

TUSD

Tucson Unified School District

Violence Prevention Threat Assessment



Violence Prevention Threat Assessment

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This policy is intended to increase the Tucson Unified School District's (TUSD) organizational readiness to identify, assess, and mitigate threat of potential violence posed to staff and students. Threats can originate from one person to another or, can be transmitted via social media and other electronic means. TUSD is implementing protocols for assessing and managing threats to school safety. The process will be a joint evaluation of threats by District/School Administrators working with School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials.

Threat assessment is a structured group process used to evaluate the risk posed by a student or another person, typically as a response to an actual or perceived threat or concerning behavior. Threat assessment as a process was developed in response to incidents of school violence. The primary purpose of a threat assessment is to prevent targeted violence. The threat assessment process is centered upon on analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation. The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest that an individual intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that event.

A threat assessment involves evaluation and classification of the threat (i.e., unknown perpetrator, and transient versus substantive) and appropriate response & intervention, including notification and involvement of parents and a written safety plan. It should include a psychological evaluation and a suicide risk assessment as these students are often also suicidal.

Unknown Perpetrator Threat Protocol (Electronic, Social Media, Text Messages and Other On-Line Sources)

School threats are manageable and preventable. This threat classification protocol is intended to prevent targeted violence. Anytime a threat is made by an unknown perpetrator and discovered by a School, the Principal will notify School Safety, TUSD Leadership, and Law Enforcement as indicated in this policy. School officials will use this threat assessment protocol to determine if a threat is credible. Administrators will focus on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest an individual intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that event. School Administrators can use these threat protocols for other threats, which includes written on bathroom walls, phone calls, verbally communicated, and delivered by other means.

School Threat Level Classifications: Unknown Perpetrator Threat Protocol

Low Risk: Lacks Realism: A threat that poses a minimum risk to the School and public safety. Probable motive is to cause disruption. Threat is vague and indirect. Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible, or lacks detail. Vague statement made on Social Media or other on-line sources.

Medium: Risk Increased Level of Realism: Multiple sources, either written or social media threats that could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Threat is direct and feasible. Wording in the threat suggests the perpetrator has given some thought on how the



act will be carried out. May include indications of a possible place and time. No strong indication the perpetrator has taken preparatory steps, although there may be some indirect reference pointing to that possibility. Indication the perpetrator has details regarding the availability of firearms needed to support a hostile act. Increased specificity to the threat (e.g., "I'm serious!" or "I really mean this!")

High Risk: Specific and Realistic: Directly identifies a specific act against a specific target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner. Threat appears to pose an immediate and serious danger to the safety of others. Threat is direct, specific, and realistic; may include names of possible victims, specific time, and location of a device. Perpetrator provides his/her identity or group affiliation. If self identification is made by a current student, follow the Transient/Substantive protocols outlined in this Annex. Threat suggests concrete steps have been taken toward carrying out the threat.

Response Procedures:

Schools will need critical strategies that can help keep children and educators safer, and the community calmer. Depending on the severity level of a threat, schools will increase security and implement crisis communications and social media plans to communicate effectively with students, staff, parents and the community. At a minimum, the following response protocols shall be considered based on the level discovered:

Low Risk

- Notify selected school staff (heighten awareness)
- School Safety Officer in local area
- Continue investigation efforts
- Communicate to parents (optional)

Medium Risk

- Armed School Safety Officers present during school hours
- Notify School Staff certified/classified to beware of unusual behavior (heighten awareness)
- Counseling teams to respond to behavior issues in a timely manner
- Implement controlled movements of students (optional)
- Notified parents of the threat without compromising the investigation

High Risk

- Armed School Safety Officers and Law Enforcement present during school hours
- Notify School Staff certified/classified to beware of unusual behavior (heighten awareness)
- Counseling teams to respond to behavior issues in a timely manner
- Implement controlled movements of students



- Notify parents of the threat without compromising the investigation
- TUSD Leadership considered closing of school

Transient and Substantive Threat Protocols

In a situation that becomes the focus of a threat assessment inquiry or investigation, appropriate authorities gather information, evaluate facts, and make a determination as to whether a given student poses a threat of violence to a target. If an inquiry indicates that there is a risk of violence in a specific situation, authorities conducting the threat assessment collaborate with others to develop and implement a plan to manage or reduce the threat posed by the student in that situation.

Tucson Unified School District staff will follow evidence-based approaches in identifying, classifying and investigating potential threats. 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. Others who pose a real danger may not make an explicit threat.

