

MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
Milford, Delaware 19963

POLICY

5112

THREAT ASSESSMENT

The Milford School District Board of Education is committed to protecting its students, employees, and members of the community. It is essential that districtwide violence prevention be in place to foster a learning environment that promotes a culture of safety, respect, trust, and social/emotional support, while also protecting students and staff from conduct that poses an actual or perceived threat to self or others. The threat assessment policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws, and all Board approved collective-bargaining agreements. This policy was developed in accordance with established research and recognized standards of practice recommended and offered by the Comprehensive School Safety Program (CSSP) of Delaware's Emergency Management Agency (DEMA). The recommended items from CSSP consists of the Safety and Wellness Suite which contains an anonymous reporting application with additional mental health resources, behavioral threat assessment (BTA), suicide risk assessment (SRA), and a case management system (CMS) for school settings.

DEFINITIONS

A. Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA): A systematic process that is designed to identify situations/persons of concern, investigate, gather information, and assess and manage the situation to mitigate risk. Threat assessment is a prevention strategy based on a problem-solving approach to violence prevention.

B. Behavioral Threat Assessment Team: A school level team that shall include people with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement. Additional personnel with knowledge of the child or circumstances may also serve as members of the team.

C. Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG): An evidence-based, research backed set of guidelines for the comprehensive school threat assessment process created by Dr. Dewey Cornell. MSD school-based teams will be trained to assess and respond effectively to threats of violence.

D. Threat: A communication or behavior that indicates that an individual poses 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.

a. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means.

b. The communication and/or behavior is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat; observed by or communicated to a third party, and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat.

E. Imminent Threat: An imminent threat exists when the person's behavior/situation poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward self or others that requires prompt, immediate containment, and action to protect identified or identifiable target(s).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The Chief Academic Officer shall ensure compliance with this policy.

B. Each school principal shall identify members of a threat assessment team that includes persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement. Members will be trained on the roles and responsibilities of each team member.

C. All school-based administrators and threat assessment team members must attend and complete mandatory district threat assessment trainings. Each mandatory team member shall report their completion of this requirement to their supervisor.

D. The district team must provide annual training and guidance to students, staff, and parents on recognizing behaviors of concern, their roles, and responsibilities in reporting the behavior, and the various options for submitting a report, including anonymous reporting through the district provided anonymous reporting application.

E. Each school principal must assign school-based staff members who can proactively monitor and respond to all incoming reports where safety is of concern.

F. Each threat assessment team must respond, within 24 hours when school is in session, to any report of a threat or any patterns of behavior that may pose a threat to self or others. If there is a threat to self, refer to the District's suicide prevention procedures as outlined in Board Policy 5111. If school is not in session, the school principal must immediately refer the matter to law enforcement for evaluation, and the threat assessment team must meet no later than the end of the first day school is back in session to consider the matter and ensure it is resolved. The team shall gather information regarding the specifics of the threat and/or behaviors that may pose a threat, including but not limited to details of the incident or threat, witness statements, and relevant artifacts.

G. When assessing a potential threat or concerning behavior, the threat assessment team must determine not only whether a threat has been made or communicated, but also if a person poses a danger to self and/or others or if they are potentially on a pathway to violence.

- For students deemed a threat to self, the threat assessment team must ensure the student's immediate safety, then activate the district's suicide prevention process as outlined in Board Policy 5111. A Threat Assessment team member will meet with the student and assess the severity of the risk following the suicide prevention policy guidelines and procedures.
- If the threat assessment team determines that a student poses a threat to others, the team is responsible for assessing the level of threat by conducting the District's threat assessment procedures outlined in the CSTAG Behavioral Threat Assessment.
- A Behavioral Threat Assessment should never be completed alone and should always have an administrator as an assessor as recommended by the CSTAG, U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), and American School Counselors Association (ASCA).
- The threat assessment team must coordinate resources to provide intervention to individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students as outlined in the CSTAG BTA.
- The threat assessment team must plan for the implementation and monitoring of appropriate interventions to manage or mitigate the student's risk for engaging in violence thereby increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes.

- Interventions should remain in place until the team determines that the student is no longer in need of supports and does not pose a threat to self or others.

H. Threat assessment teams shall follow established procedures for referrals to school-based, community, and/or health care providers for mental health services, evaluation, and/or treatment.

- All threat assessment outcomes and recommendations must be reported to the school principal. The school principal will review the documentation for all threat assessments to ensure completeness and fidelity in the Electronic Case Management System.
- In addition, upon a preliminary determination that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others, the threat assessment team must immediately report its determination to school principal or his/her administrative designee. The student should not be left alone. Once the student is safely secured by school personnel. The principal or his/her administrative designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian.
- If there is a threat to self, activate the district's suicide prevention procedures as outlined in Board Policy 5111.
- Nothing in this policy shall preclude school personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat. When an immediate threat to life or physical safety exists, an immediate notification to law enforcement is required.
- Nothing in this policy shall preclude the threat assessment team from notifying the school principal, his/her administrative designee, or the supervisor of any individual (other than a student) who poses a threat of violence or physical harm to self or others.

I. Threat assessment teams shall contact other known agencies or service providers involved with the student to share information and coordinate the necessary follow up. Any information from education records disclosed during this process shall be done in accordance with The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR 99.31(10), 99.36).

J. If a student makes an imminent threat to a specific, identified victim, the administrative member of the Threat Assessment Team will notify the parent/guardian of the threatened/victim student in accordance with Duty to Warn standards (if applicable), ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors, and in accordance with FERPA which allows school officials, in an emergency, to disclose without consent, education records, including personally identifiable information from those records to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. This exception is limited to the period of the emergency and generally does not allow for blanket release of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. Rather, disclosure must be related to an actual, impending, or imminent emergency such as a natural disaster, terrorist attack, a campus shooting, or the outbreak of an epidemic disease (FERPA 1974 34 CFR § 99.31 (a) (10) and § 99.36) ¹.

K. All District employees and volunteers are required to report to school administration any expressed threat(s) or behavior(s) that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self.

L. Regardless of threat assessment activities, disciplinary action and referral to law enforcement are to occur as appropriate and required by law and school board policies.

M. The threat assessment team must consult with law enforcement when a student exhibits a pattern of behavior, based upon previous acts, or the severity of an act, that would pose a threat to school safety.

N. Based on the above criteria, if a student is facing possible expulsion, alternative placement, or suspension as a consequence of certain actions, the school should consider ways in which these can be safely enacted and identify resources that may assist the student during this time.

O. Threat Assessment records are considered education records and shall be maintained and released in accordance with FERPA and state statute. The threat assessment, its determination, along with any interventions provided, will be recorded in the appropriate electronic data system by the threat assessment team. Additionally, these records will be transferred pursuant to school board policy 5100.2.

ADOPTED: 6/17/24