



The First Steps to Threat Assessment

Step 1: Establish A Multidisciplinary Threat Assessment Team in Your School

The threat assessment team will receive reports about concerning students and situations, gather additional information, assess the risk posed to the school community and develop intervention and **management** strategies to mitigate risk. Threat assessment teams should have a specifically designated leader and include personnel from a variety of disciplines including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, school resource officers, mental health professionals and school administrators.

Step 2: Define Prohibited and Concerning Behavior in School

Schools need to define prohibited behaviors that are unacceptable and warrant immediate intervention. Policies should also identify behaviors that may not be indicative of violence but also warrant some type of intervention and support. The threshold for intervention should be relatively low so that teams can identify students in distress before their behavior escalates to the point that classmates, teachers, or parents are concerned about their **safety**.

Step 3: Create A Central Reporting Mechanism

Schools may establish one or more reporting mechanisms that are accessible for their community (there should be an option to pass information along anonymously). Students, teachers, staff, school resource officers and parents should be trained on recognizing behaviors of concern; their roles and

responsibilities in reporting the behavior; and how to report the information. A team member should proactively monitor all incoming reports and respond immediately when someone is concerned about the safety of themselves or others.

The school community should feel confident that team members will be responsive to their concerns and that reports will be acted upon, kept confidential, and handled appropriately.

Step 4: Determine The Threshold for Law Enforcement Intervention in School

It's likely that the vast majority of incidents can be handled by school personnel, but reports regarding student behavior involving weapons, threats of violence, physical violence, or concerns about an individual's safety should immediately be reported to local law enforcement.

If a school resource officer is not available to serve on the threat assessment team, schools should set a clear threshold for times and situations when law enforcement will be asked to support or take over an assessment.

Step 5: Establish Threat Assessment Procedures

Clearly defined procedures should guide each threat assessment so that your team forms an accurate picture of the student's thinking, behavior and circumstances.

Threat assessment teams should also organize their information around themes pertaining to the student's actions, circumstances and other relevant factors. Each theme should be addressed and used to identify the most appropriate resources for the student.

Citation: National Threat Assessment Center. (2018). U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security

www.mandellonsafetyandsecurity.com