Threats may be communicated to the intended victim or relayed 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):

Examples of Transient Threats and Disposition

- Non-genuine expression
- Non-enduring intent to harm
- Temporary feelings of anger
- Tactic in argument
- Intended as joke or figure of speech
- Resolved on scene or in office (time-limited)
- Ends with apology, retraction, or clarification

Transient Threats can easily and quickly be resolved and disposed of with the concurrence of a site Administrator and Director. Call School Safety and fill out Attachment A, Transient Threat Disposition Form located on page 20.

If the threat is determined to be a Substantive Threat, the full Threat Assessment Team process will be followed and documented.

Examples of Substantive Threats:

- Specific and plausible details such as a specific victim, time, place, and method



- Repeated over time or conveyed to differing individuals
- Involves planning, substantial thought, or preparatory steps
- Recruitment or involvement of accomplices
- Invitation for an audience to observe threat being carried out
- Physical evidence of intent to carry out threat (e.g., lists, drawings, written plan)

Substantive threats can be a serious assault (e.g., beat up or hurt) or very serious (e.g., kill, rape, inflict severe injury, or involves the use of weapons). Substantive threats require full team threat assessment to include a written behavior and management plan.

The threat assessment team focuses on actions, communications and specific circumstances that indicate an individual intends to plan or carry out an attack on another person. The team will focus on three main areas of concern identification, assessment and management.

The threat assessment team will follow a five-step process:

Step 1: Forming a Threat Assessment Team

Step 2: Transmitting information to the team by using the TUSD Threat Assessment Inquiry.

Step 3: Assessing reported information by following the predetermined question format.

Step 4: Determine the threat level.

Step 5: Intervention and management

Step 1: Forming a Threat Assessment Team

The school level threat assessment team may be composed of the following members:

- Principal/Assistant Principal
- Counselor
- School Psychologist
- School Resource Officer
- Teacher(s)
- School Safety Personnel
- Parents (optional)
- MTSS Facilitator

Step 2: Transmitting Information to the Team by utilizing the TUSD Threat Assessment Inquiry format:

Specific information will be gathered and the portion of the threat assessment inquiry format will be filled in detail. All relevant information identifying the threat and victim(s) to include names, witnesses and all available to include the following:



Personality of the student: behavior characteristics and traits.

Family Dynamics: patterns of behavior, thinking, beliefs, traditions, roles and values that exist in a family.

School Dynamics: patterns of behavior, thinking, beliefs, customs, traditions, roles, and values that exist in a school's culture.

School (Social) Dynamics: patterns of behavior, thinking, beliefs, customs, traditions, and roles that exist in the larger community where students live.

Step 3: Assessing Reported Information by following a predetermined question format:

A standard predetermined question format will be used to determine the substantive threat level. The predetermined format is a guideline only in reference to the score matrix. Focus on the student's patterns of thinking and behaviors to determine whether, and to what extent, they are moving toward an attack.

Substantive Threat Assessment Official Inquiry Format

School Safety Case# _____ Law Enforcement Case# _____

Who made the threat?

Date the threat was made:

--	--

Identification of possible victim(s)?

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Identification and interview of any witnesses to the threat:

Name	Interview Notes

Description of threat (be very specific):



Type of threat?

Direct	Indirect	Veiled	Conditional
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Reason for the threat:

Means/Weapon/Method of threat:

Date/Time/Place of where threat will occur?

Specific information about the plan or preparations taken by the aggressor to carry out the threat?

Threat maker (s):

Personality traits:

Family Dynamics:



School Dynamics:

Social Dynamics:

Step 4: Determine the Threat Level

Please see the example below. There are predetermined questions and each question is scaled on a point system. The scale is meant to measure the severity and frequency of an alleged threat. Threat Assessment team members should rate the threat based on all known information. The threat may be direct, indirect, verbal, non-verbal, written, or electronic. They may target an individual, a particular group on campus, the entire school, or the community. Each question could have a different score based upon the amount of sub questions. The total score will determine the severity of the threat level.

(EXAMPLE) Has the student engaged in attack-related behaviors? These behaviors might include.
1) Developing an attack idea or plan; NO
2) Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons; YES, One Point
3) Casing or checking out possible sites and areas for attack; YES One Point
4) Rehearsing attacks or ambushes. NO
Circle rating level; 1 2 3 4 Total:2 Circle rating should be 2

Notes: If questions are non-applicable award zero points.

