York Region District School Board

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

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Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

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Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

SECTION 1 – Purpose of Protocol *

The purpose of the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol* is to guide the response to situations where there is information that indicates or suggests there is a targeted threat against an individual(s) and/or site(s).

The protocol was developed to enable a community-based response to intervene effectively to manage and reduce the risk of targeted violence. The emphasis of this approach is on prevention and the development of effective short and long-term intervention strategies in order to maintain a safe, caring and supportive school.

SECTION 2 – Defining Threat Assessment, Threats and Worrisome Behaviour

What is Threat Assessment?

Threat assessment is the process of determining if a threat -maker (someone who utters, writes, emails, etc. a threat to harm a target or targets) actually poses a risk to the target or targets they have threatened. While individuals may engage in threat-making behaviour, research indicates that few pose a risk to harm the target they have threatened. Multidisciplinary threat assessment teams engage in a data collection process including interviews and consultation with those who know the individual making the threat, to determine "initial level of risk" that may be posed and plan necessary risk-reducing interventions. The interventions are designed to protect any potential targets as well as the individual making the threat.

What is a Threat?

A threat is defined as an indication of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the internet, sent electronically or by information technology of any type, made by gesture or reasonably inferred from the surrounding circumstances of events. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.

Threat-making behaviour is defined as any action that an individual, who in any manner knowingly utters, conveys, or causes any person to receive a threat.

This protocol document is not a substitute for training in the field of violence-threat risk assessment and individuals should not engage in the threat assessment and intervention process until adequate training is received. The Student Threat Assessment and Intervention protocol is intended to be used by multidisciplinary teams trained in the theory and practice of violence-threat risk assessment through "Level 1 Student Threat Assessment and Intervention

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Training" program offered by the York Region District School Board, as certified by Lethbridge College and the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response.

What are worrisome behaviours?

Worrisome behaviours are those that cause concern for members of a school system. These behaviours may indicate that a student demonstrates a greater risk of violent behaviour. This may include drawing pictures, writing stories, or making vague statements that do not, of themselves, constitute "uttering threats" as defined by law but cause concern for members of the school community because of their violent and destructive content (refer to Appendix A).

The goal of the threat assessment and intervention process is to prevent violence. Violence can also be prevented through early recognition of worrisome behaviours and the development of an intervention plan to address these behaviours and reduce the risk that they will escalate to the point of threats and/or violence. Typically, a threat assessment would not be undertaken to address worrisome behaviours. Rather, a multidisciplinary intervention plan should be developed so that support can be put in place for the student, **before** these behaviours warrant a threat assessment.

SECTION 3 – When should the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol* be activated?

This Protocol should be activated in situations where:
- threats of violence are reported or observed,
- violence against others is reported or observed, or
- <u>significant</u> worrisome behaviours are reported or observed and an intervention plan has not been successful. In such cases, the worrisome behaviours are not typical, and suggest that the individual is on a pathway to increasingly violent behaviour against others.

When an immediate risk is identified at a school site, the school lockdown plan must be activated, followed by a call to 911 as outlined in the YRDSB Emergency Preparedness procedures.

Examples may include and are not limited to:
- a threat that is in the process of being acted out, such as someone setting up an explosive device, armed intruder, possession of a weapon, physical or sexual assault,
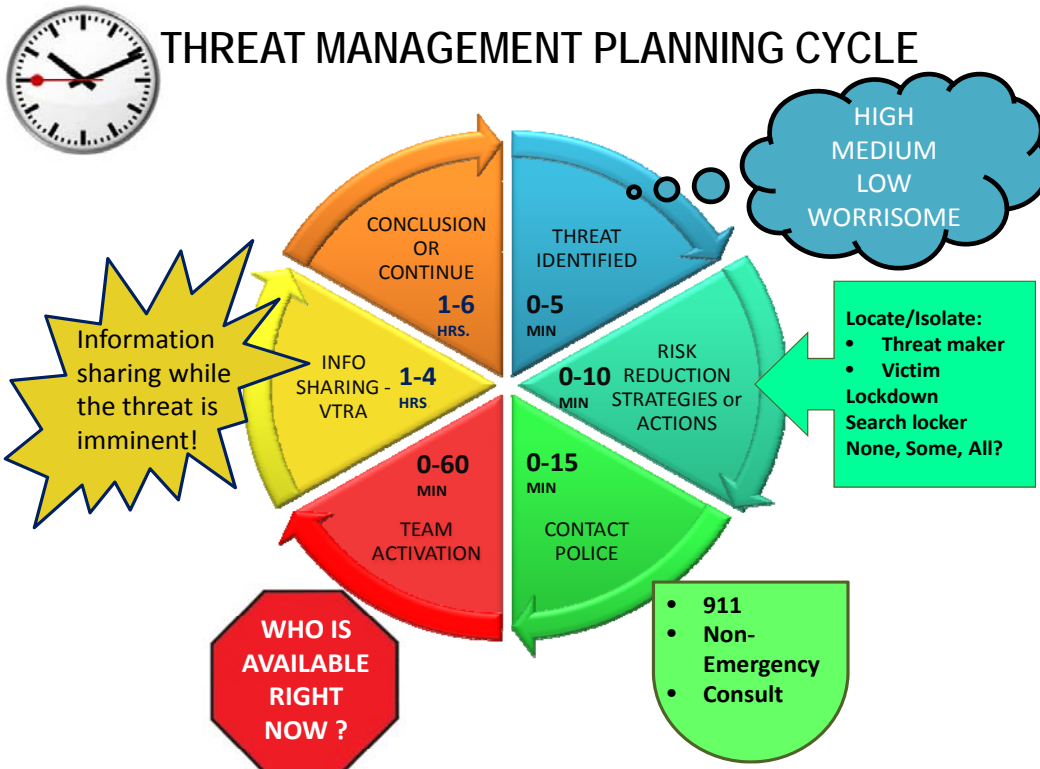- evidence that a student has or can gain immediate access to a weapon

In these cases, a threat *is* posed and the matter is one of immediate police intervention and protective school response: *not* Threat Assessment. Once immediate concerns regarding school safety and well-being have been addressed, proceeding with a threat assessment must be considered.

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Activation of the Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol by York Regional Police

There are times when a member of the York Regional Police receives information about a student that would warrant activation of the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol.* YRP members can activate the protocol by contacting the Superintendent of Schools-Operation at 905-727-0022 extension 2266.

