

REGULATION

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: GAD, GAD-RA, JH, JH-RA, JN

Responsible Office: DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

STUDENT BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENTS

A. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the appropriate preventive or corrective measures for student behavioral threat assessments.

B. BACKGROUND

The goal of the student behavioral threat assessment process is to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to help maintain a safe and secure school environment, help protect and support potential victims, and provide assistance and resources, as needed, to the student being assessed.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. ***Behavioral Threat Assessment*** – a structured group process used to identify, assess, and manage the risk of threats of targeted violence posed by an individual or group.
2. ***Eligible Student*** – a student who is 18 years of age or older, or a student who is married and, therefore, has the same rights as those granted to the student's parent as defined in Policy JH - Student Records.
3. ***Imminent Threat*** – a threat in which an individual or situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward others that requires containment and action to protect identified or identifiable target(s); and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that requires intervention.
4. ***Threat*** – an expression of intent to cause physical harm to another individual. A threat may be expressed or communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means; and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed or communicated to a third party, and regardless of whether the intended victim is aware of the threat. A threat may be direct or indirect.

- a. ***Transient/Low Risk Threat*** – a threat that does not express a lasting intent to harm someone, in which it is determined that the individual or situation does not appear to pose a threat of serious harm to self or others. A threat is transient/low risk only if it can be quickly and easily resolved. It may be handled by the ordinary school disciplinary process at the discretion of the school administration.
 - b. ***Serious Substantive/Moderate Risk Threat*** – a threat that expresses a continuing intent to harm someone or exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention. A serious substantive/moderate risk threat may also involve a parallel school disciplinary process.
 - c. ***Very Serious Substantive Threat/High Risk Threat*** – a threat that involves using a weapon or a threat to kill, rape, or inflict severe injury upon someone. The individual or situation appears to pose a threat of serious harm, exhibits behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm and efforts to acquire the capacity to carry out the plan; and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that requires intervention. A very serious substantive/high risk threat may also involve a parallel school disciplinary process.
5. ***Student Services Team Members*** – pupil personnel workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and Anne Arundel County Department of Health school health professionals.
 6. ***Threat Assessment*** – a comprehensive process which emphasizes an appraisal of observed or reasonably observable behavior in order to identify a potentially dangerous or violent situation, assess such behavior and situation, and address, assess and manage the behavior and situation.
 7. ***Volunteer*** – an individual who, working under staff supervision, contributes service to the school system remuneration.

D. PROCEDURES

1. Overview

- a. AACPS employees and volunteers shall immediately report to the principal or the principals' designee expressions of intent to harm another individual as well as concerning communications or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence
- b. The principal or the principal's designee shall immediately report any expression of intent to harm another individual as well as concerning communications or concerning behaviors that suggest an individual may intend to commit an act of violence that may constitute a criminal offense to law enforcement and the

parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who is alleged to have committed the threat, communication, or behavior.

2. **Central Office Behavioral Threat Assessment Team**

- a. There is a Central Office Behavioral Threat Assessment Team (Central Office Team) comprised of:
 - i. The AACPS Mental Health Services Coordinator;
 - ii. The Director of Student Services;
 - iii. Additional representatives from the Division of Student Support Services, as needed;
 - iv. A representative from the Office of Safe and Orderly Schools;
 - v. A representative from the Office of School Security; and
 - vi. A representative from the Division of Human Resources.
- b. The Central Office Team shall:
 - i. Provide oversight to the school-based behavioral threat assessment teams.
 - ii. Develop procedures for effective information sharing between AACPS and community mental health and law enforcement agencies;
 - iii. Assess the effectiveness of the threat assessment process throughout the school system;
 - iv. Recommend changes to policies and procedures, as needed, to maintain an effective threat assessment process that reflects known best practices;
 - v. Provide guidance to AACPS employees and students regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat by conducting training, broadly disseminating relevant information, and ensuring access to consultation; and
 - vi. Support schools and school-based behavioral threat assessment teams.

3. School-Based Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams

- a. There are school-based behavioral threat assessment teams (school-based teams) comprised of:
 - i. A principal;
 - ii. At least one student services team member;
 - iii. A representative from law enforcement, if appropriate;
 - iv. A representative from the Divisions of Special Education who is familiar with the student, if appropriate.
- b. A school-based team shall conduct regular assessments and interventions, including mechanisms for identifying and assessing potentially dangerous or violent situations, and intervening with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of AACPS schools, students, or employees. The responsibilities of a school-based team include:
 - i. Identifying members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; and
 - ii. Implementing AACPS policies in an effective manner for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior poses or may pose a threat to the safety of AACPS employees staff or students.
- c. A school-based team may request and obtain criminal history information, where it is deemed appropriate and in accordance with State and federal laws and regulations. A school-based team shall also have access to student education and health records in possession of the school in order to perform its functions and in accordance with State and federal laws and regulations.

