COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm

Staff, students, volunteers, and others involved in school activities have the responsibility to report to school officials any threats of violence or harm. Based on the significance and credibility of the threat, it may also be reported to law enforcement. As appropriate, the principal may involve a multi-disciplinary team of professionals in evaluating the threat and the needs of the person making the threat. Consultation with or referrals to community-based professionals and services will be directed where deemed appropriate by the principal after consultation with District administration.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the district may only release student records with parent or adult student permission or in a health or safety emergency. For that reason, the District will identify students who have made threats of violence or harm when notifying the subjects of the threats, under the following conditions:

A. The parent or adult student has given permission to disclose the student’s identity or other information to the subject of the student’s threat;

B. The identity of the student and the details of the threat are being disclosed to relevant District staff who have been determined to have legitimate educational interest in the information;

C. The identity of the student or the details of the threat are being released because the release of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. In making this determination, school officials will use their best judgment, and may take into account the “totality of the circumstances” pertaining to the safety or health of a student or other individuals; or

D. Only directory information is being released about a student who has not opted out of release of directory information.

E. The District is responding to a court order or subpoena. The District must make a reasonable effort to notify the parents of the student or adult student of the subpoena in advance of complying, so that the family can seek protective action, unless the court order or subpoena expressly forbids such notification.

Relevant information about the threat that does not improperly identify a student will be provided to the subject of the threat, and the subject will be advised that if law enforcement has been involved in the matter, the law enforcement agency may have more information that can be shared with the subject.

To promote the safety of all concerned, the principal will determine if classroom teachers, school staff, school security, and others working with the student(s) involved in the threat, should be notified. Subject to the confidentiality provisions cited above, principals will consider
all available information when determining the extent of information to be shared, including prior disciplinary records, official juvenile court records, and documented history of violence of the person who made the threat.

When considering the appropriate discipline for a student who has made a threat of violence or harm, the student’s prior disciplinary records will be taken into account. Emergency expulsion will be considered, based on the credibility and significance of the threat. Discipline will be imposed on students with disabilities consistent with District policy and the legal requirements of special education.

If the threat by a student was significant and credible enough to warrant expulsion, the student may only be readmitted to the District through the readmission application process provided for in District policy. The readmission application process will include meeting District readmission criteria established at the time of expulsion and should include completion of an assessment by an appropriate professional, with a report to the District, when the District determines such an assessment is necessary.

Discipline against District staff for making threats of violence or harm will be consistent with District policy and procedure regarding staff discipline, and any relevant collective bargaining requirements.

**Development of Tiered Student Threat Assessment Process**

1. Develop school policies that authorize the formation of a threat assessment process.
   a. See Snohomish School District Board Policy 4314 and 4314P, Notification of Threats of Violence or Harm
   b. Authorizes the Superintendent to involve a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to conduct threat assessments.
   c. Authorizes the school administrator to involve a multi-disciplinary team of professionals in evaluating the threat.

2. Determine the scope of threat assessment activities to be offered by the team.
   a. In event of a threat, the school administrator will consult with the Executive Director of Academic Services or designee to determine whether the threat requires:
      i. Level 1 Within-Building Screening
      ii. Level 2 District Threat Assessment
      iii. Level 3 Threat Assessment conducted by a licensed psychologist who conducts student threat assessments.
      iv. All three levels may be accessed dependent upon the situation
   b. Level 1 Within-Building Screening
i. School administrator receives report of threat
ii. School administrator ensures safety of all students/staff
iii. School administrator investigation of threat
iv. Determination of discipline
v. Determination of need for Level 2 District Threat Assessment

c. Level 2 District Student Threat Assessment
i. Based on building screening, the school administrator and school team determines need for Level 2 District Student Threat Assessment
ii. School administrator notifies Executive Director of Academic Services or designee of need for Level 2 Threat Assessment.
iii. A determination will be made of required threat assessment team members and timeline.

