-Interview Reviewing Information With The Team

When reviewing the gathered information, it is important to ensure that a range of factors are considered in determining next steps.

Mitigating and/or Extenuating Circumstances: special needs, diagnoses, evidence of bullying or victimization, history of trauma and/or other factors such as race, gender, language, culture, sexual identity etc.

APPENDIX H - Stage Two Multidisciplinary Team Information Gathering Template

Stage Two Information Gathering and Interview Responses:

Attack-related Behaviours -

Support system and situation for the individual of concern

Peer Dynamics

Family Dynamics And Living Situation

Mitigating and/or Extenuating Circumstances: special needs, diagnoses, evidence of bullying or victimization, history of trauma and/or other factors such as race, gender, language, culture, sexual identity etc.

APPENDIX I - Stage Three Multidisciplinary Team Intervention Sharing Template:

Stage Three - Threat Assessment Data Collection and Immediate Risk Reducing Interventions
<p>Risk enhancer #1 (confirmed or hypothesized): _____</p> <p>Intervention (identify if short-term or long-term):</p> <p>Professional/resources involved or needed:</p> <p>Level of agreement by IOC and others:</p>
<p>Risk enhancer #2 (confirmed or hypothesized): _____</p> <p>Intervention (identify if short-term or long-term):</p> <p>Professional/resources involved or needed:</p> <p>Level of agreement by IOC and others:</p>
<p>Risk enhancer #3 (confirmed or hypothesized): _____</p> <p>Intervention (identify if short-term or long-term):</p> <p>Professional/resources involved or needed:</p> <p>Level of agreement by IOC and others:</p>
<p>OTHER RELEVANT INTERVENTION INFORMATION</p>

APPENDIX J - Fair Notice Letter to Parents/Guardians

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We want to provide the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB) school community with an update related to our emergency preparedness protocols. We would like to share important information about how we respond to threats of targeted violence.

Our Board has worked with community partners to develop a Threat Assessment and Intervention Process. This process outlines a consistent response when someone has made a threat of targeted violence.

The Threat Assessment and Intervention Process will help us:

- Ensure the safety of students, staff, parents and other members of the community
- Ensure an effective and timely response when there is a threat of targeted violence
- Understand the factors that contribute to a situation where an individual makes threats to harm others
- Develop an intervention plan to reduce the risk of targeted violence

When we become aware of a threat, the school team will respond. The school team includes the principal and/or vice principal and other school staff. Depending on the circumstances, other Board staff, local police services and community partners may be included.

Parents and guardians of students directly involved in a situation when there is a targeted threat of violence will be contacted as soon as possible. **It is important for you to know that we do not require consent to gather information used to help us ensure the safety of everyone in the school community.**

We respond to *all* threats in order to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff. We educate students about school safety so that they understand that it is never acceptable to make threats of violence. This includes threats that are made on-line or in person, even outside of school hours.

We encourage you to review two quick resources to help you better understand our emergency preparedness protocols.

- [Being Prepared for Emergencies](#)
- [Responding to Threats of Violence](#)

The SMCDSB is committed to providing this support to all our students, staff and families. We thank you in advance for your support of our emergency preparedness protocols, including our Threat Assessment and Intervention Process.

Should you have any questions about our Threat Assessment and Intervention Process or other Safe Schools matters, please call 705-722-3555, ext. 272.

Sincerely,

Lonnie Bolton
Superintendent of Education
Student Services
SMCDSB

Kevin Kuiack
Assistant Superintendent
Safe and Accepting Schools
SMCDSB

APPENDIX K – Responding to Threats of Violence within the School Community



RESPONDING TO THREATS OF VIOLENCE WITHIN THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Schools continue to be among the safest places in our community. To continue to promote the safety and well being of students, we have developed, with our community partners Student Threat Assessment and Intervention procedures to respond to threats of violence.

Recognize a Threat

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats and perceived threats are taken seriously, investigated and responded to.

Duty to Report

Staff, parents, students and community members must report all threat related behaviours. Violence or threats expressed in any form will be taken seriously.

Examples of Threatening Behaviours

- Physical violence or violence with intent to harm
- Verbal/written threats to harm
- Internet website/instant messaging/social networking threats to harm
- Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- Bomb threats
- Fire Setting

Threat Assessment Response Team

The Threat Assessment Response Team is a multi-disciplinary team of school personnel trained in threat assessments. It may include administrators, guidance staff, behaviour consultants, social work and psychology staff, police officers and others as needed. At times, outside agencies may be included with consent.

The Goals of Threat Assessment and Intervention Response

- Threat Assessment and Intervention plan ensures:
- the safety of students, staff, parents and others.
 - an understanding of the context of the threat.
 - an understanding of the factors that contribute to the threat makers' behaviour.
 - the development of an intervention plan that addresses the emotions and physical safety of the student involved.
 - promotes the emotional/ physical safety of all.

The Process Involved in a Threat Assessment Response

All threat-making behaviours by a student are reported to the principal who will activate the Threat Assessment Response Protocol.

Interviews will be held with all students involved, parents and pertinent staff to determine the level of risk and develop an appropriate response to the incident.

Police may be involved at any point in this process.

Intervention plans will be developed and shared with parents, staff and the student.

Fair Notice

In the interests of safety, it is important to voluntarily cooperate in the process. If anyone involved refuses to participate, schools are obligated to continue with their investigation to ensure a safe and caring learning environment for all.