

# THREAT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

## LEVEL I

The Building Team should initiate a Level I Threat Assessment Screening when a *student makes a threat, or if there is concern that a student may be about to act out violently*. Information should be shared among all members of the Building Team, as this is essential to the effectiveness of the Threat Assessment Screening and to the development of a Supervision Plan. The Building Team is directed by the Administrator and consists of:

- Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal)
- School Psychologist, Social Worker, Nurse
- DPS Safety and Security Officer and Denver Police Department School Resource Officer
- Student Advisor, Counselor
- Teacher or other person who knows the student

This Threat Assessment Screening will guide your inquiry, document concerns, and help you develop a Supervision Plan to maximize student safety. Contact administrative offices as necessary for guidance. Actively seek information from:

- Current and *previous* school/discipline records
- Law Enforcement, Probation, Diversion, etc.
- Interviews with school staff, students, parents, the target of the threat, the student of concern
- Searches of the student(s), lockers, and cars
- Other agencies: mental health, human services, etc.
- Activities: internet histories, diaries, notebooks
- Parent interview: offer support, seek their help in understanding, clarify interest in/access to weapons

---

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_  
DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parents Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 1: Make Sure All Students Are Safe

- Appropriately detain the student(s).
- Do not allow access to coats backpacks, or lockers.
- If there is imminent danger call the Denver Police Department at 911.

### Step 2: Notify DPS Safety and Security

- Report the situation to DPS Safety and Security dispatch at 303-764-3911.
- Complete a copy of the District Incident Report and fax it to DPS Safety and Security at 303-764-3474.

### Step 3: Notify the Student's Parent(s) or Guardian(s)

- Parents/guardians have been notified of the situation and this screening.
- Parents/guardians have NOT been notified because: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Step 4: Initiate the Level I Threat Assessment Screening

The following warning signs are offered to guide the threat assessment process. The purpose of this process is to determine whether a student *poses* a threat to the safety of others. Does the student appear to have the resources, intent, and motivation to carry out the threat? Is there evidence of attack-related behaviors that suggest movement from thought to violent action? Document and discuss all warning signs that apply.

Who are the Targets of the threat? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the incident or concern. Who was present? Where did the incident occur? What happened?

---

---

---

---

- 
- Is there evidence of a plan to hurt *self* or *others*? Is the threat vague, or specific, plausible and detailed? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Violent ideation or threats conveyed in stories, diary entries, essays, letters, songs, drawings, or videos? Subtle threats, boasts, innuendos, or predictions? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Homicidal ideation? Suicidal ideation? Obsessive thoughts? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Motives* for the student's threat or behavior? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Has the student engaged in behaviors relevant to carrying out the threat? "Practice sessions"? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Interest in weapons or acts of violence? Weapon-seeking? Access to firearms? At home or friends? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Violence seen as a way to solve problems? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Difficulty controlling impulses or emotions? Are emotional reactions extreme or disproportionate to the situation? \_\_\_\_\_
  - History of disruptive behavior? Aggressive behavior? Suspension? Expulsion? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Nature of the student's achievement/academic progress? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Irrational beliefs or ideas? Mental health concerns? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student accepts responsibility for actions? Denials? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Are peers fearful of the student? Staff fearful of the student? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Drug or alcohol concerns? Nature of substance use/abuse? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Initiator or victim of harassment or bullying? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student experiencing hopelessness, personal failure, desperation, depression? \_\_\_\_\_
  - History of violence toward others, objects or property (e.g., fights, vandalism, fire setting)? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Student feels treated unfairly? Grievances, grudges? Against whom? Result of attempts to solve these problems? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Recent loss or emotional trauma? Loss of status: Shame, rejection, humiliation, failed love relationship? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Member of a closed peer group? Does the student's peer group reinforce antisocial attitudes? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Quality of support? Quality of the student's relationships with peers/adults at school? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What support will parents provide? Lack of supervision? \_\_\_\_\_
  - How will the student react to discipline in the current situation? Student's reaction to recent or past disciplinary incidents? \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 5: Review Findings with the School Building Team

Convene the school Building Team and discuss all relevant information regarding the student. As a team, ask the question: "To what extent does the student pose a threat to school/student safety?"

### **Low Level of Concern**

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

- Threat is vague and indirect.
- Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail; threat lacks realism.
- Available information suggests that the person is unlikely to carry out the threat or become violent.

### **Medium Level of Concern**

The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible.

- Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat. 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).
- No clear indication that the student of concern has taken preparatory steps (e.g., weapon, seeking), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive references pointing to that possibility. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty: "I'm serious!"
- Moderate or lingering concerns about the student's potential to act violently.

### **High Level of Concern**

The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.

- Threat is specific and *plausible*. There is an identified target. Student has the *capacity* to act on the threat.
- Information suggests concrete steps have been taken toward acting on threat. For example, information indicates that the student has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance.
- Information suggests strong concern about the student's potential to act violently.

## Step 6: Decide on a Course of Action

With the input of all Building Team members, decide on a course of action. If there is a low to medium level of concern, the student can likely be managed at school with appropriate (increased) supervision.

### **Low to Medium Level of Concern**

- Implement the Supervision Plan on Page 4. (*Most students can be managed at school with interventions.*)

### **Medium to High Level of Concern**

- The Building Team has determined that a Level II Threat Assessment is needed, or that Law Enforcement investigation is needed. Immediately notify DPS Safety and Security and Threat Assessment Team dispatch at 303-764-3911.
- If there is imminent danger, call the Denver Police Department at 911 (e.g., a gun is found).
- While awaiting contact from the Level II, Student Threat Assessment Team (STAT), complete the Supervision Plan below and use it to provide for student safety. Document all interim steps take by the Building Team.

The results of this screening do not predict specific episodes of violence, nor are they a foolproof method of assessing an individual's potential to harm others. The purpose of this screening is to identify circumstances that may increase the risk for potential violence and to assist school staff in developing a safety and supervision plan.

The Denver Public Schools acknowledges the significant contributions of Emergency Management Committee members Christopher Saiz, Ph.D., School Psychologist, Threat Assessment Team; Patricia Lopez, M.A., Program Manger, Psychological Services; and Ed Ray, Chief of Security in the development of this Threat Assessment Screening protocol. This Threat Assessment Screening is guided by findings and recommendations published in the *Safe School Initiative, Threat Assessment in Schools* (U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Secret Service, 2002), *Threat Assessment: An Approach to Prevent Targeted Violence* (National Institute of Justice, 1995), and *The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective* (Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, 1999) in addition to other sources.

## Step 7: Develop an Action and Supervision Plan

Use the following Supervision Plan to address all concerns identified during the Level I screening.

### SCHOOL (attach additional pages as needed)

- Disciplinary action taken:** \_\_\_\_\_
- If suspended, student will return on:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Intended victim warned and/or parents or guardian notified.
- Suicide assessment initiated on: \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_
- Contract not to harm self or others created (please attach).
- Alert staff and teachers on a need-to-know basis.
- 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.
- Increased supervision in these settings: \_\_\_\_\_
- Modify daily schedule by: \_\_\_\_\_
- Behavior plan (attach a copy to this Threat Assessment Screening).
- Intervention by support staff (Psychologist, Social Worker,, Counselor).
- Identify precipitating/aggravating circumstances, and intervene to alleviate tension. Describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Drug and/or alcohol intervention with:
- Referral to IEP team to consider possible Special Education assessment.*
- If Special Education or 504 student, review goals and placement options.*
- If Special Education student, refer to Alternative Resources Team to consider change in placement.*
- Review community-based resources and interventions with parents or caretakers.
- Maintain permission to share information with community partners such as counselors and therapists
- Other action: \_\_\_\_\_

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS (attach additional pages as needed)

- Parents will provide the following supervision and/or intervention: \_\_\_\_\_
- Parents will: \_\_\_\_\_

Monitor this Supervision Plan regularly and modify it as appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator, Plan Supervisor  
(Maintains responsibility until reassigned or modified)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Psychologist, Social Worker, Advisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Other (please specify title)

## Step 8: FAX this completed screening to Safety and Security, (303) 764-3474

- File this copy in the student's discipline folder. Do not destroy this copy.