

Billings School District 2

DISTRICT SAFETY

Threat Assessment Procedures

Policy 8301- P1: Threat Assessment Procedures

The threat assessment is based on the combined efforts of a school-based team including representatives from administration, mental health professionals employed by our schools, and law enforcement. In unusually complex cases, the team might draw upon professionals in the local community. The interdisciplinary team approach improves the efficiency and scope of the assessment process and reduces the risk of observer bias.

In situations where a potential threat is reported, school teams:

- (a) identify student threats to commit a violent act,
- (b) determine the seriousness of the threat,
- (c) determine the likelihood the threat will be carried out,
- (d) develop intervention plans that protect potential victims and address the underlying problem or conflict that stimulated the threatening behavior and,
- (e) create a communication plan based on the specific circumstances of the threat.

BPS has established district-wide procedures which require that all threats of violence must be taken seriously and investigated using the Colorado Threat Assessment & Management Protocol. In the event that there is an immediate threat or act of harm to self or others, building administration will secure the school and follow district safety protocols.

If the threat is not immediate, the district Threat Assessment Team conducts the Threat Assessment Screen consisting of the eleven (11) essential questions developed by the US Secret Service and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) The Threat Assessment Team includes the following individuals:

- (a) building administrator(s),
- (b) counselor(s),
- (c) school resource officer(s),
- (d) school social worker/licensed professional counselor (if applicable), and
- (e) other designated school staff.

The team determines if a Full Team Threat Assessment is necessary, at which point parents will be contacted for written consent and participation in the full Threat Assessment.

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The student and parents are required to attend a Re-entry Plan meeting to receive the Full Threat Assessment Summary Documentation and discuss the Response, Management, and Support Plan developed by the Threat Assessment Team. During the Re-entry Plan meeting, the determination will be made regarding any potential disciplinary action resulting from the student's conduct.

For students eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a manifestation determination review meeting must be conducted if the disciplinary action will result in a change in placement for the student.

Types of Threats Resulting in a Threat Assessment

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. It may be spoken, written, or symbolic. Threats can be expressed directly or indirectly to the victim or to others, and threats may be explicit or implied. Threats sometimes, but rarely, actually involve guns or explosive devices. Many students who make a threat will never carry it out. Conversely, others who pose a real danger may not make an explicit threat. Threats may be communicated to the intended victim or related to a third party. A threat to harm others can be transient (i.e., expression of anger or frustration that can be quickly or easily resolved) or substantive (i.e., serious intent to harm others that involves a detailed plan and means). We encourage students and teachers to report both transient and substantive threats.

Response, Management, and Support Plan

If one of our schools determines that an individual poses a threat of violence, a plan is developed that involves individual management, monitoring, and support. Three functions of threat management are:

- (a) controlling and/ or containing the situation to prevent a possible attack,
- (b) protecting potential targets of the threat, and
- (c) providing support and guidance to aid the student who is at risk for violence in dealing with his or her problems in an appropriate and adaptive manner.

Options for Intervention

Some interventions might need to be staged immediately (e.g., bringing the student in question under adult supervision) while others require long-term planning and monitoring (e.g., conflict resolution efforts). Our teams consider whether the student can stay in school, what alternatives may be needed, how and when to notify families, if and when to involve law enforcement, and

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what mental health, social service, and school- based interventions are required to reduce the student's risk for violence. In cases where a criminal offense has been committed, law enforcement may choose to conduct a criminal investigation and pursue legal action against the presumed offender or offenders. We share information only about threats which are considered actionable, credible and real. This ensures that our community does not experience undue stress or become complacent when too many incidents are reported that are of low-level concern.

Reporting Threats

A key component to keeping students safe is ensuring students, teachers and community members report concerns or threats to school administrators or law enforcement. The Secret Service reports 81% of the time at least one person had prior knowledge of planned attack and 59% of the time more than one person had knowledge. Alarmingly, only 4% with prior knowledge tried to dissuade the attacker and many with prior knowledge did not believe it could happen. All members of the community, especially students, must understand the distinction between seeking help to prevent violence and "snitching," or informing on someone for personal gain.

Additional Benefits of Threat Assessment

There are a number of other positive outcomes related to the use of a threat assessment approach. These include fewer instances of bullying, perceptions of a more positive and supportive school climate, greater willingness to seek help, and fewer long-term suspensions.

Resources

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Threat Assessment for School Administrators & Crisis Teams

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/systems-level-prevention/threat-assessment-at-school>

Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and To Creating Safe School Climates <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/threatassessmentguide.pdf>

Implementing Policy 3300 Student Discipline: Consequences for Violations of Student Code of Conduct

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Cross References: Policy 3200
Policy 3204
Policy 3205
Policy 3210
Policy 3230
Policy 3250
Policy 3255
Policy 3300
Policy 3350 Student Discipline: Due Process
Procedure 3350-P1 Detention
Procedure 3350-P2 Suspension and Expulsion
Procedure 3350-P3 Discipline Procedure for Special Education Students
Procedure 3350-P4 Discipline Procedure for 504 Students
Policy 6430 Development of Administrative Procedures

Legal References:

§ 20-5-201, MCA Duties and sanctions
§ 20-4-302, MCA Discipline and punishment of pupils – definition of corporal punishment
§ 20-5-202, MCA Suspension and expulsion
§ 20-4-302, MCA Discipline and punishment of pupils – definition of corporal punishment
§20-7-401, et seq. MCA Special Education for Exceptional Children
A.R.M. 10.16.3007 Special Education
20 U.S.C. 1400, et seq. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
34 CFR 300.519-521 Procedural Safeguards

Procedure History:

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