2. Suicidal Threats and Gestures

An AACPS employee or volunteer who becomes aware of a student who implies, states, writes about, or communicates possible suicide threats or makes suicidal gestures shall immediately report this information and address the situation in accordance with Policy GAD and Regulation GAD-RA – Confidential Communications: Reporting At-Risk Student Behaviors.

3. Self-Injurious Behavior

An AACPS employee or volunteer who becomes aware of a student engaging in self-injurious behavior shall immediately report this information and address the situation in accordance with Policy GAD and Regulation GAD-RA – Confidential Communications: Reporting At-Risk Student Behaviors.

4. Threat to Harm Others or Property

- a. Student threats shall be reported to the principal or the principal's designee immediately upon becoming aware of the threat. No judgments regarding the seriousness or nature of the threat shall be made by the reporter. Staff shall accompany the student to the office, if compliant. If not compliant, the principal or the principal's designee shall be summoned to the location.
- b. The student who expressed the threat, individuals who received or heard the threat, and any other pertinent individuals shall be interviewed independently by the principal or the principal's designee to obtain specific information regarding the threat. The principal or the principal's designee shall make a preliminary determination of the level of threat. Once a preliminary level of threat has been determined, the principal or the principal's designee shall follow the appropriate procedures as outlined in paragraphs d., e., and f. of this subsection.
- c. Resolution and closure of a behavioral threat assessment shall be documented in accordance with AACPS requirements.
- d. If the threat is a transient/low risk threat, the principal or the principal's designee shall:
 - i. Determine whether disciplinary action, in accordance with the *AACPS Code of Student Conduct*, will be taken against the student who expressed the threat;
 - ii. Develop student supports, as appropriate, considering both the student who expressed the threat and the intended victim(s);
 - iii. Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student who expressed the threat and intended victim(s), if appropriate, as soon as practicable. If the intended victim is an eligible student, only notify the intended victim(s); and
 - iv. Notify the appropriate staff.
- e. If the threat is a serious substantive/moderate risk or very serious substantive/high risk threat, the principal or the principal's designee shall:

- i. Consult with the Office of School Security and school resource officer (SRO) if there is an SRO assigned to the school;
 - ii. Ensure that the Office of School Security inform appropriate Central Office staff;
 - iii. Determine whether disciplinary action should be taken against the student who expressed the threat in accordance with the *AACPS Code of Student Conduct*;
 - iv. Mobilize the school-based team, as needed, conduct a threat assessment, and develop an action plan, if appropriate;
 - v. Contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student who expressed the threat as soon as practicable. Notify the intended victim(s) and the intended victim's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the threat. If the intended victim(s) is an eligible student, only notify the intended victim(s); and
 - vi. Notify the appropriate staff.
- f. If the individual appears to pose an imminent threat of serious violence, the principal or the principal's designee shall notify law enforcement in accordance with local school system policies on critical incident response.
- g. If the threat occurs when the student is not in the presence of staff, including social media posts or a class assignment:
- i. Staff shall report the situation to the principal or the principal's designee; and
 - ii. The principal or the principal's designee shall make a preliminary determination of the level of threat. Once a preliminary level of threat has been determined, the principal or the principal's designee shall follow the appropriate procedures for the level of threat as outlined in paragraphs d., e., and f. of this subsection.
 - iii. If staff is unable to contact the principal or the principal's designee, staff shall contact law enforcement.
 - iv. The principal or principal's designee shall notify the Office of School Safety.
 - v. Upon the student's return to school, the principal or principal's designee shall engage the school-based team, if appropriate.

- h. If the threat occurs during a school-sponsored field trip or after hours school-sponsored event:
 - i. The student shall be supervised at all times by staff.
 - ii. Staff shall report the situation to the principal or the principal's designee.
 - iii. The principal or the principal's designee shall make a preliminary determination of the level of threat. Once a preliminary level of threat has been determined, the principal or the principal's designee shall follow the appropriate procedures for the level of threat as outlined in paragraphs d., e., and f. of this subsection.
 - iv. If staff is unable to contact the principal or the principal's designee, staff shall contact law enforcement.
 - v. The principal or principal's designee shall notify the Office of School Safety.
 - vi. Upon the student's return to school, the principal or principal's designee shall engage the school-based team, if appropriate.

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