NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES: Safety and Security

Behavior Threat Assessment

I. Purpose

To establish procedures for responding to individuals (students and non-students) whose behaviors pose a threat to the safety of the school or to a student or staff members in the school or while attending a school-sponsored activity.

II. Definitions

A. Behavior Threat Assessment – A structured group process used to identify, assess and manage the risks of threats of targeted violence posed by an individual or group.

B. Low Risk Threat – Determination that the individual/situation does not appear to pose a threat of serious harm to self and/or others and any exhibited issues/concerns can be resolved easily.

C. High Risk Threat – Determination that the person/situation appears to pose a threat of serious harm, exhibiting behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm and efforts to acquire the capacity to carry out a plan to cause harm; and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that requires intervention.

D. Imminent Threat – Determination that the person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward others that requires containment and action to protect identified or identifiable target(s); and may also exhibit other concerning behaviors that require intervention.

E. Moderate Risk Threat – Determination that the person/situation does not appear to pose a serious harm to self and/or others at the time of assessment; but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent and potential for future violence, serious harm to self and/or others; and/or exhibits other concerning behaviors that require intervention.

F. School Administrator – School principal or in the absence of the principal, the administrator designated by the principal.
G. **School Property** – Any BCPS-owned, controlled or leased property or vehicle regardless of whether students are present.

H. **School-Sponsored Activity** – An activity that is sponsored, approved, conducted, planned and/or supervised by school personnel, regardless of whether the activity takes place on or off school property or occurs during regular instructional hours.

I. **Threat** – An expression of an intent to cause physical harm to someone or school property. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically or through any other means.

J. **Threat Assessment** – A comprehensive process emphasizing an appraisal of observed (or reasonably observable) behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them and to manage/address them.

K. **Threat Management** – A comprehensive process emphasizing an appraisal of observed or reasonably observable behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them and to manage/address them.

L. **Triage** – Initial assessment of degrees of urgency or perceived threat to determine the acuity of need.

M. **Workplace Violence** – Violent acts, including physical assaults and threats of assaults, directed towards individuals at work or that impact the workplace.

III. **Guidelines**

A. All school system staff, students, volunteers and contractors shall report immediately to the school administrator and/or office head any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications or concerning behaviors that suggest the likelihood of a threatening situation of that an individual may intend to commit an act of targeted violence.

B. Anyone who believes that a person or situation poses a clear and immediate threat of serious violence that requires containment shall notify school security and law enforcement immediately.

C. Any person who exhibits threatening, aggressive or violent behavior on school property or at a school-sponsored event may be subject to
disciplinary or other action, including, but not limited to removal from school property and/or criminal prosecution.

D. Nothing in this policy shall preclude school system personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.

IV. Behavior Threat Assessment Teams

A. School-level Behavior Threat Assessment Team
   Each school shall establish a behavior threat assessment team whose functions include, but are not limited to:
   1. Developing a process for identification, assessment and intervention of students, staff and other individuals whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school or to an individual attending, visiting or working on BCPS property;
   2. Monitoring and responding to information received about a behavior, statement or plan that may pose a threat of violence at a school, on school property or during a school-sponsored activity.
   3. Determining whether a threat is classified as low, moderate, high or imminent.
   4. Implementing the school system disciplinary policies as necessary to assess and intervene when a student’s behavior poses (or may pose) a threat to the safety of a school or to a student or staff members;
   5. Referring an individual for evaluation and/or treatment; and
   6. Taking appropriate disciplinary action and referring a student to law enforcement as required by state law and regulation and board policy.

B. School System-level Behavior Threat Oversight Team
   The Division of School Climate and Safety shall establish a school system-level behavior threat assessment oversight team responsible for:
   1. Providing oversight and guidance to school-level behavior threat assessment teams on recognizing behaviors that may represent a threat to the school or to at student or to a staff member;
   2. Consulting with and maintaining a process for effective information sharing between Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) and community mental health and law enforcement agencies;
   3. Assessing the effectiveness of the threat assessment process throughout BCPS and recommend changes to policies and procedures; and
4. Recommending changes to policies, rules or procedures, as needed, to maintain an effective threat assessment process reflecting known best practices.