Automatic Activation of the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol* for:

- serious violence with intent to harm or kill;
- verbal/written threats to kill others ("clear, direct and plausible");
- internet website/MSN threats to kill others;
- possession of weapons (including replicas);
- bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices);
- fire setting;
- sexual intimidation or assault;
- gang-related intimidation and violence.

THREAT MANAGEMENT PLANNING CYCLE

HIGH
MEDIUM
LOW
WORRISOME

CONCLUSION OR CONTINUE
1-6 HRS.

THREAT IDENTIFIED
0-5 MIN

INFO SHARING - VTRA
1-4 HRS

Information sharing while the threat is imminent!

RISK REDUCTION STRATEGIES or ACTIONS
0-10 MIN

Locate/Isolate:
- **Threat maker**
- **Victim**
Lockdown
Search locker
None, Some, All?

TEAM ACTIVATION
0-60 MIN

CONTACT POLICE
0-15 MIN

WHO IS AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW ?

- **911**
- **Non-Emergency**
- **Consult**

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SECTION 4 – The three stages of the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention* process

The *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol* is comprised of three distinct and integrated stages involving a multidisciplinary team.

Stage I consists of "data collection and immediate risk reducing intervention" initiated by school staff. Data is then reviewed by others on the school team that must include the school administrator, clinician, and York Regional Police. Data collection should begin immediately when the administrator is made aware of the potential threat and should continue until all members of the team are assured that safety concerns have been addressed and there is enough information to develop an effective intervention plan.

Stage II is further evaluation completed by a multidisciplinary team which may include some or all of the following: York Regional Police, YRDSB Psychological Services staff, YRDSB Social Work staff, community-based mental health professionals, Children's Aid Society staff, etc. This second stage is focused on comprehensive data collection for further identification of risk factors and effective strategies to reduce risk and provide support to the student and others

Stage III is the development and implementation of a comprehensive intervention plan to support the student.

SECTION 5 – Proceeding with a Stage I Student Threat Assessment and Intervention

The Stage 1 Student Threat Assessment and Intervention process begins when a threat is reported to a school administrator. The administrator will proceed with the following steps to maintain safety at the school**.**

Step I: Identify the whereabouts of the target(s) and threat-maker(s) and address any immediate risk factors.
- Appropriately monitor the individual(s) of concern.
- Prevent access to coats, backpacks, desks or lockers for those involved.

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Step 2: Search of school property
- Administrators are permitted to search school property, such as lockers and desks, without consent.
- Following the *Police and School Board Protocol*, Board employees will only conduct a search of an individual's personal belongings such as knapsack, handbag, personal communication devices, personal computers and accessories, etc., with the individual's permission except where there would otherwise be an imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm.

Step 3: Call York Regional Police to share initial data and request support for a Threat Assessment and Intervention meeting.

Step 4: Convene the Stage 1 team
- The school administrator contacts police and clinician to convene a Stage 1 team meeting. At the same time, school staff continues to collect data and continues to assess risks to safety.

Step 5: Collect and review data
- Review information collected from school records and sources related to the individual such as internet use, notebooks, school assignments, information collected by the police, etc. as permissible (refer to Step 2).

Step 6: Interview*
- Prior to conducting the Stage 1 Interview, the team should ask the following questions and act accordingly:
  1. How much time do we have?
  2. Who will be interviewed?
  3. In what order will we interview them?
  4. Who will interview them?

  Conduct interviews with potential target(s), threat-maker(s) and others such as friends, parents, teachers (current and past), educational assistants, bus drivers, coaches, community agency staff members, etc. (refer to Appendix B for *Stage I Interview form*).

Interviewing Students with Special Needs

*When interviewing individuals with special education needs, English Language Learner needs, or disabilities, accommodations must be considered to support the individual in his or her communication. Determine the need for an interpreter, including language interpreter and interpreters for hearing impaired students. Ideally, professionally qualified interpreters and not family or friends should be used with children/witnesses and individuals who require interpretative services.

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Step 7: Notify the threat-maker(s) and target(s) parent/guardian(s)

In accordance with the *Education Act* and accompanying regulations, a school administrator is responsible for reporting to a student's parent or legal guardian. The administrator shall contact the student's parent or legal guardian regarding the alleged inappropriate behaviour requiring police involvement unless the student is 18 years of age or older and requests that his/her parents not be contacted, or if 16 or 17 years of age and has withdrawn from parental control (refer to *Police and School Board Protocol*, Section 9 and 10).

Parent/guardian permission is not required for a Threat Assessment to occur.

Threat-maker Parent/Guardian notification*:*

Parents/Guardians must be notified at the earliest opportunity. Administrators are obligated to inform the parents/guardians of an activity for which suspension or expulsion must be considered unless, in the opinion of the administrator, doing so would put the student at risk of harm from the parents. Specifically, notification should occur after the Threat Assessment and Intervention team has collected enough initial data to confirm that a threat or violent act has occurred.

The participation of parents/guardians in the threat assessment process is crucial since family members will be able to provide important information about the threat-maker's behaviour, activities, mental health, resources to carry out the threat, peers, and other contextual information to determine the level of threat and develop a risk reduction plan.

Parent/guardian notification may be delayed if:

1. The student discloses child abuse during the Threat Assessment process. In this case school staff will notify the appropriate child protection agency and work collaboratively with the agency as to the timing of parent/guardian notification.
2. The parent/guardian of the student has exhibited violent threatening behaviour in the past and is believed to pose a potential risk to the safety and well-being of others. In this case school staff will enlist the support of the police, and the police member of the Threat Assessment team may opt to inform the parent/guardian.

Target-Parent/Guardian notification:

If the threat is clear, direct and plausible, the targeted student's safety must be addressed immediately. The parent/guardian of the student(s) must be notified immediately after data is collected. That is, the student(s) who has been targeted should be secured and protected.

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Step 8: Determine level of concern

The multidisciplinary *Threat Assessment and Intervention* Stage 1 team reviews the information and data gathered regarding the threat(s), behaviour(s) and the individual. As a team, there is a determination as to the level of concern that the individual poses.

➢ *Low Level of Concern*

Risk to the target(s), students, staff, and school safety is minimal.

