

HighTech LA
17111 Victory Blvd.
Van Nuys, CA 91406

Threat Assessment Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to outline administrative procedures governing school violence and threats involving students.

Definitions:

School Violence

School violence falls on a continuum that recognizes severity, frequency, and recency. Violence can be impacted by individual characteristics, environmental stressors, and/or the relationship between involved parties. It is any act of physical, verbal, or emotional aggression, and represents a continuum of behaviors that includes threats, violence, harassment, bullying, stalking, vandalism, emotional abuse, intimidation, and other forms of conduct that create anxiety, fear, and a climate of distrust in the educational setting.

Threat

The expression of a willful intent or desire to inflict harm that would likely result in death, bodily injury, physical damage to property, or disruption to institutions or school-sponsored activities. A threat may be direct, indirect, verbal, non-verbal, written, or electronic and may target an individual, a particular group on campus, the entire school, or the community.

Bullying

Any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including electronic communications, and including one or more acts committed by a pupil or group of pupils, directed toward one or more pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects on a reasonable student:

1. Reasonable fear of harm to person or property of student(s)
2. Substantially detrimental effect on physical or mental health of student(s)
3. Substantial interference with academic performance
4. Substantial interference with the ability to participate in or benefit from school services, activities, or privileges.

Hate Violence

Any act punishable as a hate crime under the Penal Code, including a criminal act (threat, injury, use of force, damage or destruction of property_ committed in whole or in part, because of one or more actual or perceived characteristics of the victim: (1) disability; (2) gender; (3) nationality; (4) race or ethnicity; (5) religion; (6) sexual orientation; and/or (7) association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

Responsibilities of HTLA Employees

All HighTech LA employees are expected to :

- Adhere to the Threat Assessment Policy and act in accordance with the policy.
- Report any suspected treats to the administrator or designee immediately or as soon as possible.
- Cooperate in the investigation of complaints by providing relevant information.
 - Administrator/Designee must:
 - Establish a safe and respectful school environment.
 - Establish a multi-disciplinary school site threat assessment team.
 - Ensure that the Threat Assessment Policy is implemented.

Protocol For Responding To School Violence And Threats

The following are general procedures for the administrator/designee to respond to any reports of violence or threats in the school, at school related activities and in all areas within the school's jurisdiction. The urgency of the situation will dictate the order and applicability in which the subsequent steps are followed.

Secure Campus/Office Safety

1. Call 911 for immediate, emergency life threatening situations.
2. Call LA School Police Department (213)625-6631 or local law enforcement for assistance at the school site or school related activity.
3. Secure site and implement lockdown, if necessary.
4. Contact the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health ACCESS (800) 854-7771 for a mental health evaluation to determine risk to self or others and possible hospitalization.
5. Warn the intended victim(s) of the threat and/or take reasonable steps to protect the threatened individual(s) in the educational setting. If the targeted individual is a student, take appropriate steps to warn the parent/guardian.

6. For assistance and consultation, contact LAUSD School Mental Health, Crisis Counseling and Intervention Services at (213) 241-3841.

Investigate

Prior to convening a multi-disciplinary threat assessment team, designated staff from the team should gather background information that includes:

1. Student information (name, date of birth, address)
2. Emergency information (family contact, health care provider information)
3. Attendance records
4. Student cumulative records, including IEP, psycho-educational assessment, prior school records
5. Student discipline records, including any history or discipline related to the incident
6. Student health information, including self-injurious behavior and/or suicidal ideation
7. Review of school computers and property (e.g., desks, books), as applicable, if reason exists for an administrative search
8. Statements from witnesses
9. Family situation information
10. Triggering events or other personal stressors (e.g., mental/physical health, death, divorce, economic or family stressors, relationship problems).
11. Access to weapons
12. Personal communications devices, as applicable, if reasonable suspicion exists for an administrative search
13. Other pertinent information (e.g., written material, e-mails, pictures, social network postings)

Convene Threat Assessment Team

The multi-disciplinary team may include, but not limited to, an Administrator, a LA School Police Department Officer, and a mental health professional (e.g., Psychiatric Social Worker, School Psychologist, Pupil Services and Attendance Counselor). The student making the threat, the targeted individual(s) or witness(es) should not be part of the threat assessment team meeting.

Critical roles of effective teams include:

1. Communication among all key stakeholders. The administrator/designee shall coordinate and document all actions.
2. Collaboration with other professionals across institutional boundaries, including local law enforcement, community mental health agencies, child protective services, and probation.

3. Coordination of services or prevention, early identification, and interventions.
4. Sharing of confidential information shall be restricted to those persons with a need to know basis. Information must not be discussed or divulged concerning any involved parties to any other person(s).

