

THREAT ASSESSMENT/SAFETY TEAM REGULATIONS

I. GOVERNING POLICY: EBB: THREAT ASSESSMENT/SAFETY TEAMS

II. DIVISION-LEVEL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

In accordance with Va. Code § 22.1-79.4 the Superintendent establishes a Threat Assessment Team, or “Safety Team,” to oversee Division-level threats and those pertaining to multiple facilities. In addition, the Division-level team oversees the individual Safety Teams located at each school. This Division-level team includes the Chief of Student Services and Equity, the Executive Director of Student Services, the Chief of Human Resources, the Chief of Facilities and Operations, the Director of Safety and Security Services, and the Coordinator of Security and Emergency Operations. It also includes other staff as appropriate.

The Division-level Safety team ensures that procedures are maintained for effective information sharing between the school division and community mental health and law enforcement agencies; assesses the effectiveness of the threat assessment process throughout the school division; and recommends changes to policies and procedures, as needed, to ensure an effective threat assessment process reflecting known best practices. The Division-level Safety Team oversees and provides support for school Safety Teams and works in consultation with designated representatives of the Community Services Board and the Alexandria Police Department.

III. SCHOOL SAFETY TEAMS

Each school Safety Team includes persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration and law enforcement. The team leader is the principal or other senior administrator for the school.

Team members 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.

The Safety Team leader may designate a subset of team members to screen cases reported to the team. This process serves to determine their appropriateness for review and/or action by the full team. If the team elects to implement a screening process, at least two members of the team will review initial reports of concern to determine if existing resources and mechanisms are sufficient to address those concerns, or whether the full team should further assess and manage the situation. All members of the team should

have the opportunity to review screened cases to ensure they have been adequately addressed.

Unless it is not feasible to do so, all team members are involved with the assessment and intervention of individuals whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of school staff or students.

Although only some members may be involved in management of the crisis depending on the situation, team members 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, its students and its staff.

In fulfilling statutory responsibilities, school Safety Teams:

- Provide guidance to students and staff regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat by conducting presentations, broadly disseminating relevant information, and ensuring access to consultation from 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.

IV. PROCEDURES

Identifying and Reporting Threats

- When an individual makes a threat or engages in concerning communications or behaviors that suggest the likelihood of a threatening situation, the ACPS Threat Assessment Guidelines are followed. The goal of the threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment, to protect and support potential victims, and to provide assistance, as needed, to the individual being assessed.
- Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement occur when required by School Board policy or the Code of Virginia.
- In accordance with the Code of Virginia, when threats of self-harm are accompanied by threats to harm others, or investigation suggests the existence of a threat to others, the school Safety Team (and Division-level Safety Team, if applicable) are notified and take appropriate action to prevent acts of violence. The Safety Team works collaboratively with other entities involved in the case.

- All school division employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to report immediately to an 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.

Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence that requires containment must notify school security and/or law enforcement in accordance with Policy EB.

Certain types of threats require immediate notification to law enforcement. In accordance with Policy KNAJ, the principal immediately reports to the local law enforcement agency:

- Assault and battery that results in bodily injury, sexual assault, death, shooting, stabbing, cutting, or wounding of any person, or stalking of any person, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity;
- Threats against school personnel while on a school bus, on school property or at a school-sponsored activity;
- Illegal carrying of a firearm or pneumatic weapon onto school property;
- Illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, or explosive or incendiary devices, or chemical bombs, on a school bus, on school property, or at a school-sponsored activity; and
- Threats or false threats to bomb made against school personnel or involving school property or school buses;

In accordance with Policy CLA, the Superintendent Designee or school administrator also immediately reports any act noted above that may constitute a criminal offense to the parents and/or guardians of any minor student who is alleged to have committed the act and reports that the incident has been reported to local law enforcement, as required by law. The school administrator informs the parents and/or guardians that they may contact local law enforcement for further information, if they so desire. In addition, the school administrator may report other threats to the local law enforcement agency as necessary and appropriate.