The categorization of low risk does not imply "no risk" but indicates *the individual* is at little risk for committing violence. Information indicates that the:
- threat is vague and indirect;
- threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail and lacks realism;
- person is unlikely to carry out the threat of become violent; and/or
- behaviour of concern is within the general range for typical or baseline behaviour for the individual in question.

Ongoing monitoring of the matter is essential.

➢ *Medium Level of Concern*

The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible. Categorization at this level suggests that the individual is at an elevated risk for violence, and those measures currently in place or further measures, including monitoring, are required in an effort to manage the individual's future risk. Information indicates that:

- the threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat;
- the wording in the threat and information gathered suggests that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (e.g., possible place and time);
- there is no clear indication that the individual of concern has taken preparatory steps (e.g., seeking a weapon), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive reference pointing to that possibility;
- there may be a specific statement indicating that the threat is not empty: e.g. "I'm serious!";
- there is a moderate or lingering concern about the student's potential to act violently, and/or
- the behaviour or concerns represents an increase in baseline behaviour.

A plan to monitor, support and decrease risk factors for violent behaviour must be developed.

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➢ *High Level of Concern*

The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others. Categorization of risk at this level indicates that the individual is at a high or imminent risk for violence. Information indicates that:

- immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring;
- the threat is specific and plausible;
- there is an identified target;
- the individual has the *capacity* to act on the threat;
- concrete steps have been taken toward acting on the threat (e.g., information indicates that the individual has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance);
- information suggests strong concern about the individual's potential to act violently; and/or
- there is a significant increase in baseline behaviour.

It is essential in all high risk situations that a Stage 2 Student Threat Assessment and Intervention be conducted as soon as possible.

 Sources for the above categorizations represent the work of the FBI, Durham Regional Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police Threat Assessment Unit, and the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response.

Step 9: Decide on a Course of Action

With the input of all Threat Assessment and Intervention Team members, decide on course of action. If there is a low to medium level of concern, a student may be managed at school with appropriate (increased) supervision and support.

➢ **Low to Medium Level of Concern**
- Complete ***Intervention Plan Form*** (refer to Appendix C).
- Implement the Intervention Plan (*Most students can be managed at school with interventions).*

➢ **Medium to High Level of Concern**
- Complete ***Intervention Plan Form*** (refer to Appendix C).
- The *Threat Assessment and Intervention Team* has determined that a Stage II Threat Assessment and Multidisciplinary Evaluation is needed.

Step 10: Complete Stage I Threat Assessment Incident Report
- Complete and submit ***Stage I Threat Assessment Incident Report*** (Refer to Appendix D)

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Contacting the police

	911	Non-emergency #	Consult
High Risk—Immediate threat	YES	NO	YES, after calling 911
Medium Risk	NO	YES	YES
Low Risk	NO	YES	YES
Worrisome Behaviour	NO	NO	YES

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SECTION 6 – Stage II Threat Assessment and Multidisciplinary Evaluation

The second stage is focused on further data collection beyond the initial data set obtained in Stage I. This process will identify a more comprehensive understanding of the student and the risk factors that will inform an intervention plan (Stage III). Stage II involves risk evaluation completed by a multidisciplinary team which may include some or all of the following: York Regional Police, YRDSB Psychological Services staff, YRDSB Social Work staff, community-based mental health professionals, Children's Aid Society staff and others as appropriate.

Contextual data about the threat-maker(s) is to be obtained from multiple sources including teachers, students, target(s), threat-maker(s), parents/caregivers/family members, probation officers, therapists, etc., and others as appropriate.

Explicit and thorough data must be collected by the multidisciplinary team on the following items –
i.   **The Incident** - factual details about the threat from a variety of sources
ii.   **Attack-related Behaviours** - behaviours and actions that indicate a student may be on a pathway towards violence
iii.   **Baseline Overview** - history of behavioural functioning and recent changes in behaviour
iv.   **The Target History** – information about the threat-maker's history of violence
v.   **Peer Dynamics** - nature and functioning of threat-maker's relationships with friends and other acquaintances
vi.   **Empty Vessel** – information about the threat-maker's interests and social connections
vii.   **Contextual factors** - contributing situational and personal factors and stressors
viii.   **Family dynamics** - family structure, relationship and functioning

An evaluation of the individual and his or her circumstances is determined by the Stage II multidisciplinary team following a thorough assessment of all of the information gathered. Typically, the team will determine appropriate interventions and identify the risk factors contributing to the increased potential for violence.

Complete and submit **Stage II Student Threat Assessment Incident Report** (Appendix E) and **Notice of Student Threat Assessment Form** (Appendix F).

SECTION 7 – Stage III Intervention Plan

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Stage III is the development and implementation of a comprehensive intervention plan by the members of the Stage I and Stage II multidisciplinary teams to support the

SECTION 8 – Responsible Information Sharing: Guidelines and Legislation

individual.

There is legislation in Ontario that permits information sharing without consent in emergency situations. The Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario has made it clear that it is permissible to disclose information about a student, including information about their mental, emotional or other health conditions, to parents or others who may be able to help in a crisis.   Further information about privacy law and its application to emergency situations can be found in the document: *Practice Tool for Exercising Discretion: Emergency Disclosure of Personal Information by Universities, Colleges and other Educational Institutions*, October 2008 and is available on the Privacy Commissioner's website, www.ipc.on.ca.

Similarly, there are provisions within the *Health Care Consent Act*, 1996, in terms of proceeding with assessment or treatment without obtaining informed consent in emergency situations where the well-being of an individual is thought to be at-risk. These laws also protect an individual from damages, provided that the release of confidential information was done in good faith and in reasonable circumstances.

Ontario's Privacy Commissioner has outlined the serious nature of the decision to waive consent in urgent situations and has stated that the disclosure of a student's personal information without consent is extremely difficult and requires careful consideration. A great deal of deliberation and discretion must be exercised, often very quickly and the decision must be made very carefully and sensitively. If information has been shared without consent, the individual must be notified at the "first reasonable opportunity" about what information was shared and with whom.

The *Police and School Board Protocol* also addresses the matter in Section 7, Information Sharing and Disclosure.