Assess for Risk to Self or Others

1. The administrator/designee or the designated school site threat assessment member will meet with the student to complete a risk assessment, School Violence Risk Assessment Checklist, and Suicide Risk Assessment Checklist. The questions should not be read to the student, but rather should be used as a guide while assessing the student.
2. The multi-disciplinary threat assessment team will determine the level of risk by reviewing the School Violence Risk Assessment Checklist and the Suicide Risk Assessment Checklist as needed:
 - **Low Risk** – Does not pose imminent danger to self or others; insufficient evidence for violence potential.
 - **Moderate Risk** – May pose imminent danger to self or others, but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a viable plan of action to do harm.
 - **High Risk** – Poses imminent danger to self or others with a viable plan to do harm and exhibits extreme and/or persistent inappropriate behaviors; sufficient evidence for violence potential; qualifies for immediate arrest or hospitalization.

Suspected Child Abuse

If child abuse is suspected or there is concern that contacting the parent may escalate the student's current level of risk, and/or the parents/guardians are contacted and unwilling to respond, report the incident to the appropriate child protective services agency. This report should include information about the student's suicide risk.

Determine Appropriate Action Plan

Interventions will be based upon the severity and potential risk of the threat. The action plan determined by the team should be documented and managed by the school site administrator/designee. Actions may include:

- 1..Contact with and/or apprehension of student(s) who initiated the threat.
2. Removal of student from premises.
3. Conference with student(s) initiating the threat and his/her parent(s) and consider appropriate interventions, including access to mental health services, case management, school or community resources. Other actions may include discipline, change of class(es), and/or change of school.

4. Consider the possibility that there are circumstances that might increase the likelihood of an attack that may need to be addressed. Examples of triggers may include bullying, suspension, expulsion, relationship problems, significant loss, or interpersonal conflict.
5. Warn and protect the targeted individual(s) of the threat and/or take reasonable steps to warn the parent/guardian.
6. Design support system for the targeted individual and/or student who initiated the threat, if appropriate.
7. Obtain a restraining order, when appropriate.
8. Monitor progress toward reestablishing school safety.

Additional Actions

Additional interventions may be required if the behavior falls under any of the following categories:

1. Criminal Threat (bodily harm or an immediate physical threat)
 - a. Call LA School Police Department or local law enforcement.
 - b. Warn the targeted individual(s) and their parent/guardian of the threat and/or take reasonable steps to protect the targeted individual(s) while attending school or a school related activity/event.
2. Disciplinary Action
 - a. Consult HTLA Charter Petition and LAUSD Charter Schools Division to discuss procedures for discipline and/or intervention.
 - b. If the student has an IEP, consult the appropriate staff from the Division of Special Education or Charter Operated Programs.
3. Mental Health Evaluation
 - a. While in school or at a school sponsored activity, students who present with severe mental health/behavior issues, such as depression, homicidal or suicidal ideation, should be addressed by and administrator/designee to discuss any concerns for their safety and health/mental well being.
 - i. Determine level of risk by reviewing School Violence Risk Assessment Checklist, as needed. If the behaviors are determined to be high risk, secure emergency services by calling 911, LA County Department of Mental Health ACCESS (800) 854-7771, and/or School Police (213)625-6631.
 - ii. Supervise and monitor student until appropriate assistance arrives.
 - iii. School employees should not transport students exhibiting the behaviors noted above.

- b. Contact law enforcement to conduct a welfare check, as appropriate.

Student Re-entry Guidelines

1. A student returning to school following hospitalization, including psychiatric and drug or alcohol inpatient treatment, must have written permission from the health care provider to attend school.
2. If the student has been out of school for any length of time, including mental health hospitalization, the school site administrator/designee may consider holding a re-entry meeting with key support staff, parents, and student to facilitate a successful transition. See Student Re-entry Guidelines.

Provide Resources

1. For mental/physical health services, refer the student to LAUSD School Mental Health, a community resource provider, or their health care provider.
2. For students who pose a risk to themselves, provide the 24/7 Suicide Prevention Crisis Line (877) 727-4747.

Monitor and Manage

1. The administrator/designee will monitor and manage the case as it develops and until it has been determined that the individual no longer poses an immediate threat to self or others.
2. Maintain consistent communication with appropriate parties on a need to know basis.

Document All Actions

1. Each administrator/designee shall maintain records and documentation of actions taken at the school for each case.
2. The administrator/designee notes taken during the threat assessment meeting are for use the HighTech LA attorneys. No copies of the notes shall be furnished to anyone including employees, students, or parents without permission from HTLA attorneys.
3. Note, documents and records related to the incident are considered confidential information and remain privileged to authorized personnel. These notes should be kept in a confidential file separate and apart from the student's cumulative records.

Approved: June 4, 2013

HighTech LA
Inter-Office Correspondence

Date: _____

Attorney Client Communication

RE: Threat Assessment Notes

Confidential and Privileged

These are CONFIDENTIAL NOTES for use by HighTech LA attorneys. No copies of these notes shall be furnished to anyone including employees, students, or parents without permission from HighTech LA attorneys.