V. ASSESSING THREATS

When a threat is reported, the school administrator and/or Safety Team leader initiates an initial inquiry/screening and, in consultation with the Safety Team, makes a determination of the seriousness of the threat as expeditiously as possible in accordance with ACPS Student Threat Assessment Guidelines.

Upon notification of threatening behavior or communications, the school administrator or Safety Team leader determines if an imminent threat is believed to exist. If the individual

appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence, the administrator notifies law enforcement and school security in accordance with Policies EB and EBB.

If there is no reasonably apparent imminent threat present, or once such an imminent threat is contained, the Safety Team leader ensures that the situation is screened to determine if the full Safety Team needs to be involved. This screening may include (as necessary and appropriate):

- Review of the threatening behavior or communication;
- Review of school and other records for any prior history or interventions with the individual(s) involved; and
- Conducting 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 individual can be determined.

If it is determined that the threat is not identifiable or a low threat of violence or harm to self or others, and Safety Team determines that no further assessment, intervention, or monitoring is required at this time to prevent violence:

- The Safety Team leader ensures that the incident and review is adequately documented via the ACPS Threat Assessment and Response Form. The threat assessment team maintains the documentation in accordance with Policy EBB.
- If the individual (about whom the report was made) does not pose a threat but could benefit from or is in need of some other assistance, the Safety Team leader ensures that the individual is referred to the appropriate school or community-based resources.

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 undertaken by the Safety 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 who know the individual; and interviews of the individual and the target/recipient of the threat(s).

Based on the information collected, the school Safety Team determines strategies to mitigate the threat and provides intervention and assistance to those involved, as needed.

Upon a determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, the school Safety Team immediately reports its determination to the Division-

level Safety Team, as well as to the Superintendent or designee, including designated school administrators. The school-based administration immediately attempts to notify the minor student's parent or legal guardian.

In accordance with Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) Threat Assessment Guidelines, in instances where the threat is deemed moderate risk or high risk, or requires further intervention to prevent violence or serious harm, the school administrator shall notify, in consultation with law enforcement, 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 made the threat. Timing of notifications should be made in consultation with law enforcement.

In cases involving no/low risk threats, the school administrator may notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who is the target/recipient of a threat and/or may notify the parent and/or guardian of any student who made the threat.

VI. INTERVENING, MONITORING, AND RESOLVING THREATS

If it is determined that an individual poses a threat of violence, the Safety Team develops, implements, and monitors an individualized plan to intervene with, address and reduce the threat. The Safety Team maintains documentation in accordance with DCJS Threat Assessment Guidelines.

The Safety Team assists individual(s) within the school who engaged in 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 Safety Team is designated as a case manager to monitor the status of the individual(s) of concern (in that case) and to notify the Safety 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 documented in accordance with (DCJS) Threat Assessment Guidelines. These updates are 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.

Resolution and closure of the case is documented in accordance with (DCJS) Threat Assessment Guidelines.

Established: June 22, 2017
Revised: December 16, 2021

Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 16.1-301, 18.2-83, 22.1-79.4, 22.1-272.1, 22.1-277.07, 22.1-279.3:1.

Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, 2nd Edition, 2016.

Policy Refs.:	CLA	Reporting Acts of Violence and Substance Abuse
	EB	School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Emergency Response Plan
	EBB	Threat Assessment/Safety Teams
	JFC	Student Conduct
	JFCD	Weapons in School
	JFCF/JFCI	Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) in Schools
	JGD/JGE	Student Suspension/Expulsion
	JDGA	Disciplining Students with Disabilities
	JFCE	Gang Activity or Association
	JFCC	Student Conduct on School Buses
	JHH	Suicide Prevention
	JM	Management of Student Behaviors in Emergency Situations
	JO	Student Records
	KNAJ	Relations with Law Enforcement Authorities