

**Wisconsin Department of Justice  
Office of School Safety**



**Guide on Developing a Threat Assessment Team and Mandatory Reporting Process**

A threat is, “an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. A threat can be spoken, written, or symbolic (FBI, 1999).”

A Threat Assessment Team is a multidisciplinary team of individuals, “who will direct, manage, and document the threat assessment process. The team will receive reports about concerning students and situations, gather additional information, assess the risk posed to the school community, and develop intervention and management strategies to mitigate any risk of harm (NTAC, 2018)”.

“The goal of a threat assessment is to identify students of concern, assess their risk for engaging in violence or other harmful activities, and identify intervention strategies to manage that risk (NTAC, 2018)”

In July of 2018, the National Threat Assessment Center released “*Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model*”, in cooperation with the United States Department of Homeland Security and the United States Secret Service. This report included 8 steps to developing an effective Threat Assessment Team in the educational environment.

1. Establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team.
  - Includes: teachers, counselors, coaches, SROs, mental health professionals, and school administrators.
  - There should be a specifically designated leader.

- There should be established protocols and procedures.
- They should meet on a regular basis.

2. Define prohibited and concerning behaviors.

- Engaging in violence
- Weapons
- Bullying/harassment
- Concerning criminal behavior
- Threats of violence

3. Create a central reporting mechanism.

- Establish one or more reporting mechanism.
- Provide training regarding behaviors of concern.
- Provide training regarding roles/responsibilities regarding reporting.
- Provide training regarding how to report behavior.

4. Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention.

- Reports regarding weapons.
- Threats of violence.
- Physical violence.
- Concern for a victim's safety.

5. Establish assessment procedures. .

- FBI Four Pronged Threat Assessment Protocol
- Standardized Risk Assessment
- Interview sources that may have information about the suspect's actions.

- Complete documentation regarding interviews, searches, dates and times.
6. Develop risk management options.
    - Ongoing individualized risk management plan.
    - Information regarding referrals to internal/external resources.
    - Engage parents in safety planning.
  7. Create and promote safe school climates.
    - Create a culture of safety and respect within the educational environment.
    - Encourage staff to create supportive relationship with students.
    - Encourage students to take part in teams/clubs based on their interests.
  8. Conduct training for all stakeholders.
    - Threat Assessment Team Training.
    - Mental health training.
    - Peer to Peer training.
    - Violence prevention training.
    - Parent training.
    - Law Enforcement training.

When school personnel are made aware of a threat, Wisconsin Act 143 now requires that it must be reported. School personnel must immediately inform law enforcement of the threat when there is a serious and imminent threat to the health or safety of a student or school employee or public. Although the legislature did not specify what constitutes a serious and imminent threat to health or safety, the risk assessment process is helpful in determining when a threat should be reported.

Examine the following chart and examples for guidance. Any threat made that falls under the category of “Medium” or “High” should be reported to law enforcement. However, if a student has a concerning pattern of behavior or has made several low level threats, it would be wise to

report this pattern to law enforcement. Please keep in mind that just because a threat is reported, does not mean that the incident will end in the citation or arrest of the threatening person.

## Levels of Risk

<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Vague	More concrete	Direct
Implausible	Some Planning	Specific
Not realistic	No Preparation	Plausible
Unlikely to carry out		Steps to Prepare

## Examples of Levels of Risk

**Low:** A student says that they are going to London to throw themselves off the London Bridge today. This is not a realistic threat, and is not likely to be carried out.

**Medium:** A girl sees a picture of her boyfriend with another girl on social media. She states on her social media profile: "I'm going to get that bitch at school tomorrow". There is a timeline for the attack, but the threat does not say what the suspect is going to do to the target. There is time to intervene as they are not in school and do not currently have access to each other.

**High:** A boy posts a picture of a firearm on his social media page. The caption states, "This is my only friend. We are both coming to school today. Let the bodies hit the floor". This is a direct and specific threat to bring a firearm to school today. It is plausible as it appears the student does possess his weapon of choice. It appears as though he has had some forethought into the attack as he has obtained the weapon and posted on social media about it.

When law enforcement responds to a threat complaint, they should take part in the threat assessment procedure and complete an investigation. If it is determined that a threat was made and thus a crime was committed, law enforcement will complete a police report and report the threat via the Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) system at the Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC). The link to complete this report can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Justice Wilenet page. Click the WISC tab and then the SAR tab. Complete the associated form and submit. Should WISC determine that more investigation would be needed regarding your report, they will contact you.

## Training

The Office of School Safety will be offering several trainings in order to provide you with all the information that you need to begin your School Safety Intervention Team. You can find all of our scheduled training dates at [Office of School Safety](#). [Subscribe to DOJ-OSS Alerts & Grant Announcements](#) in order to get the most up to date training information and announcements.