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**Board Governance Policy Cross Reference:** [1](#), [12](#), [13](#)

**Administrative Procedures Cross Reference:**

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Outside Agency Involvement](#)

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**Legal/Regulatory Reference:**

[The Public Schools Act](#), section 47.1(1), 47.1(3)

[The Education Administration Act](#), section 4(1)(p.1), (p.2), (p.3)

[Manitoba Regulation 77/2005](#), section 6 (Safe Schools Regulation)

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The Interlake School Division (ISD) is committed to creating and maintaining school environments in which students, staff, parents and others feel safe. Schools cannot ignore any threat of violence. To this end, the ISD has established a Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) protocol for responding to student threats/high-risk behaviours.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) is a multi-disciplinary process used by school and system staff to investigate specific behaviours such as threats to harm self or others. Direct threats of harm or even information that someone may be exhibiting worrisome behaviours or could be a danger can lead to a VTRA being initiated. The school and Division can activate a VTRA to determine the level of concern/threat and then respond accordingly.

A threat maker may not actually pose a risk to a target or targets; instead the threat may be a cry for help. The question for school staff is how do we determine the intent of the threat maker?

Each incident must be treated as unique. The strength of this model lies in the use of multi-disciplinary teams that investigate and evaluate all factors and contexts of the student's life and the specific incident of concern.

## **A. Stage 1: Data Collection and Immediate Risk-Reducing Intervention**

Each school should establish a school based VTRA team also known as a Stage 1 VTRA team, which includes, at a minimum, the Principal, a school counselor and a member of the local police force. The Principal will take the lead and is ultimately responsible for the safety of students. The team will work collaboratively to make the best decisions possible with the information gathered. When a Principal activates a school based Stage 1 VTRA team, he/she must inform the Superintendent/CEO or designate. The Stage 2 VTRA team may not become directly involved at this stage but will be available for consultation and support should the situation warrant it.

## **B. Stage 2: Comprehensive Risk Assessment**

After the initial level of risk is assessed and immediate risk-reducing interventions have occurred, a further risk assessment may be required. A Stage 2 VTRA team includes wider community representation. It is focused on collecting further data beyond the initial data collected by the school-based Stage 1 VTRA team. A Stage 2 VTRA team includes members of the school based VTRA team plus mental health professionals, child protection workers, probation workers and others as needed.

VTRA, whether Stage 1 or 2, has four basic steps:

1. Identify worrisome or threatening behaviour. The person making the observation initiates the VTRA process.
2. Immediately, the VTRA team conducts a violence threat risk assessment by collecting relevant data. The VTRA process does not use a profile or a checklist of behaviours to identify an individual who may be on the pathway to violence, but makes use of information gathered from social media, friends, parents, teachers, and others. Data to determine initial level of risk can often be collected in two hours or less, especially with the use of technology.
3. Using the data, determine if a threat maker actually poses a risk. This involves determining how credible the threat is and whether or not the threat maker has the resources and motivation to carry out the threat.
4. Intervene appropriately by implementing risk-reducing interventions. The interventions are designed to protect the threat maker as well as any potential targets.

The VTRA Team shall also ensure that appropriate support is provided to those against whom threats have been made and shall notify school staff and parents as required. Fortunately, the majority of threat makers do not pose a risk to others. However, all threats must be taken seriously and assessed in a timely manner.

The Team Leader shall be responsible for completing or designating the completion of a VTRA Report, available in Clevr.

## **C. Principal Responsibilities**

1. When a threat or very worrisome behavior is brought to your attention:
  - a) Make sure that no individual is in possession of a weapon and poses a serious threat to self/others. Check backpack, jacket, locker, car (if applicable) for weapons.

