

**RESPONSE TO THREATS OF HARM**

The School Board, faculty, staff, parents, and community are committed to providing a safe place for students and all members of the North Hampton School community. Threats against students and members of the faculty and staff are taken seriously and will be promptly, decisively, and reasonably responded to. Community services (police, fire, etc.) shall be utilized when appropriate or required. This Policy establishes the North Hampton School's responses to threats of injury or harm.

**Definitions**

THREAT: A threat is a communication or behavior that suggests a person may intend to harm others, or self. The threat may be spoken, written, or gestured and is considered a threat regardless of whether it is observed or communicated to the target(s) of the threat or observed by or communicated to a third party and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat existing in any fashion, whether orally, visually, in writing or electronically.

THREAT LEVELS: The Social Response Team (SRT) shall conduct its assessment and categorize the threat into three levels. The levels are

*Level 1 No Threat Risk*: A no-risk threat may include misunderstandings, poor decision making, false accusations, etc. The definition of a threat has not been met, no intent to cause harm to others or self. No response to threat is developed or implemented by the SRT.

*Level 2 Threat Risk*: The designation of risk threat is one in which the definition of threat has been met—intent to cause harm to others or self. The immediacy of the threat and the extent of the threat of harm are factors that are considered as the SRT develops its response plan.

*Level 3 Imminent Threat Risk*: An imminent threat exists when the person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward others or self that require immediate containment and action to protect identified target(s). This level of threat requires an immediate 911 call.

THREAT ASSESSMENT: Threats will be immediately assessed to determine the Threat Level based on two questions:

- (1) how credible and serious is the threat itself?
- (2) And to what extent does the threatener appear to have the resources, intent, and motivation to carry out the threat?

**Adopted:**           **DATE:**  
**Reviewed:**       **June 17, 2014**  
**Revised:**  
**Cancellation:**

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Threat assessment shall be conducted by the Social Response Team (SRT), and will follow an integrated systems approach. This is a coordination of relationships with agencies and service systems within the school (e.g., school mental health counselor, guidance counselor, administration) and community (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare) to identify, assess, and manage students who are on the path to carrying out an act of violence.

SOCIAL RESPONSE TEAM: The Social Response Team may consist of the principal, assistant principal, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Primary Grade Mental Health Counselor, classroom/staff member(s) knowledgeable about the perpetrator and the victim, and other personnel as needed. The administration shall decide on the constitution of the SRT for any given threat. Law enforcement shall be part of the team as necessary, appropriate, or required.

**Foundation for the Threat Response**

Six principles form the foundation of the threat assessment process. These principles are:

1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior.
2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.
3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
4. Effective threat assessment is based upon facts rather than on characteristics or traits.
5. An integrated systems approach should guide threat assessment inquiries and investigations.
6. The central question in a threat assessment inquiry or investigation is whether a student poses a threat, not whether the student has made a threat.\* See Safe School Initiative

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**Response**

*A. Imminent Threat Risk (Level 3)*

1. When a report is received of a threat by a staff member the individual who allegedly made the threat shall be immediately removed from the situation. The intended victim(s) shall be immediately checked on to ensure their safety and may be removed if necessary. The principal shall be notified as soon as practical.
2. If the preliminary assessment is that the threat is imminent and there is a high likelihood of immediate violence and/or injury, the involved staff member shall immediately call 911 for emergency services. Appropriate emergency procedures shall be instituted to protect students and staff.

*B. Response to Threat Levels*

1. If there is no immediate danger, the Social Response Team (SRT) shall be convened as soon as practical.
2. A Student Threat Assessment and Response Report (HOTLINK to REPORT) shall be started and the Guidelines for the Social Response Team (HOTLINK to GUIDELINES) shall guide the assessment.
3. The parents/guardians of the threatener shall be notified of the report and assessment. They will be required to participate in a meeting with the SRT.
4. The intended victim(s) and their parents must be notified of the seriousness of the threat, the identity of the student who made the threat, and what actions are being taken to ensure student safety. The intended victim and his/her parents should be notified before the student who made the threat leaves school grounds.
5. The SRT shall conduct its assessment and determine the threat level. Appropriate responses to the threat shall be taken within three (3) school days of receipt of the threat. A member of the SRT shall be designated to monitor the status of the student and to notify the SRT of any change in status or additional information that would be cause for a reassessment.
6. There will be a designated staff community liaison that communicates with parents and the community about threats to the school community. The staff community liaison shall be the official spokesperson on the threat. Communications will be timely. Relevant facts will be shared but confidential information regarding students shall not be shared. The SRT determines the relevancy of the facts necessary to protect the school community from harm and to quell rumors, while balancing the required confidentiality of student information.

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Sources for Policy

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Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. (2013). *Threat assessment in Virginia public schools: Model policies, procedures, and guidelines*. Available at <http://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcscs/documents/ThreatAssessmentPoliciesProceduresGuidelines-Final.pdf>.

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