SECTION 9 – Students with Special Needs

A principal must consider prescribed mitigating factors when considering whether to hold a student responsible for a violation of the Board Code of Conduct, including whether the student has the ability to control his or her behaviour and whether the student has the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour. **Notwithstanding, the administrator <u>must</u> adhere to the occurrences that require police response (refer to *Police and School Board Protocol,* section 6a).**

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The *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol* will NOT be activated when students with special needs engage in threat-making or aggressive behaviours that are typical to their "baseline"; that is, their conduct is consistent with their diagnosis and the individual's past behaviours. However, if the student with special needs moves beyond their typical baseline behaviour and exhibits threat-making behaviour, the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention* process should be activated. Once the Stage I team is activated, the process of data collection and assessment is not modified other than to ensure that interviewing strategies that are utilized address the needs of the student with special needs.

SECTION 10 – Locker Search

The locker is one of the first places to find drugs, weapons and other contraband in the school setting. As a result, it is standard practice in the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention* process to search the threat-maker's locker as it may house evidence that would indicate that the threat-maker is engaging in behaviours that are consistent with their threat.

At the commencement of **each school term or semester**, administrators shall ensure that all members of the school community are made aware of the right of administrators to search school property, such as lockers and desks, without notice to, or permission of, any person (refer to *Police and School Board Protocol*, section 11, 2b).

SECTION 11 – Creating an Expectation for Responsible Reporting and School Readiness

All staff and students need to be advised that any person in a school community having knowledge of threatening and/or violent behaviour, or having reasonable grounds to believe there is a potential for threatening or violent behaviour, must promptly report the information to the administrator.

Students, staff and parents will be provided with information about the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol* and procedures so that "**fair notice**" is given that violence and threats of violence will not be ignored and there will be an appropriate response. Administrators will ensure that the Board's *Fair Notice Brochure* is distributed to all parents/guardians annually at the commencement of the school year.

It is essential that each school have in place a school team that is trained to respond should a threat or targeted violence occur. The purpose of this team is to come together in the face of a possible threat, or targeted violence, to gather information,

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

analyze its potential and to design a course of action. Team members are also responsible for the training of school staff, participating in the development of an action plan, including intervention strategies, and to act as an action team to gather data alongside the administration (refer to Appendix G).

Reporting and identification of threats

All school staff must make sure that all students understand the importance of reporting threats.

The most important points to emphasize with students are:
- Students can go to *any* teacher or staff member to report a threat;
- Students need to report *any* threat that is not clearly a joke;
- A classmate will be in *more* trouble or others may be hurt if a threat is carried out rather than prevented;
- *Seeking help* to prevent someone from being hurt is not "snitching".

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Worrisome Behaviours

Worrisome Behaviours are those behaviours that cause concern for members of the school system that may indicate that a student is moving toward a greater risk of violent behaviour. This may include drawing pictures, writing stories, or making vague statements that do not, of themselves, constitute "uttering threats" as defined by law but cause concern for members of the school community because of their violent and destructive content.

In determining changes with student baseline behaviour, the In-School Threat Assessment Team may consider the following worrisome behaviours and signs to look for:

Social functioning	Academic functioning	Physical well-being
*abrupt change in social group	*skipping school	*unkempt appearance
*arguing with friends	*decline in marks	*change in appearance
*association with negative peer group	*lack of participation in class	*weight loss or gain
*no friends	*excessive time on computer	*change in sleep pattern
*isolated, withdrawn from social activities	*failure to complete/hand in assignments	
*excessive time on computer	*opposition to authority	
*reduced eye contact	*discussions/focus on weapons in work	
*change in verbal communication	*focus on death, violence in assignments	
*change in clothing/inappropriate clothing		

Emotional functioning	Behavioural functioning
*angry outbursts	*self-injurious behaviour: cutting, mutilation, hair pulling
*emotional outbursts	*drug or alcohol use
*overly emotional (cannot control tears, fears, frustration)	*interest/participation in negative activities (computer, violent games, weapons)
*change in body language	*doodling, religious imaging, occult images
*negative outlook	*increase in physical activity
*despair about the future	*impulsive
*inability to make decisions	*giving away personal property
*unexpected happiness/giddiness	*change in body language
	*opposition to authority
	*discussions about weapons
	*fire setting

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**STAGE I
Interview Form**

The Incident

1. Where did the incident happen & when?
2. How did it come to the interviewee's attention?
3. What was the specific language of the threat, detail of the weapon brandished, or gesture made?
4. Was there stated:
   - **J**ustification for the threat?
   - **M**eans to carry out the threat?
   - **C**onsequences weighed out (I don't care if I live or die!)?
   - **C**onditions that could lower the level of risk (unless you take that Facebook post down I will stick my knife in your throat!)?
5. Who was present & under what circumstance did the incident occur?
6. What was the motivation or perceived cause of the incident?
7. What was the response of the target (if present) at the time of the incident? ***Did they add to or detract from the Justification Process?***
8. What was the response of others who were present at the time of the incident? ***Did they add to or detract from the Justification Process?***

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STAGE I
Interview Form

Attack-related Behaviours

1. Has the student (subject) sought out information consistent with their threat making or threat-related behaviour?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intentions to attack a target currently or in the past?
3. Has the student (subject) attempted to gain access to weapons or do they have access to the weapons they have threatened to use?
4. Have they developed a plan & how general or specific is it (time, date, identified target selection, site selection, journal of justifications, maps & floor plans)?
5. Has the student (subject) been engaging in suspicious behaviour such as appearing to show an inordinate interest in alarm systems, sprinkler systems, video surveillance in schools or elsewhere, schedules & locations of police or security patrol?
6. Have they engaged in rehearsal behaviours, including packing or brandishing fake but realistic looking weapons, air rifles, pistols, or engaged in fire setting (i.e.: lighting fire to cardboard tubes cut & taped to look like a pipe bomb, etc.)?
7. Is there any evidence of attack related behaviours in their locker (back pack, car trunk, etc.) at school or bedroom (shed, garage, etc.) at home?
8. Have others been forewarned of a pending attack or told not to come to school because "something big is going to happen?"

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Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

Baseline Overview

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1. Does the threat-maker (subject) have a history of violence or threats of violence? If yes, what is their past:
    - a) **(HTS)** History of Human Target Selection?
    - b) **(SS)** History of Site Selection?
    - c) **(F)**requency of Violence or Threats?
    - d) **(I)**ntensity of Violence or Threats?
    - e) **(R)**ecency?
2. In the case at hand, what is their current:
    - a) **(HTS)** Human Target Selection?
    - b) **(SS)** Site Selection?
    - c) Does it denote a significant increase in **BASELINE** Behaviour?