- b) Investigate with witnesses. What happened, what was said/done? What is the risk of immediate threat to life?
  - c) If immediate threat exists, call 911 and initiate Lockdown.
2. If no immediate risk to life:
- a) Consult with Student Services Administrator (SSA) and call together the Stage 1 Threat Assessment Team (school team and clinicians).
  - b) Review incident; team decides (with SSA's input) whether there is sufficient escalation to warrant a Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA).
  - c) If a VTRA is needed, determine who should be part of the team (for example, if CFS is involved, they will be part of the team; if probations is involved they would be, etc.).
  - d) Decide if suspension is appropriate and consider the possibility of extension.
3. Interviewing:
- a) Decide on who will do which interviews. Generally, administration interviews staff, guidance/resource interviews students, clinicians interview threat maker, parents, and sibling(s).
  - b) External partners are consulted and attend data review meeting to share the information they have. Team member with level 2 VTRA will assist with this step.
4. Following interviewing:
- a) Gather the whole team.
  - b) Everyone shares what information they have gathered.
  - c) The information is organized using the VTRA report template.
  - d) The team then considers the information gathered and makes an intervention plan. If external partners are involved, they may be part of the plan.
  - e) If they were not involved in data collection (because, for example, the student was not previously open to Community Mental Health), referrals can still be made to external agencies as part of the plan.
5. Intake Meeting:
- a) Call the parent(s)/guardians and student to invite them to an intake meeting.
  - b) The plan is shared at the meeting.
  - c) The plan will consist of both requirements and recommendations.
  - d) Depending on the age of the student, they may be present for only the last portion of the meeting.
6. Follow up:
- a) A follow-up meeting should be scheduled for within 4-6 weeks at the Intake meeting.

**See Appendix A - VTRA Flowchart**

**See Appendix B - VTRA - Fair Notice to Parents**

## Appendix A VTRA Flowchart

The decision to engage in any of the processes below is at the discretion of the Principal or designate.

<u>Worrisome Behaviour</u>		<u>Exceptional Case High Profile Behaviour</u>	<u>Threat Making Behaviour</u>	<u>Immediate Risk</u>					
<p>Majority of concerning behaviour - may include violence in drawings, writings, vague statements or uttering threats (even threats presumed to be made as a joke or in jest)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observer reports concern ASAP to Principal or designate</li> <li>▪ Principal or designate will consult with Stage 1 or Stage 2 VTRA Team as required, to determine if threat is generalized or a direct threat</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 100px;">↙</span> <span>↘</span> </div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Generalized Threat (no target or time frame)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principal, SST, RCMP (as required) meet to decide if Stage 1 VTRA Team is to be activated</li> <li>▪ Complete VTRA Incident Report Form</li> <li>▪ Develop School Plan</li> <li>▪ Continue to monitor behaviour</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Direct Threat (target specified)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stage 1 Team activated or Stage 2 VTRA as required</li> <li>▪ Contact Superintendent/CEO or designate and Student Services Administrator</li> <li>▪ Define roles and tasks</li> <li>▪ Complete VTRA Report</li> <li>▪ Develop VTRA Intervention Plan</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>		<p><b>Generalized Threat (no target or time frame)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principal, SST, RCMP (as required) meet to decide if Stage 1 VTRA Team is to be activated</li> <li>▪ Complete VTRA Incident Report Form</li> <li>▪ Develop School Plan</li> <li>▪ Continue to monitor behaviour</li> </ul>	<p><b>Direct Threat (target specified)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stage 1 Team activated or Stage 2 VTRA as required</li> <li>▪ Contact Superintendent/CEO or designate and Student Services Administrator</li> <li>▪ Define roles and tasks</li> <li>▪ Complete VTRA Report</li> <li>▪ Develop VTRA Intervention Plan</li> </ul>	<p>Worrisome behaviour occurring in a setting where there is an audience that may be traumatized</p> <p><b>Audience reaction to the incident may trigger a broader trauma response in the school and community.</b></p> <p><i>Note: Inadequate response may result in over-reacting by community and parents.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Activate Stage 1 VTRA Team or Stage 2 VTRA as required</li> <li>▪ Contact Superintendent/CEO or designate and Student Services Administrator</li> <li>▪ Complete VTRA Report</li> <li>▪ Develop VTRA Intervention Plan</li> <li>▪ If appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Send letter home to parents/SchoolMessenger</li> <li>– Facilitate a parent meeting, including RCMP and Division Office staff, to answer questions and share information</li> <li>– Organize debriefing sessions as required</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Individual has access to a weapon; making threats to destroy school (bomb or fire); is making verbal/written (i.e. internet) threats to injure or kill self or others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Report incident to Principal or designate</li> <li>▪ Notify Superintendent/CEO and Student Services Administrator</li> <li>▪ Plan for immediate risk reduction</li> <li>▪ Activate Stage 1 VTRA Team</li> <li>▪ Based on stage 1 VTRA Team Assessment, develop/implement VTRA Intervention Plan or activate Stage 2 VTRA Team to assist</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Stage 1 VTRA Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define roles and tasks.</li> <li>- Develop plan of action.</li> <li>- Complete VTRA Intervention Plan</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">→</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Stage 2 VTRA Team</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define roles and tasks.</li> <li>- Develop plan of action.</li> <li>- Complete VTRA Intervention Plan</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: center;"> <span style="margin-right: 100px;">↓</span> <span>↓</span> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; 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**Anytime the VTRA Team is activated, the team will need to complete a VTRA Intervention Plan.**