V. Training

The Division of School Climate and Safety shall be responsible for providing training to:

A. Members of the school-based Behavior Threat Assessment Team and school system-level Behavior Oversight Team on their duties and responsibilities; and

B. BCPS staff regarding recognition and reporting of behaviors that may represent a threat.

vi. Reporting Requirements

A. Threats Made by Students
   1. If it is determined that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm, the threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to the school administrator and to the Superintendent/designee.
   2. Following notification, the school administrator shall attempt to notify the student’s parent or legal guardian.
   3. The student who made the threat shall be assisted in accessing appropriate school and community-based resources for support and/or assistance.

B. Threats made by Non-Students
   If the team determines that a non-student poses a threat of violence or physical harm, the threat assessment team shall immediately report its determination to:
   1. The school administrator or his/her supervisor;
   2. The Baltimore County Police Department;
   3. The executive director of the Department of School Safety; and
   4. The school’s executive director, school support.

C. Workplace-related Threats of Domestic Violence
   An employee who has secured a protective or restraining order that lists the workplace as a protected area should promptly inform his/her school administrator or office head and the BCPS Department of School Safety of such orders.
VII. Threat Management Support Staff/Personnel

The members of the Behavior Threat Assessment Team are identified in the Comprehensive Safety Plan, Volume VI: Situational Response Guidance Protocols. These individuals are charged with threat management once a threat has been identified.

VIII. Triage of Behavioral Threat Situations

When a threat is reported, the school’s Behavior Threat Assessment Team leader shall initiate an initial inquiry/triage in consultation with at least one mental health professional and one other team member.

IX. Threats of Self-Harm made by Students

The procedures for responding threats of self-harm made by students are outlined in the Comprehensive Safety Plan, Volume VI: Situational Response Guidance Protocols.

X. Threats of Harm to Other Students, School Staff and/or Property made by students

The procedures for handling and reporting threats of harm made by students to other students, school staff and/or property are outlined in the Comprehensive Safety Plan, Volume VI: Situational Response Guidance Protocols.

Xi. Workplace Violence and Threats of Workplace Violence Made by Non-Students.

The procedures for reporting workplace violence are outlined in the Comprehensive Safety Plan, Volume VI: Situational Response Guidance Protocols.

XII. Confidentiality

A. No member of a Threat Assessment Team shall re-disclose any confidential information and/or criminal history record obtained pursuant to this rule and/or otherwise use any confidential information of any individual beyond the purpose for which such disclosure was made to the Threat Assessment Team in order to carry out its prescribed activities.
B. All information obtained during the behavior threat assessment investigation shall be remain confidential and sensitive information shall only be shared in a manner consistent with all governing privacy laws.

C. Criminal history information obtained by the threat assessment team may not be placed in or maintained as a student record.

XI. The employee and/or service provider reporting a threat is prohibited from taking any action that may compromise the investigation and from discussing the reporting/investigative process with the offender.

XII. Law Enforcement Involvement

A. All incidents and acts that constitute a violation of law or applicable protective or restraining order shall be reported immediately to law enforcement officials.

B. All threats and/or potential threats of significant harm shall be reported immediately to law enforcement officials.

C. Once a matter is being investigated by law enforcement officials, the team shall work closely with law enforcement officials to ensure the school system investigation does not hinder the criminal investigation.

D. BCPS employees shall cooperate fully with investigations conducted under this Rule.

XIII. Incident Reporting Process and Follow-up


B. The school-based Threat Assessment Team shall maintain all information gathered during the incident and ongoing monitoring to document the team’s good faith efforts to identify, investigate, assess and manage the specific threat.

C. All school-level behavior threat assessment Threat Incident Reports shall be forwarded to the school system-level behavior threat assessment oversight team.
Legal References:  
20 U.S.C. § 1232g, *The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*
*Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article § 7-1500, *et seq.*, *Maryland Safe to Learn Act*
COMAR 13A.01.04.03, *School Safety*

Other:  
*Maryland’s Model Policy for Behavior Threat Assessment*, Maryland Center for School Safety, September 2018

Related Policies:  
Board of Education Policy 1240, *Visitors to Schools and Offices*
Board of Education Policy 3710, *Safety and Security Equipment*
Board of Education Policy 4100, *Employee Conduct and Responsibilities*
Board of Education Policy 5230, *Student Records*
Board of Education Policy 5410, *School Counseling Services*
Board of Education Policy 5420, *Health Services*
Board of Education Policy 5430, *Psychological Services*
Board of Education Policy 5550, *Student Behavior Code*
board of education policy 5560, *Suspensions and Expulsions*

RULE  
Superintendent of Schools
Adopted: 09/10/19