NOTE: In Stage I *Threat Assessment and Intervention*, history of violence is a significant risk enhancer but the best predictor of future violent behaviour is an **increase or shift** in **Baseline**. This may also include an individual who has become more withdrawn or quiet as opposed acting out!

• Do they have a history of depression or suicidal thinking/behaviour?

• Is there evidence of fluidity in their writings, drawings or verbalizations?

• Does the threat-maker (subject) use drugs or alcohol? Is there evidence it is a risk enhancing factoring the case at hand?

• In the case at hand, is there a mental health diagnosis or evidence of a mental health diagnosis that may be a risk-enhancing factor?

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STAGE I
Interview Form

The Target History

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*Remember that in some cases the target is a higher risk for violence than the threat-maker, with the most common case being where the threat-maker is the victim of bullying and the target is the bully.

1. Does the target have a history of violence or threats of violence? If yes, what is their past?
2. If yes, what is the frequency, intensity & recency (FIR) of the violence?
3. What has been their past human target selection?
4. What has been their past site selection?
5. Is there evidence the target has instigated the current situation?

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Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

STAGE I
Interview Form

Peer Dynamics

1. Are others involved in the incident that may intentionally or unintentionally be contributing to the justification process?
2. Who is in the threat-maker's (subjects) peer structure & where does the threat maker (subject) fit (i.e. leader, co-leader, and follower)?
3. Is there a difference between the threat-maker's individual baseline & their peer group baseline behaviour?
4. Who is in the target's peer structure & where does the target fit (i.e.: leader, co-leader, and follower)?
5. Is there a peer who could assist with the plan or obtain the weapons necessary for an attack?

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STAGE I
Interview Form

Empty Vessels

1. Does the student of concern (subject) have a healthy relationship with a mature adult?
2. Does the student have **inordinate knowledge** versus **general knowledge** or interest in violent events, themes, or incidents, including prior school – based attacks?
3. How have they responded to prior violent incidents (local, national, etc.)?
4. What type of violent games, movies, books, music, Internet searches, does the student (subject) fill themselves with?
5. Is there evidence that what they are filling themselves with is influencing their behaviour? (**Imitators vs. Innovators**)
6. What related themes are present in their writings, drawings, etc?
7. Is there evidence of fluidity and/or religiosity?

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Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

STAGE I
Interview Form

Contextual Factors

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1. Has the threat-maker experienced a recent loss, such as a death of a family member or friend; a recent break-up; rejection by a peer or peer group; been cut from a sports team; received a rejection notice from a college, university, military etc?
2. Have their parents just divorced or separated?
3. Are they victims of child abuse & has the abuse been dormant but resurfaced at this time?
4. Are they being initiated into a gang and is it voluntary or forced recruitment?
5. Have they recently had an argument or "fight" with a parent/caregiver or someone close to them?
6. Have they recently been charged with an offence or suspended or expelled from school?
7. Is the place where they have been suspended to likely to increase or decrease their level of risk?

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STAGE I
Interview Form

Family Dynamics

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1. How many homes does the student (subject) reside in (shared custody, goes back and forth from parent to grandparents home)?
2. Is the student (subject) connected to a healthy/ mature adult in the home?
3. Who lives in the family home (full-time and part-time)? Has anyone entered or left the home that may be influencing level of risk?
4. Who seems to be in charge of the family and how often are they around?
5. Has the student engaged in violence or threats of violence towards their siblings or parent(s) caregiver(s)? If so, what form of violence and to whom including Frequency, Intensity, Recency (FIR)?
6. What is the historical baseline at home? What is the current baseline at home? Is there evidence of evolution at home?
7. Are parent(s) or caregiver(s) concerned for their own safety or the safety of their children or others?
8. Does the students' level or risk (at home, school, or the community) cycle according to who is in the home (i.e. the student is low risk for violence when his/her father is home but high risk during the times their father travels away from home for work)?
9. Does the student have a history of trauma? Including car accidents, falls, exposed to violence, abuse, etc.
10. Has the student been diagnosed with any DSM IV diagnoses?
11. Is there a history of mental health disorders in the family?
12. Is there a history of drug or alcohol abuse in the family?
.

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Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

APPENDIX C
Stage I Intervention Plan Form

Name: _____   **Date:** _____

➢ Disciplinary action taken Y or N ➢ If yes, describe:
➢ Intended victim warned and/or parent/guardian notified
➢ Mental health assessment initiated on: _____ by: _____
➢ Safety plan to address concerns about safety to self or others Y or N(please attach)
➢ Intervention plan to support behaviour and further identification of needs Y or N ➢ Alert staff and teachers on a need-to-know basis Y N
➢ Daily or Weekly check-in with (title/name): _____
➢ Travel card to hold accountable for whereabouts and on-time arrival to destinations
➢ Backpack, coat and other belongings check-in and check-out by: _____
➢ Late arrival and/or early dismissal to assist with monitoring: Y or N
➢ Increased supervision in these settings: _____
➢ Modify daily schedule by: _____
➢
➢ In-school Team meeting date to review plan:
➢ Review community-based resources and interventions with parent/guardian
➢ Obtain permission to share information with community partners
➢ Other action(s) and resources: _____

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

York Region District School Board
Stage I Threat Assessment Incident Report

Name of Student: *(please print clearly)*	Student Identification #:
School:	Grade:
Date of Birth:	Age:

Parent/Guardian and Contact Information:

Mother/Legal Guardian:	Father/Legal Guardian:
Address: _____	Address: _____
City: _____ Prov._____	City: _____ Prov._____
Telephone: *Home* _____	Telephone: *Home* _____
Work _____	*Work* _____

Brief Summary of Threat and Incident

Date of Incident:
Name of Threat-maker and his/her relationship to the school and to the target:
Name(s) of victims or potential victims:
When and where the incident occurred:
What happened immediately prior to the incident?:
The specific language of the threat:
Physical conduct that would substantiate intent to follow through on the threat:

Appearance of threat-maker:
    physically:
 	
    emotionally:

Names of others who were directly involved and any actions taken:
How did the incident end?
Names of witnesses:

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

What happened to the other students or employees directly involved after the incident?:
Names of any administrators, teachers, or staff and how they responded:
What events appear to have triggered the incident:
Other relevant historical information leading up to the event:
Steps taken to ensure that the threat will not be carried out:

Name and Affiliation of Individuals Participating in Level I Threat Assessment:

Name:	Organization/agency and contact information:

Outcomes of Threat Assessment (include information about all those that apply):

Student:
Parent:
School staff:
School Board staff:
Community Service Provider:
Medical professional: (family doctor, psychiatrist etc.)
Other:
Stage II threat assessment recommended: (circle one)   **YES**   **NO**

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

Report completed by:

Name: _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

Please be advised that the personal and/or health information in this report is being collected, retained, used and disclosed by the York Region District School Board and its employees pursuant to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Personal Health Information Protection Act and Education Act for the purposes of providing education and education-related programs and services, and for the purpose of maintaining a healthy and safe learning and working environment in circumstances where there is a threat to the safety of those environments, including threat assessment services, which may include involving community agencies such as the York Region Police, Ontario Provincial Police, local emergency care service providers, Community Care Access Centers, hospitals and/or health care providers.

Any questions regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal and/or health information by the Board may be directed to the School's administration, Principal/Vice-Principal and/or the Area Superintendent.

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

York Region District School Board
Stage II Threat Assessment Summary Report

Name of Student:	Student Identification #:
School:	Grade:
Date of Birth:	Age:

Parent/Guardian and contact information:

Mother/Legal Guardian:	Father/Legal Guardian:
Address: _____ City: _____ Prov._____ Telephone: *Home* _____ *Work* _____	Address: _____ City: _____ Prov._____ Telephone: *Home* _____ *Work* _____

Brief Summary of Threat and Incident
(or attach a copy of the Stage 1 Threat Assessment Incident Report)

Date of Incident: Target(s) of threat: Description of incident or concern: Who was present? Where did the incident occur? What happened? Response to incident?   Was there police involvement? If so, were charges laid?

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

Name and affiliation of individuals participating in Level II Threat Assessment:

Name:	Organization/agency and contact information:

Recommendations arising from the Level II Threat Assessment
(Include information about all those that apply):

Student:
Parent:
School staff:
School Board staff:
Community Service Provider:
Medical professional (family doctor, psychiatrist etc.):
Other:

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

York Region District School Board
Notice of Threat Assessment

The student named below has been the subject of a threat assessment while attending:

_____
(name of school)

Name of Student: (*please <u>print</u> clearly*)	
Date of Birth:	**Student Identification #:**

Parent/Guardian and Contact Information:

Mother/Legal Guardian:	**Father/Legal Guardian:**
Address: _____ **City:**_____**Prov.**_____ *Telephone:* *Home:* _____ *Work:* _____	**Address:** _____ **City:**_____**Prov.**_____ *Telephone:* *Home :*_____ *Work:* _____
Date of incident:	**Date Form filled out:** **Date *Threat Assessment Notice* filed in OSR:**

Relevant information pertaining to this threat assessment is filed at the Community Education Centre designated for the student's school. Information is also filed in the student's confidential psychology file.

Report completed by:

Name: _____ **Position:** _____ **Date:** _____

Distribution: 1 copy OSR, 1 copy Supervisory Officer, 1 copy Chief Psychologist,1 copy parent/guardian

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

Name of School Principal: _____

Contact information: (telephone #) _____

Name of Supervisory Officer for the school: _____

Contact information: (telephone #) _____

Information filed at: (check one)

☐ **CEC West**　　☐ **CEC East**　　☐ **CEC North**　　☐ **CEC Central**
　(905)764-6830　　　　(905)940-7800　　　　(416)324-2902　　　　(905)895-7480

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

SCHOOL READINESS – GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

GETTING STARTED

<u>Schools need to develop awareness and preparedness prior to the implementation of Stage I *Studen*t *Threat Assessment and Intervention* Protocol.</u>

It is essential that each school have in place a school team that is trained to respond should a threat occur. The purpose of this team is to come together in the face of a possible threat to gather information, analyze its potential and to design a course of action. Team members are also responsible for the training of school staff, development of an action plan, including intervention strategies, and to act as an action team to gather data alongside the administration.

1. **IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT and INTERVENTION TEAM MEMBERS**(To be facilitated on an annual basis)

   School-based Threat Assessment and Intervention Team membership must include:

   - School administrator(s)
   - York Region District School Board Psychological Services Staff and/or Social Work Staff
   - York Regional Police

   Other team members providing support may also include members from:

   - School Support Staff
   - Student and Community Liaisons
   - Regional Special Education staff

2. **BOARD TRAINING**

   At least one member of the School Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Team must receive training in threat assessment offered by the board.

3. **THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

   The School Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Team will work together when there is a need to address a perceived threat or situation in which there is the potential of violence.

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

Critical in the response to a threat are the following four questions:

1. How much time do we have, given the threat situation?
2. Who will be interviewed?
3. What order will we interview them in?
4. Who will interview whom?

The School Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Team will be able to assist in:

- developing the logistics of facilitating a team meeting (i.e., on calls, delegation of tasks, protocol of contacting team members, etc.);
- determining student baseline behaviours (i.e., determining the context within which threats occur – personality of student, family dynamics, school dynamics, social dynamics);
- data gathering and documentation techniques;
- ensuring that all school staff have an understanding of the process for the team to carry out the in-school threat assessment; and
- developing a plan for implementing intervention strategies.