Substantive Threat Assessment Question Format:

1. What are the student’s motive(s) and goals?

- 1) What motivated the student to make the statements or take the actions that caused him or her to come to attention?
- 2) Does the situation or circumstance that led to these statements or actions still exist?
- 3) Does the student have a major grievance or grudge? Against whom?
- 4) What efforts have been made to resolve the problem and what has been the result?
- 5) Does the potential attacker feel that any part of the problem is resolved or see any alternative?

Circle rating level; 1 2 3 4 5



2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?

- 1) What, if anything, has the student communicated to someone else (targets, friends, other students, teachers, family, others) or written in a diary, journal, or website concerning his or her ideas and/or intentions?

Circle rating level; 1

3. Has the subject shown inappropriate interest in any of the following?

- 2) School attacks or attackers;
- 3) Weapons (including recent acquisition of any relevant weapon).
- 4) Incidents of mass violence (terrorism, workplace violence, mass murderers).

Circle rating level; 1 2 3

4. Has the student engaged in attack-related behaviors? These behaviors might include?

- 1) Developing an attack idea or plan;
- 2) Making efforts to acquire or practice with weapons;
- 3) Casing or checking out possible sites and areas for attack;
- 4) Rehearsing attacks or ambushes.

Circle rating level; 1 2 3 4



5. Does the student have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?

- 1) Does the student's thinking and behavior indicate interest in targeted violence?
- 2) Does the student have the means, e.g., access to a weapon, to carry out an attack?

Circle rating level; 1 2

6. Is the student experiencing hopelessness, desperation and/or despair?

- 1) Is there information to suggest that the student is experiencing desperation and/or despair?
- 2) Has the student experienced a recent failure, loss and/or loss of status?
- 3) Is the student known to be having difficulty coping with a stressful event?
- 4) Is the student now, or has the student ever been, suicidal or "accident-prone"?
- 5) Has the student engaged in behavior that suggests that he or she has considered ending their life?

Circle rating level; 1 2 3 4 5

7. Does the student have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?

- 1) Does this student have at least one relationship with an adult where the student feels that he or she can confide in the adult and believes that the adult will listen without judging or jumping to conclusions? (Students with trusting relationships with adults may be direct away from violence and despair and toward hope.)
- 2) Is the student emotionally connected to – or disconnected from – other student?
- 3) Has the student previously come to someone's attention or raised concern in a way that suggested he or she need intervention or supportive services?

Circle rating level; 1 2 3



8. Does the student see violence as an acceptable- or desirable- or the only way to resolve problems?

- 1) Does the setting around the student (friends, fellow students, parents, teachers, adults) explicitly or implicitly support or endorse violence as a way of resolving problems or disputes?
- 2) Has the student been “dared” by others to engage in an act of violence?

Circle rating level; 1 2

9. Is the student’s conversation and “story” consistent with his or her actions?

- 1) Does information from collateral interviews and from the student’s own behavior confirm what the student says is going on?

Circle rating level; 1

10. Are other people concerned about the student’s potential for violence?

- 1. Are those who know the student concerned that he or she might take action based on violent ideas or plans?
- 2. Are those who know the student concerned about a specific target?
- 3. Have those who know the student witnessed recent changes or escalations in mood and behavior?

Circle rating level; 1 2 3

11. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of an attack?

- 1) What factors in the student’s life and/or environment might increase or decrease the likelihood that the student will attempt to mount an attack at school?
- 2) What is the response of other persons who know about the student’s ideas or plan to mount an attack? (Do those who know about the student’s ideas actively discourage the



student from acting violently, encourage the student to attack, deny the possibility of violence, passively collude with attack, etc.?)

Circle rating level; 1 2

Determine the Threat Level Score

Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Total of 0-18	Total of 18-26	Total of 26 and higher

Step 5: Intervention and Management

A threat assessment involves evaluation and classification of the threat (i.e., low, medium, high) and appropriate response and intervention, including notification and involvement of parents and a written safety plan. Determine if the threat level by evaluating the available information. If a threat is vague and no specific information available, then it should be considered low and not considered as severe as a medium or high threat. If a medium threat is determined as a result of an argument or conflict, the administrator can involve other team members in helping address and resolve the problem.

It should include a mental health evaluation and a suicide risk assessment as these students are often also suicidal. It is important to act quickly if the team is concerned about a threat. Steps to take can include contacting the appropriate school administrator, school safety, the school crisis team leader, the school-employed mental health professional and/or local law enforcement immediately.

