



Tredyffrin/Easttown School District

Administration Offices, West Valley Business Center
940 West Valley Road, Suite 1700, Wayne, PA 19087

Phone: 610-240-1900

August 2024

Dear Families,

The Tredyffrin/Easttown School District is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all students and staff. The administrators, with Board support, have developed a protocol for responding to threatening student behaviors. The purpose of the protocol is to assess whether a student, who demonstrates threatening behaviors, poses a serious risk to self or others. The protocol is included as a section of District Regulation 5401: Student Discipline. The complete Policy and Regulation are available at www.tesd.net at Our District > Policies and Regulations, or through District administrative offices.

Our teachers and administrators review student conduct and expectations with students in a developmentally appropriate manner. We remind students that their safety is our priority and that, where their safety is concerned, we take what they do and say very seriously.

Likewise, we feel it is important for parents to be aware of how school personnel respond to behaviors that may pose a threat. It is often difficult to distinguish between behaviors that do not pose a threat and those that do. When a student makes a verbal or written comment or gesture that could suggest a threat, our initial response is to assure safety for all, and the student is removed to a safe location in school and out of the classroom. Pending an initial investigation by the building administrator or designee, a clinical interview may be completed by a District Mental Health Specialist. Parents are notified. The student may be suspended from school and/or subsequently participate in a mental health risk assessment arranged by the District and conducted by a licensed and/or certified mental health professional. The majority of mental health risk assessments are conducted within 72 hours, at District expense, by one of our local contracted service providers.

We ask that you take time to carefully review this protocol with your student and contact your child's building administrator if you have questions or comments. Our experience with this protocol has affirmed the strength of our valued partnership with you, and we appreciate your continued support.

Sincerely,

Chris Groppe, Ed. D.
Director of Safety & Student Services

Protocol for Assessment of Threatening Behaviors and Threats

1. Building administrator or designee conducts initial investigation to verify the incident and the probability of student involvement.
2. If the building administrator or designee cannot verify the incident, then the parent/guardian of all known students associated with the reported incident should be contacted. No further action is required.
3. If the threatening behavior or threat occurs in the context of a time-sensitive consultation with a mental health specialist, the mental health specialist shall conduct an immediate clinical interview with the student in order to be able to assess the nature and extent of the threatening behavior. This interview does not require prior consent by the student's parent or guardian or the student themselves.
4. Upon a preliminary determination that a student's behavior may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others, then the building administrator or designee convenes the Threat Assessment Team and serves as the designated leader. The Threat Assessment Team shall include individuals as outlined in the accompanying Board Policy. Additionally, if the student who made the threatening behavior or threat has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan, then at least one school staff member of the student's IEP or 504 team, who is not an administrator, will serve on the Threat Assessment Team and the pertinent portions of the student's IEP or 504 Plan will be shared and reviewed.
5. The Threat Assessment Team shall immediately notify the Superintendent or designee, the student's building principal and the school safety and security coordinator upon a preliminary determination of a threat.
6. The Threat Assessment Team will take into consideration the developmental age and disability of the students involved when determining discipline measures and supports. Additionally, the Threat Assessment team will consider whether appropriate supports and services for a disabled student which may potentially mitigate the threatening behavior have been offered and implemented.
7. The building administrator or designee contacts parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student who engaged in threatening behaviors or threats to review these steps in the protocol, which do not necessarily need to be taken in the order listed below, in addition to any requirements of the section regarding Suspensions of Students with Disabilities:
 - a. The student will be removed from class to a safe location and/or additional supervision will be assigned.
 - b. Parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are notified by the building administrator and an initial investigation is conducted by the building administrator or designee.
 - c. Upon receipt of parental, guardian and/or, if the student is 18 or older, student consent, a clinical interview, or additional clinical interview if a clinical interview has already been conducted pursuant to number 3 above, may be completed by a District mental health specialist and the results of the clinical interview will be discussed with the Threat Assessment Team and parent(s)/guardian(s). The Threat Assessment Team shall provide the District mental health specialist with all relevant records and information relating to the student's disability, if applicable.
 - d. Based upon the available information, the Threat Assessment Team will categorize the threat as transient or substantive. If the Threat Assessment Team cannot resolve the threat as transient, then they may consult with the police. In this context, "consult with" serves two purposes. Consultation allows law enforcement to participate in the threat assessment process, as contemplated by the Public School Code, to assist with the determination as to whether a threat constitutes a transient or a substantive threat. Consultation also provides the opportunity for communication between school officials and law enforcement to share information known by one agency with the other in order to best plan protective supports as appropriate. If a threat is considered a serious substantive threat, then the Threat Assessment Team will consult with the police. If the threat is a very serious substantive threat, then the building administrator or designee will contact the police to request further investigation.
 - e. The building administrator, with input from the Threat Assessment Team, will determine any disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis while considering the severity of the threatening behavior or threat and prior relevant disciplinary history of the student. The Threat Assessment team will consider whether supports and services included in any disabled student's IEP or 504 plan have been implemented as required. The Threat Assessment Team may also, as appropriate, refer the student to other support-based resources such as the Student Assistance Program and appropriate community resources.
 - f. A designated member of the Threat Assessment Team will maintain contact with the family of the suspended student during any period of suspension from school.
 - g. Whether determined to be a transient or substantive threat, the student may be required to attend school-based counseling session(s).