Staff will be able to:

- implement the school protocol for Threat Assessment (for example, reporting behaviour of concern immediately to school administration similar to the protocol for Reporting Children in Need of Protection – CAS);
- recognize situations that might support or trigger violence in schools; and
- employ supportive classroom intervention strategies
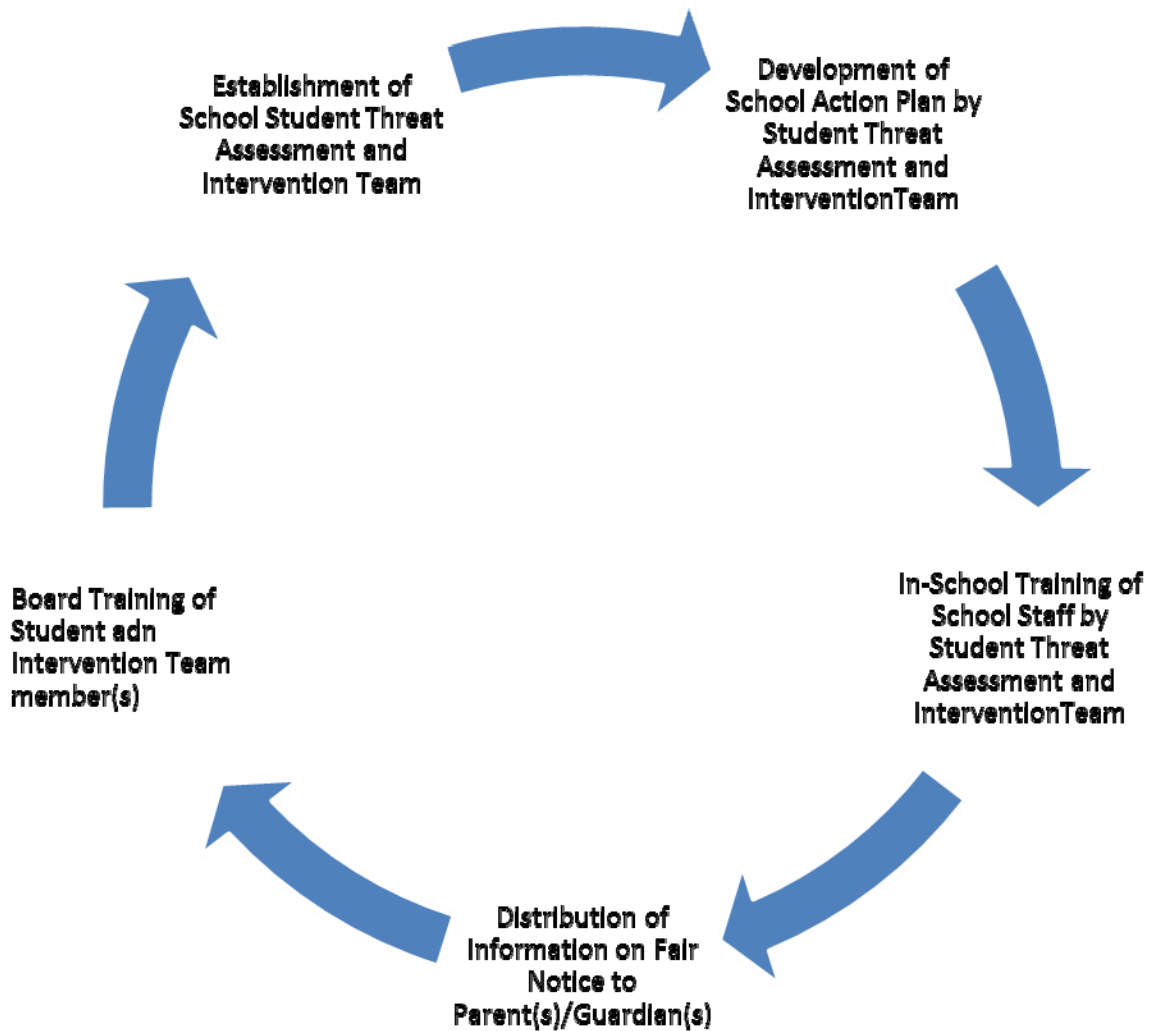
4. IN-SCHOOL TRAINING

Through staff meetings or other Professional Development opportunities, all school staff will be encouraged to develop an awareness of:

- worrisome behaviour i.e., (rumours, talk of weapons, student writing, pictures, and other forms of submitted work, etc.);
- the evolution of school violence in school communities;
- what is a threat/risk assessment;
- the types of threats, direct, indirect, veiled and conditional;
- levels of risk: high, medium, low, worrisome behaviour;
- the impact of trauma on schools and communities; and
- relevant data necessary for staff i.e., graffiti, colloquialisms, language used by gangs, community activity, etc. (Police And School Board)

5. Identification and FAIR NOTICE

Schools will distribute information regarding *Fair Notice* to the community at the commencement of the school year informing parents and guardians of the threat assessment protocol

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

ANNUAL SCHOOL READINESS

Establishment of School Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Team

Development of School Action Plan by Student Threat Assessment and InterventionTeam

In-School Training of School Staff by Student Threat Assessment and InterventionTeam

Distribution of Information on Fair Notice to Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Board Training of Student adn Intervention Team member(s)

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

APPENDIX H

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Does the School Administrator need to obtain parent or youth permission to proceed with a Threat Assessment?

No, parent/guardian or youth permission is not required to *proceed* with a threat assessment.

a) Despite the restrictions contained in the **Education Act,** records of personal information whether or not contained in the OSR are subject to the provisions of the **Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection Act.** MFIPA expressly permits a school board to disclose confidential information to the police to aid in an investigation undertaken with a view to a law enforcement proceeding or from which a law enforcement proceeding is likely to result (s.32(g)).

b) The **Supreme Court of Canada** (1998) has established legal precedent by ruling in R. versus M (M.R.) that in certain situations, the need to protect the greater student population superseded the individual rights of the student. The ruling explicitly acknowledges that school officials must be able to act quickly and effectively to ensure the safety of the students and to prevent serious violations of the school rules. Two principles relevant to V-TRA Protocol were established by the Supreme Court:

The individual charter of rights of the student is lessened to protect the collective need for safety and security of the general student population;
School officials have greater flexibility to respond to ensure the safety of the general student population in an educational setting than law enforcement officials have in a public setting.

c) Under ss.125 (6), the **Youth Criminal Justice Act** enables information in a YCJA record to be shared, within the access period, with any professional or other person engaged in the supervision or care of a young person – including a representative of any school board or school or any other educational or training institution only in limited circumstances. Information may be shared to ensure the safety of staff, students or others to facilitate rehabilitation of the young person or to ensure compliance with a youth justice court or any order of the provincial director respecting reintegration leave. Such sharing of information does not require the young person's consent.

[Sources: *Police and School Board Protocol*, September, 2011 *Assessing Violence Potential: Protocol for Dealing with High-Risk Student Behaviours,* [7th] Edition and *Community Threat Assessment Protocol, A Collaborative Response to Student Threat Making Behaviours*, Limestone District School Board, 2008]

2. When a Threat Assessment meeting is convened, who chairs the meeting?

The School Administrator/designate is responsible for chairing the *Student Threat Assessment and Intervention* meeting.