A very serious threat is considered a high-level incident and usually involves a weapon and is a threat to kill, rape, or inflict severe injury. The distinction between medium and high threats should be based on the intended severity of injury.

In the case of any threat, the team should implement immediate protective actions that depend on the circumstances of the threat, how immediate it could happen, as well as where the attack is planned to take place. The team should notify the intended victim and the victim's parent.

High level threats require immediate actions to assure the threat is not carried out. The team should determine the most appropriate placement which may include suspension from school pending a comprehensive safety evaluation. This evaluation will include a psychological assessment and law enforcement involvement. The team will create a written safety plan to protect the potential victim and to address the student's educational needs. A determination will



be made to return the student to school or placement in an alternative setting. The plan should describe the conditions that must be met and the procedures in place to monitor the student when he or she returns to the school setting.

School Response Procedures

Schools will need critical strategies that can help keep children and educators safer, and the community calmer. Depending on the severity level of a threat, schools will increase security and implement crisis communications and social media plans to communicate effectively with students, staff, parents and the community. At a minimum, the following response protocols will be considered anytime a threat is discovered:

Low Risk

- Daily and random check of person, backpack (clear backpack if allowed at all), and locker for any items of concern related to the threat
- Are scheduling changes needed? Is the student to return to the situation in which the threat occurred?
- Monitor attendance utilizing a check-in, check-out procedure
- Student will self-manage. (e.g., the student will request to see an administrator if he needs help with frustration).
- Identify an adult at school that the student agrees to confide in and go to as needed to help address difficulties the student may be having as a mentor (consider written no harm contract).
- Parents agreed to notify the school administration if student makes further threatening statements about the intended victim ASAP
- Encourage and/or facilitate school connectedness through participation in school based extracurricular activities.
- Optional Law Enforcement contact. (Reminder, use or threat to use a deadly weapon or dangerous instruments is a mandatory Law Enforcement referral)

Medium Risk

- Armed School Safety Officers present during school hours
- Notify School Staff certified/classified to beware of unusual behavior (heighten awareness)
- Counseling teams to respond to behavior issues in a timely manner
- Implement controlled movements of students (optional)
- Notified parents of the threat without compromising the investigation
- Identify an adult family member that the student agrees to confide in and go to as needed to address difficulties the student may be having (consider no harm contract)
- Law enforcement notification is mandatory
- Encourage and/or facilitate school connectedness through participation in school based extracurricular activities.



- Parents have agreed to make sure he does not have access materials to facilitate the implementation of the threat (i.e., inspection of bedroom and computer for evidence of plans, maps, lists, or materials to implement a violent act).
- Parents have agreed to allow law enforcement officers to search student's belongings (bedroom, computer, etc.) to help determine progress toward threat development (physical or digital plans, maps, lists, weapons etc.)
- Parents agreed to notify the school administration if student makes further threatening statements about intended victim ASAP.
- When the student arrives at school, he/she will report to the front office and check in with an administrator. The administrator will conduct any searches/checks that have been prescribed and will ask the student how he/she is doing and let the student know that he/she is available to help if the student has problems at school. (Note: The focus of this meeting is intended to build rapport rather than be of a punitive nature).
- School based guidance and/or mental health service to address any underlying psychosocial concerns related to the threatening behavior (e.g., social stress, alienation, peer conflict, coping skill development, etc.)
- Student will be referred to expedited evaluation to determine if Exceptional Student Education services are needed and a meeting should be held to discuss the results.
- Refer student for counseling, dispute mediation or other appropriate intervention.
- Take immediate precautions to protect potential victims, including notifying the victim and the victim's parents.
- Complete a written plan and revise as needed.

High Risk

- Armed School Safety Officers and Law Enforcement present during school hours
- Notify School Staff certified/classified to beware of unusual behavior (heighten awareness)
- Counseling teams to respond to behavior issues in a timely manner
- Student's teachers and office staff should be notified of the students threatening behavior and to watch out for additional threatening behavior (e.g., verbal, nonverbal, written, artistic, etc.).
- The student restricted from coming early to school or staying late. If he/she does, he/she will need to stay in the front office and be supervised until the bell rings in the morning or parent pick up in the afternoon
- The student's unsupervised time at school should be restricted, if the student leaves the classroom, the teacher should call the office and request an adult to escort the student.
- Student assigned a 1:1 aide (details: meets at bus, shadows student all day until placed back on bus) Parents have agreed to make sure he/she does not have access materials to facilitate the implementation of the threat (i.e., inspection of bedroom and computer for evidence of plans, maps, lists, or materials to implement a violent act).