3. Determine which staff will be on the assessment team and define their functions. The following are recommendations, staff assigned may vary based on the needs of the student.

a. District Coordinator. The Executive Director of Academic Services or designee should chair the District team. The District Coordinator’s role includes the following:
   i. The authority to make district-wide decisions that shape the scope and implementation of the District’s threat assessment process.
   ii. Serve as a resource for school administrators and the District Threat Assessment Team. Ensure consistency and continuity across schools within the District.
   iii. Serve as liaison to community-based experts.

b. Lead Evaluator. A staff member with mental health training should be the lead evaluator. The lead evaluator’s role includes the following:
   i. Responsibility for evaluating the youth’s mental health function.
   ii. Responsibility for interviewing the youth’s parents.
   iii. Responsibility for interviewing school-based team.
   iv. Conduct collateral interviews with witnesses.
   v. Gather background information from school records.
   vi. Responsibility for integrating information from interviewees and secondary evaluators and producing the final threat assessment document. Threat assessment report should be provided to family.
   vii. Gather and share information about local mental health resources.

c. Secondary Evaluator. Other staff with specialized training in work with children and adolescents can serve as secondary evaluators. The secondary evaluator’s role includes the following:
   i. Support lead evaluator by conducting assigned interviews
   ii. Gather background information
d. School Resource Officer or police officer/sheriff deputy.
   i. Participates whenever weapons are involved or a targeted threat of violence is made.
   ii. Determine if laws have been broken.
   iii. Serves as liaison to law enforcement agencies and juvenile probation/parole.
   iv. Gather information about juvenile delinquency history.

e. Support members
   i. School administrator. Provides administrative consultation regarding adolescent development and school dynamics to student threat assessment team.
   ii. Counselor. Provides child and adolescent mental health consultation to the student threat assessment team.
   iii. Secondary teacher. Provides secondary consultation in adolescent development and secondary school dynamics to the student threat assessment team.
   iv. School nurse. Provides health and medical consultation to the student threat assessment team.

f. Ad hoc members
   i. Staff who knows the student well will be part of the threat assessment process on an ad hoc basis. If the student undergoing assessment receives services under IDEA, a member of the IEP team must be included on an ad hoc basis.

4. Provide initial and ongoing training to the District Threat Assessment Team.

   a. Basic competencies. Evaluators should make a long-term professional commitment to learn about high-risk youth, however. Ideally, evaluators should be familiar with, or in the process of, becoming familiar with the following domains:
      i. Child and adolescent development
      ii. Family dynamics
      iii. Child and adolescent mental health
      iv. School dynamics
      v. Juvenile delinquency
      vi. Youth violence
      vii. Suicide Prevention/Intervention
      viii. Threat assessment

   b. Attitude and Orientation. Prospective Threat Assessment Team members should take a personal inventory to aide in determining if they are well suited to this type of work. In deciding the goodness of fit between your attitude and
orientation and one that is ideally suited to the job, consider the following list of desirable attributes:

i. Intellectual curiosity and attention to detail

ii. Ability to remain objective

iii. Ability to relate and communicate with challenging youth

iv. Tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity

v. Willingness to take unpopular positions

vi. Willingness to become involved in the juvenile justice system and to testify.

5. Determine the relationship of District Threat Assessment activities to police/sheriff activities. When a reportable offense has occurred, the assessment process will have two stages:

a. The District Threat Assessment and the local law enforcement assessment to determine if a crime has been committed.

b. Determine how the assessment team will interact with the police and other law enforcement agencies and avoid interference with law enforcement investigations.

6. Educate staff, students, parents and the surrounding community about the threat assessment team.

7. Threat Assessment Records

a. Building level—documentation that a student threat assessment has been conducted should be noted in the student’s discipline file in Skyward.

b. District level—the original signed student threat assessment report and supporting documentation will be kept in a Threat Assessment File in the Special Services Department.

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