- h. If the Threat Assessment Team determines the threat is transient, the student may return to school pending the outcome of any disciplinary action.
 - i. If the Threat Assessment Team determines the threat is substantive, a mental health risk assessment (“the mental health risk assessment”) shall be required.
 - j. If the mental health risk assessment is required, it will be completed by a District selected or District-approved certified child and adolescent psychiatrist or other District-selected or District-approved qualified mental health professional. Any mental health risk assessment shall include review of all relevant records and information relating to student’s disability, if applicable.
 - k. The Office of Individualized Student Services will schedule the mental health risk assessment, and the school administrator or designee will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss arrangements for the mental health risk assessment.
 - l. Signed parent/guardian consent is required for the mental health risk assessment to commence. If signed consent is not forthcoming and the family has not made arrangements with a District-approved psychiatrist or other mental health professional, then the student will be suspended, pending the development of a District-approved written plan to ensure the safety of the student and others in school. If the District provides non-disabled students with work materials related to on-going classroom instruction during this period of removal, it shall do the same for disabled students, ensuring access to FAPE.
 - m. If there is a delay in the completion of the mental health risk assessment beyond the length of the assigned suspension, then a District-approved written safety plan will be developed to ensure the safety of the student and others before the student is scheduled to return to school.
 - n. If suspension exceeds three (3) school days, the student has the right to an informal hearing. If suspension exceeds ten (10) school days, the student has the right to a formal hearing.
 - o. The building administrator or designee will hold a conference with a suspended student and their parent/guardian prior to readmission to school.
 - p. A student who is suspended or expelled for threatening behavior or making a threat is subject to random searches in accordance with Policy 5412 and applicable law.
 - q. Police must be notified by the building administrator in the event of a weapons offense, as defined in Policy 5410.
 - r. During non-school hours, such as through the state’s required anonymous reporting system (Safe2Say Something), police may be notified by a building or District administrator in situations where the health, safety or welfare of students, staff or District property are thought to be in jeopardy as determined by the building or District administrator.
8. Office of Individualized Student Services or designee prepares appropriate parent/guardian permissions for assessment and release of information for building administrator to secure parent/guardian signature.
9. Upon receipt of permission and information release from the parent(s)/guardian(s), building administrator or designee contacts the District-approved mental health professional to provide student records and information about the incident.
10. The administrator or designee makes arrangements with the mental health professional to contact the building administrator or designee immediately following the mental health risk assessment as to whether the student is safe to return to school and to make recommendations for support. Following the mental health risk assessment, the mental health professional contacts the building administrator or designee as per previous agreement. The administrator or designee contacts the parent(s)/guardian(s).
11. If the mental health risk assessment determines that the student is not considered a threat to self or others, then the student may return to school as determined by the building administrator pursuant to District disciplinary procedures.
12. Supports and services are guided by assessment data and determined by the appropriate building-based team. Building and District personnel work with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student to discuss and implement recommendations.
13. A report from the mental health risk assessment is sent to the Office of Individualized Student Services which, in turn, will disseminate it to the building administrator and the parent(s)/guardian(s).