**Appendix B**  
**VTRA - Fair Notice to Parents**

**Interlake School Division**

**Student Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) - Fair Notice to Families**

*The Interlake School Division is committed to creating and maintaining school environments in which students, staff, parents/guardians/caregivers, and others feel safe. Schools cannot ignore threats of violence.*

**What is a threat?**

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the internet, or made by gesture.

**Duty to report**

To keep school communities safe and caring, staff, parents/guardians/caregivers, students and community members must report all threat-related behaviours to the school principal.

**What is the purpose of a student threat assessment?**

The purposes of a student threat assessment are:

- To ensure and promote the emotional and physical safety of students, staff, parents, the student making the threat, and others.
- To ensure a full understanding of the context of the threat.
- To understand the factors contributing to the person of concern's (threat maker's) behaviour.
- To be proactive in developing an intervention plan that addresses the emotional and physical safety of the person of concern.
- To promote the emotional and physical safety of all.

**What behaviours warrant a Student Violence Threat Risk Assessment to be initiated?**

A student threat assessment will be initiated for behaviours including, but not limited to:

- Verbal/written threats to harm/kill others ("clear, direct and plausible")
- Threats made via social media to harm, kill or cause serious property damage
- Serious violence or violence with intent to harm and kill
- Indicators of suicidal ideation as it related to fluidity (homicidal/suicidal)
- Weapon possession (including replicas)
- Bomb threats (or possession/detonation of devices)
- Hate incidents motivated by factors including but not limited to: race, culture, religion, and/or sexual orientation
- Sexual intimidation, sextortion, extortion or assault
- Domestic, interpersonal, relational violence
- Gang-related intimidation and violence
- Fire setting (contextual)

**What Do Parents and Students  
Need to Know:**

- Any threats must be reported to the school principal.
- Investigation may involve divisional staff, police, and other community agencies.
- Investigation may involve locker or property searches.
- Interviews will be held with the person of concern and other students or adults who may have information about the threat.
- Parents/guardians of the students who are directly involved will be notified.
- Threatening behaviour may result in disciplinary action.
- An intervention plan may be developed for the student making the threat and support plan developed for any individuals targeted by threats.
- It is important for all parties to engage in the VTRA process. If, for some reason, the threat maker or their parent/guardian are reluctant to participate in the process, the process will continue to ensure a safe and caring learning environment.

**Collection Notice**

The school division is subject to personal information privacy laws and will undertake the collection of this information in compliance with the requirements of such laws, including by limiting collection to information that is relevant and necessary to address a risk or threat and by ensuring that information is collected from publicly available open source social media sites. Interlake School Division will not collect information as part of a threat assessment unless there is a reason to believe that a risk exists. Information collected as part of a threat assessment may be provided to law enforcement authorities in appropriate circumstances.

For more information regarding the threat/risk assessment process please visit the Centre for Trauma Informed Practices website at: [www.ctipractices.com](http://www.ctipractices.com)