- Parents have agreed to allow law enforcement officers to search students belongings (bedroom, computer, etc) to help determine progress toward threat development (physical or digital plans, maps, lists, weapons etc)
- Future internet access will be limited and/or monitored (i.e., computer use will be in a public area of the household).
- Implement controlled movements of students
- Notify parents of the threat without compromising the investigation
- Law enforcement notification is mandatory
- TUSD Leadership may consider closing of school
- Student will be referred to expedited evaluation to determine if Exceptional Student Education services are needed and a meeting should be held to discuss the results.
- Refer student for counseling, dispute mediation or other appropriate intervention.
- Take immediate precautions to protect potential victims, including notifying the victim and the victim's parents.
- Complete a written plan and revise as needed.

Develop a Student Supervision Plan

- Plan Supervisor will review the status of this plan on/Date_____.
- Disciplinary action taken
- If suspended student will be returning on Date_____.

Interventions for Safety

- Intended victim warned - parent / guardian notified/ Date_____.
- Protective Response initiated by School Team
- Suicide Assessment initiated on Date_____.
- No Harm Contract
- Daily Random check of backpack, locker, pocket, purse etc.
- Parents will provide the following supervision / intervention
- Travel card and time accountability
- Late arrival / Early dismissal
- Alerting staff and teachers on need to know basis
- Behavioral Modification Plan (attach copy to this report)
- Increased supervision in following settings
- Modifications of daily schedule by_____
- Drug / Alcohol intervention with _____
- Daily/Weekly check with /Administration /CDS/Counselor/Liaison Officer
- Other
- Review of counseling and community interventions with parents
- Referral to appropriate school team to consider alternative placement i.e. Home supervision pending further assessment or action increased supervision in the following



setting(s): _____. (Note: If student is on IEP, any change in placement or Special services should be completed through Special Education Team process.)

- Referral to appropriate Special Education Team to consider
- Psych educational Evaluation / Special Education Assessment. (Note: Should be completed through Special Education Team Process.)
- CDS / School Counselor intervention including _____
- Referral to Law Enforcement/Agency/ Case number _____
- Student will self-manage. Describe _____

Other(s):

Administrator, Plan Supervisor Date: Counselor Date:

(Will maintain responsibility until reassigned or modified)

Name of School Resource Officer or School Safety Officer Date:

Consider requesting a Law Enforcement Investigation/Assessment if:

1. You are unable to confidently answer questions on this protocol.
2. You have safety concerns that are beyond your Team’s ability to supervise and secure within the building.
3. You have exhausted your building resources and would like to explore community support to assist you with supervision.

Other Considerations:

- Is student adjudicated? YES NO
- If Yes -- Name of Probation Officer _____
- Phone: _____
- Is student ward of the court or in foster placement? YES NO
- If Yes -- Name of Caseworker _____
- Are there other agencies or individuals involved with the student (counselors, clergy, Boys/Girls club, Scouting, etc.) that the parents would like involved? YES NO.
- If yes, is there signed consent for exchange of information? YES NO.



If yes, please list agencies and individuals:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Name:

Phone:



School Name:

School Phone Number:

Transient Threat Disposition Form Attachment A School

Student Information

Year:

Last Name:	First Name:	Middle Name:	Gender:	Grade:	Birth Date:
School Safety Case Number:	District Administrator:	School Safety Officer:			

Type of Transient Threat

Incident Date:	Incident Time:	Incident ID:	Entered By:	Referred By:
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Circle all that apply: Non-genuine expression / Non-enduring intent to harm / Temporary feelings of anger / Tactic in argument / Intended as joke or figure of speech / Resolved on scene or in office (time-limited) / Ends with apology, retraction, or clarification

Description of Incident:

Principal Name	Signature	Date
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The purpose of this report is to inform you of a transient threat made by your student to another student/ and or staff member. You are encouraged to discuss this incident with your child and to help prevent reoccurrence. Please sign this copy and return it to school.

<input type="checkbox"/> The type and nature of the threat was explained to the student. The student was given the opportunity to explain his/her involvement or non-involvement.	Parent/Guardian _____ (signature acknowledges receipt of form only) Student _____
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Printed by:

Date: _____ Time: _____

Tucson Unified School District