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

3. When should the School Administrator contact the threat-maker's parent(s)/guardian(s)?

In accordance with the *Education Act* and accompanying regulations, a principal is responsible for reporting to a student's parent or legal guardian. The principal/principal designate shall contact this student's parent or legal guardian regarding the alleged inappropriate behaviour requiring police involvement unless the student is eighteen years or older and requests that his/her parent/guardian not be contacted.

Communication with parents is an important aspect of determining student need and baseline behaviour. In most cases, parents should be contacted as soon as possible. There may be occasions where the School Administrator should not contact parents, for example following the direction from police, child welfare agency and/or the school board supervisor. (refer to the *Police and School Board Protocol* sections 10)

4. When should the York Regional Police be called about a student who has made a threat to harm another student?

In an emergency where there is or may be an **imminent threat** to the safety of students, staff and/or other persons, a board employee should call 911 and/or report the matter to the principal/principal designate for immediate action.

In accordance with the *Police and School Board Protocol*, the following serious and/or violent incidents **must** be reported forthwith to the police; however, upon investigation the principal would need to determine if a Threat Assessment is required:

- Criminal harassment
- Deaths on school property
- Extortion
- Gang-related incidents
- Hate and/or bias motivated incidents
- Possession or trafficking in drugs
- Possession or use of weapons
- Physical assaults causing bodily harm requiring medical attention
- Robbery
- Sexual offences
- Threatened or actual violence occurring within an intimate relationship;
- Threats of serious physical injury, including cyber-related incidents, social networking, instant messaging, text messaging, e-mail, etc.

5. Does the School Administrator contact the police if the child is less than 12 years of age?

Section 13 of the Criminal Code provides that no person under the age of 12 can be convicted of a criminal offence. Where children under the age of 12 are involved, school boards are expected to use their discretion for reporting incidents to the police except for incidents requiring mandatory notification to police (refer to *Police and School Board Protocol* section 15) Although formal charges cannot be laid against a child, police should conduct an investigation involving a Threat Assessment, and, in concert with school administrators/designate, the child (where appropriate)

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

and the child's parent or legal guardian, determine appropriate remedial or corrective measures to be taken.

6. **If the student is an exceptional needs student, does the school administrator ever activate a Threat Assessment meeting?**

As would be the case with any student presenting with threat-making behaviour, the school administrator would first gather information at the school level to determine the credibility of the threat. Consultation with regional support staff, such as the school Psychological services staff member, and/or the CEC Coordinator of Psychological Services, Area Intervention Team staff and/or Regional Autism/Behaviour Team staff, would assist the school administrator in determining any mitigating factors that may have impacted the student's behaviour. In turn, the consultation information would assist the administrator in further decision-making regarding the level of risk and the appropriate response. In the case where Area and/or Regional Team support is in place for a student, school administrators are advised to contact the Coordinator of the respective team, for consultation and assistance in making informed decisions regarding next steps.

Sometimes, students with special needs are receiving assessment, consultation and/or treatment services from community providers who are external to the Board; community providers may have valuable information to contribute when determining a student's level of risk, and the school administrator may wish to invite them to participate in the information-gathering or threat assessment process. Parents of students with special needs have valuable information to contribute as well and should be included as a collaborative partner in the threat assessment of their child where appropriate.

If upon further investigation and consultation with relevant support and/or team staff, it is determined that a student with special needs has made a credible threat, the principal or designate shall contact the police. Our police partners play an important role in the threat assessment process. Contacting a York Regional Police Youth Coordinator in an area, a York Regional V.I.P. Police officer in an elementary school, or a York Region Street Beat officer in a secondary school may be beneficial in cases involving students with special needs. The principal or designate making the initial contact shall inform the police about the student's exceptional needs.   (Refer to the *Police and School Board Protocol* sections 14)

7. **Can the school administrator/designate search a student's locker? Can the police search a student's locker? Can I search a child's backpack/purse or other personal property?**

At the commencement of each school term or semester, school administrators shall ensure that all members of the school community are made aware of the right of the school administrators to search school property, such as lockers and decks, without notice to or permission from any person.

Unless exigent circumstances make it impractical, police shall not conduct a search on school property without first notifying the principal or principal designate. When conducting a search of school property, persons, or personal property, the police shall conform to all legal requirements with respect to such searches, including the obtaining of a warrant to search in appropriate circumstances.

No board employee shall conduct a search of a person or the personal belongings of a person (such as a purse or backpack) except where there would otherwise be an imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm(refer to the *Police and School Board Protocol* sections 11, sub-section 2) unless the person consents to the search.

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol

8. **What information can the school administrator share with the police at a Threat Assessment meeting?**

MFIPA expressly permits school board staff to disclose confidential information to the police to aid in an investigation undertaken with a view to a law enforcement proceeding or from which a law enforcement proceeding is likely to result (s.32(g)).

9. *Can the school administrator share the contents of a student's OSR with police?*

The Education Act stipulates that information in the OSR is privileged for the information and use of supervisory officers and the principal and teachers of a school for the improvement of instruction of a student. Disclosure of its contents to the police may be made in the following circumstances:

- Through a search warrant requiring the surrender of an OSR to the police;
- With written permission of the parent or guardian of the student or, where the student is an adult, with the written permission of the student; or
- Through a subpoena or appropriate court order

10. **Should all school staff be expected to report knowledge of high-risk student behaviour?**

Any person in a school having knowledge of worrisome to high-risk behaviour should contact a School Administrator /designate immediately. In situations of immediate risk, staff will contact the School Administrator/designate immediately and CALL 911.   **Bill 157: Keeping Our Kids Safe at School requires notification directly to the school's administration.**

11. **What is the purpose of the Fair Notice Brochure?**

All students, staff and parents/guardians should be provided with information about the *Student Threat Assessment Protocol* so that "fair notice" is given that violence and threats of violence will not be tolerated and the school administrator will investigate the incident.

12. **How should the school community be notified about a perceived threat?**

Any official communication to the school community concerning perceived threats of a specific nature shall be conveyed only with the joint agreement of police and board communications staff.

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol