

Walla Walla Public Schools

BOARD POLICY

Policy No. 3225

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SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT

The District is committed to providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. This policy establishes a school-based threat assessment program to provide for timely and methodical school-based threat assessment and management.

Student behavior, rather than a student's demographic or personal characteristics, will serve as the basis for a school-based threat assessment.

The threat assessment process is distinct from student discipline procedures. The district will not impose suspension or expulsion, including emergency expulsion, *solely* for investigating student conduct or conducting a threat assessment. However, nothing in this policy precludes district personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat, including imposing an emergency expulsion, if the district has sufficient cause to believe that the student's presence poses an immediate and continuing danger to other students or school personnel or an immediate and continuing threat of material and substantial disruption of the educational process.

Structure of Threat Assessment Teams

The superintendent shall establish and ensure the training of a multidisciplinary, multiagency threat assessment team to serve district schools. As the threat assessment team must be multidisciplinary and multiagency, it might include persons with expertise in:

- Counseling, such as a school counselor, a school psychologist and/or school intervention specialist
- Law enforcement, such as a school resource officer
- School administration, such as a principal or other senior administrator
- Other district or school staff
- Community consultant
- Special education teachers
- Practicing educational staff member.

Not every multidisciplinary team member need participate in every threat assessment. When faced with a potential threat by, or directed towards, a student receiving special education services, the threat assessment team must include a team member who is a special education teacher or administrator.

Although parents, guardians, or family members are often interviewed as part of the threat assessment process, neither the student nor the student's family members are part of the threat assessment team.

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Function of Threat Assessment Team

Each threat assessment team member, whether a teacher, counselor, school administrator, other school staff, contractor, consultant, or other individual, functions as a “school official with a legitimate educational interest” in educational records controlled and maintained by the district. The district provides the threat assessment team access to educational records as specified by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). No member of a threat assessment team, including district/school-based members and community resource/law enforcement members, shall use any student record beyond the prescribed purpose of the threat assessment team or re-disclose records obtained by being a member of the threat assessment team, except as permitted by FERPA.

The threat assessment team:

- Identifies and assesses the behavior of a student that is threatening, or potentially threatening, to self, other students, staff, school visitors, or school property. Threats of self-harm or suicide unaccompanied by threats of harm to others should be promptly evaluated according to Policy 2145 – Suicide Prevention.
- Gathers and analyzes information about the student’s behavior to determine a level of concern for the threat. The threat assessment team may conduct interviews of the person(s) who reported the threat, the recipient(s) or target(s) of the threat, other witnesses who have knowledge of the threat, and where reasonable, the individual(s) who allegedly engaged in the threatening behavior or communication. The purpose of the interviews is to evaluate the individual’s threat in context to determine the meaning of the threat and intent of the individual. The threat assessment team may request and obtain records in the district’s possession, including student education, health records, and criminal history record information. The purpose of obtaining information is to evaluate situational variables, rather than the student’s demographic or personal characteristics.
- Determines the nature, duration, and level of severity of the risk and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will mitigate the risk. The threat assessment team will not base a determination of threat on generalizations or stereotypes. Rather, the threat assessment team makes an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment, best available objective evidence, or current medical evidence as applicable;
- Communicates lawfully and ethically with each other, school administrators, and other school staff who have a need to know particular information to support the safety and well-being of the school, its students, and its staff; and
- Timely reports its determination to the superintendent or designee.

Depending on the level of concern determined, the threat assessment team develops and implements intervention strategies to manage the student’s behavior in ways that promote a safe, supportive teaching, and learning environment, without excluding the student from the school.

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In cases where the student whose behavior is threatening or potentially threatening also has a disability, the threat assessment team aligns intervention strategies with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or the student's plan developed under section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973 (section 504 plan) by coordinating with the student's IEP team or section 504 plan team. Although some of the functions of a school-based threat assessment may run parallel to the functions of a student's IEP team or 504 plan team, school-based threat assessments remain distinct from those teams and processes.

Data Collection, Review and Reporting

The superintendent shall establish procedures for collecting and submitting data related to the school-based threat assessment program that comply with OSPI's monitoring requirements, processes, and guidelines.

Cross References:

2121 – Substance Abuse Program

2145 – Suicide Prevention

2161 – Special Education and Related Services for Eligible Students

2162 – Education of Students With Disabilities Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

3143 – District Notification of Juvenile Offenders

3231 – Student Records

3432 – Emergencies

3241 – Student Discipline

4210 – Regulation of Dangerous Weapons on School Premises

4310 – District Relationships with Law Enforcement and other Government Agencies

4314 – Notification of Threats of Violence of Harm

Legal References;

Chapter 28A.300 RCW

Chapter 28A.320 RCW

CFR 34, Part 99, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations

Adopted: July 21, 2020