2019-2020

Novato Unified School Distrct

Student Threat Assessment Team

Protocols and Resource guide

Table of Contents

[Executive Summary 3](#_Toc532243252)

[Introduction 3](#_Toc532243253)

[Assumptions 3](#_Toc532243254)

[Principles of Threat Assessment 4](#_Toc532243255)

[Best Practices 6](#_Toc532243256)

[School Threat Assessment Guidelines 7](#_Toc532243257)

[Identifying and Reporting Threats 7](#_Toc532243258)

[Threat Assessment Protocol 8](#_Toc532243259)

[Types of Threats 8](#_Toc532243260)

[Transient threats 8](#_Toc532243261)

[Substantive threats 8](#_Toc532243262)

[Overview of the Five Steps in Student Threat Assessment 8](#_Toc532243263)

[Step 1: Evaluate the Threat 8](#_Toc532243264)

[Step 3: Respond to a Substantive Threat 9](#_Toc532243265)

[Step 4: Conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat 10](#_Toc532243266)

[Step 5: Implement and monitor the Safety Plan 10](#_Toc532243267)

[Assessment Team – District Level 10](#_Toc532243268)

[Assessment Team – School Level 11](#_Toc532243269)

[Prevention 12](#_Toc532243270)

[School Prevention 12](#_Toc532243271)

[School Climate 12](#_Toc532243272)

[School-wide Positive Programming to Support Students 12](#_Toc532243273)

[Culture of Caring, Collaboration, and Excellence 12](#_Toc532243274)

[Do Good. Be Kind. Assemblies 12](#_Toc532243275)

[Student Voice and Choice Groups (Student Advocacy Groups, Student Councils) 13](#_Toc532243276)

[Social Emotional Curriculums 13](#_Toc532243277)

[Mind UP 13](#_Toc532243278)

[Second Step 13](#_Toc532243279)

[Soul Shoppe 13](#_Toc532243280)

[Conflict Management and Resolutions 13](#_Toc532243281)

[No Bully Solution Teams 14](#_Toc532243282)

[Community Circles 14](#_Toc532243283)

[CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Prevention 14](#_Toc532243284)

[Counseling 14](#_Toc532243285)

[North Bay Security Group 14](#_Toc532243286)

[School Resource Officers (SROs) 15](#_Toc532243287)

[Promotions 15](#_Toc532243288)

[Social Emotional Learning Curriculum 15](#_Toc532243289)

[COST and SST 15](#_Toc532243290)

[Intervention 15](#_Toc532243291)

[Provide Supportive Interventions 15](#_Toc532243292)

[Options for Interventions 15](#_Toc532243293)

[NUSD Interventions 16](#_Toc532243294)

[Community Resources 16](#_Toc532243295)

[NUSD Suicide Assessment 16](#_Toc532243296)

[Postvention 16](#_Toc532243297)

[Debriefing 16](#_Toc532243298)

[Safety Plans 16](#_Toc532243299)

[Intake Meetings 16](#_Toc532243300)

[Forms 17](#_Toc532243301)

[Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire 18](#_Toc532243302)

[Threat Assessment Decision Tree 19](#_Toc532243303)

[Elementary and Marin Oaks Threat Assessment Checklist 20](#_Toc532243304)

[Middle School Threat Assessment Checklist 21](#_Toc532243305)

[High School Threat Assessment Checklist 22](#_Toc532243306)

[Threat Assessment Team Summary 23](#_Toc532243307)

[Safety Plan 24](#_Toc532243308)

[School Threat Assessment Team Template 25](#_Toc532243309)

[Resources 26](#_Toc532243310)

# Executive Summary

Novato Unified School District developed this threat assessment model as a preventative and responsive guide to support our staff and community with students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of our school staff or students. Threat Assessment is defined as a problem-solving approach to violence prevention that involves assessment and intervention with students who have threatened violence in some way.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, school violence has declined over the last 25 years. However, Novato Unified School District prioritizes student and school safety measures and allocates resources to ensure all students can learn.

This document is designed to guide administrators and school personnel through a comprehensive approach for preventative measures to assess a threat in order to avoid a crisis response.

# Introduction

## Assumptions

The *Safe School Initiative,* as well as other research about targeted violence occurring in, or related to educational settings identified the following key findings:

* Incidents of targeted violence at school/workplaces are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
* In addition to students, others also engage in targeted violence in schools, including administrators, teachers, other staff, parents/guardians of students, contractors, people in relationships with staff or students, and even people with no connection with the school.
* Prior to most incidents of targeted violence, other people knew about the individual’s idea and/or plan to attack.
* Most individuals who perpetrated violence engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident that caused others to have serious concerns about their behavior and/or well-being.
* Many individuals who perpetrated violence had significant difficulties with losses or failures. Many were suicidal.
* Many felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to engaging in violence.
* In many cases, others (e.g., staff, students, peers, family members, etc.) were involved in some way, such as helping with plans or preparation for violence, encouraging violence, or failing to report (or take other steps) to prevent violence.
* Most individuals who perpetrated violence did not threaten their targets directly prior to engaging in violence.
* Violence is a dynamic process. No one is either always dangerous or never dangerous. Rather, the risk for violence is an interaction between the individual, the situation, circumstances, provocations and inhibitory factors that are present.

The fact that most individuals engaged in pre-incident planning and preparation, and frequently shared their intentions, plans and preparations with others, suggests that the information (about targeted violence) is likely to be uncovered through a sound threat assessment process.

Targeted violence is the end result of a process of thinking and behavior that begins with an idea (i.e., to use violence to address a real or perceived grievance), progresses to development of a plan, moves on to preparation (e.g. acquiring the means (e.g., weapons, training, capacity, access) to carry out the plan, and culminates in an attack. A graphic representation of the “Pathway to Violence” process is shown in Figure 1.

***Figure 1: The Pathway to Violence***

**Idea**

**Planning**

**Preparation**

**Violence**

The steps along this path indicate opportunities to observe, identify and intervene with threatening and/or aberrant behaviors that cause concern for violence by, or the well-being of, the individual. Frequently, information about an individual’s ideas, plans and preparations for violence can be observed before violence can occur. However, information is likely to be scattered and fragmented. For example, a teacher may see a certain set of behaviors of an individual in her class, a coach observes other behaviors or expressed thoughts by the individual, a school resource officer has other concerns, and a school administrator is aware of certain conduct violations. The challenge, and the key, is to act quickly upon initial reports of concern, gather other pieces of the puzzle, and assemble them to determine what picture emerges.

## Principles of Threat Assessment

The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on communications, actions, behaviors, and specific circumstances that might suggest an individual intends to engage in violence and is planning or preparing for an event. The threat assessment process is centered upon an analysis of the known (or reasonably knowable) behavior(s) in a given situation.

Several core principles form the foundation of the threat assessment process and include:

1. **The threat assessment central question is whether an individual poses a threat (i.e., is building the capability to cause harm), not just whether the person has made a threat (directly expressed intent to harm).** Individuals who are found to ***pose*** threats (i.e., engaged in violence) frequently ***do not make*** threats to their targets. The absence of a direct threat should not, by itself, cause a team to conclude that a subject does not pose a threat or danger to others. Targeted violence in schools and workplaces research found that fewer than 20 percent of violent perpetrators communicated a direct or conditional threat to their target before the violence. In the majority of incidents of targeted violence, perpetrators did not directly threaten their targets, but they did communicate their intent and/or plans to others before the violence.
2. **Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and often discernible, process of thinking and behavior (see Figure 1: The Pathway to Violence.)** Individuals who have committed targeted violence did not “just snap,” but rather they engaged in a process of thought and escalation of action over days, weeks, months, and even years.
3. **Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the Subject(s), Target(s), Environment and Precipitating Incidents.**

Identifying, preventing and intervening with acts of violence requires a focus on four components and their interaction.

***Subject/individual***: concern should provide insight into how the individual perceives and deals with conditions, often stressful, in their life and the intensity of effort they direct toward planning and preparation for violence.

***Target***: examines choices and coping strategies they are using or responding with that may increase or decrease their risk for harm.

***Environment***: examines school/workplace climate and systemic issues that contribute to the risk of violence, or do not discourage it.

***Precipitating*** **events**: examine critical stressors or events such as bullying, personal losses, enforcement actions, or even threat assessment team interventions, that may increase or decrease the risk for violence.

1. **An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.** Those who carry out threat assessment must strive to be both accurate and fair, continuing throughout the assessment process both to gather pieces of information and to fit the pieces into a larger picture and to gain understanding of the context and situation.
2. **Effective assessment is based upon facts and observations of behavior, rather than on characteristics, traits or profiles. Perpetrator “profiles” do not provide a reliable basis for making judgments of the threat posed by a particular individual.**
3. **An “integrated systems approach”, coordinating between local agencies and service systems within the school and the community (e.g., mental health services, law enforcement) should guide threat assessment and management processes.** Relationships with agencies and service systems within the school (e.g., school psychologist, school social worker, school-based mental health clinicians, administrators, disciplinary officers, human resources, etc.,) and community (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, law enforcement) are critical to identifying, assessing, and managing individuals who are on a path to carrying out an act of targeted violence.

## Best Practices

* Establish district-wide policies and procedures
* Role of educators in relation to law enforcement
* Identify the Threat Assessment Team
* Specify team’s training requirements
* Create an interdisciplinary assessment team
* School-based team should include administrators, school employed mental health professionals, and law enforcement
* Interdisciplinary team improves efficiency and scope of the assessment process and reduces the risk of observer bias
* Educate the school community about threat assessment
* Educate school community on importance of positive school climate
* Focus on providing help for students before escalation
* Regularly assess school climate with focus on students’ trust in adults and willing to seek help for problems / concerns
* Educate on the difference between “snitching” and helping to prevent violence
* Publically available written materials to explain relevant aspects of the threat assessment policy for staff, students, and parents
* Conduct an individualized assessment of each threat
* Consider risk for violence
* Most students who display multiple risk factors will never become violent offenders
* Some who pose a real threat will not demonstrate a prescribed level of risk
* The use of profiling (ranking a student’s behavior, risk factors against a set of criteria) increases the likelihood of misidentifying students who are thought to pose a threat
* Profiling focuses solely on identification, not intervention, and fails to provide the necessary help to troubled students
* Consider the following:
	+ Is the student responsive to efforts to resolve the problem or conflict that precipitated the threatening behavior?
	+ Has the student engaged in behavior that indicates intent and capability to carry out the threat?
* Assessment should:
	+ Incorporate referrals to appropriate mental health and social services
	+ Follow up on effectiveness of intervention
	+ Suicide assessment should be part of the Threat Assessment
* STAT must be prepared to act expeditiously based on the imminence of danger

# School Threat Assessment Guidelines

Threat assessment is to be viewed as one component of an overall strategy to reduce school violence and implemented within the larger context of strategies to ensure schools are safe and secure environments. The principle objective of school violence reduction strategies should be to create cultures and climates of safety, respect, and emotional support within the school.

School safety strategies within NUSD include:

* Effective communication among and between school staff, students and parents/guardians of students
* School climate assessments (Youth Truth & California Healthy Kids Survey)
* Emphasis on school connectedness
* Strong, but caring, stance against the code of silence
* Bullying prevention and intervention
* Partnership with North Bay Security Group
* Law enforcement partnerships including School Resource Officers
* Collaborative relationships with mental health, social services, and other community-based resources
* Planning and preparation to deal with, respond to, and recover from potential crises
* Physical security

## Identifying and Reporting Threats

All school employees, volunteers, and contractors are required to immediately report to the school administrator or designee any expression of intent to harm another person, concerning communications, or concerning behaviors that suggest a student may intend to commit an act of targeted violence.

The school threat assessment team shall strive to make the reporting process anonymous, understandable and highly accessible in order to discourage a “code of silence” that may be a barrier to reporting. Faculty and staff, students, volunteers, and other members of the school community need to know:

* their role and responsibility to report concerns
* what to report
* where and how to report it
* reports are wanted and will be acted upon appropriately

Members of the school community should be encouraged on an ongoing basis to report any threatening communication or troubling behavior and be reminded that reporting is an act of caring and not “snitching” or “tattling.”

# Threat Assessment Protocol[[1]](#footnote-2)

## Types of Threats

Transient threats are statements that do not express a lasting intent to harm someone. They are intended as figures of speech or reflect feelings that dissipate in a short period once the person starts thinking about what they really said. Apologies are often given spontaneously after being questioned.

Examples of transient threats:

* Something said as a joke
* Something said in the heat of the moment
* Students playing “cops & robbers” using their fingers as guns
* Something said and retracted after calming down
* Intimidation in the moment but retracts after calming down
* Threat of a bomb with the intention of disrupting school, with no actual bomb
* Knife found in student backpack with a reasonable and substantiated explanation of why it was there (went camping over the weekend and forgot to take it out)

Substantive threats are statements that express a continuing intent to harm someone. Statements extend beyond the immediate incident or argument when the threat was made. When in doubt threats should always be investigated as substantive rather than transient. If student denies making the threat or refuses to cooperate, administrators have no choice but to continue the assessment as a substantive threat.

* **Serious**: threat to hit, fight, or beat up
* **Very Serious**: threat to kill, rape, or cause serious injury with a weapon

## Overview of the Five Steps in Student Threat Assessment

### Step 1: Evaluate the Threat

* Interview the Student to evaluate the threat context and seriousness of the incident using the Threat Assessment Report
	1. Do you know why I want to talk with you?
	2. What happened when you were (refer to the incident)
	3. What exactly did you say? What exactly did you do? (Write down the exact words.)
	4. What did you mean when you said/did…
	5. How do you think (the other person) feels about what you said/did?
	6. What was the reason you said/did that? (Are there any prior incidents?)
	7. What are you going to do now? (Do they intend to carry out the threat?)
* Interview the Witness(es) and Target(s) to evaluate the threat context and seriousness of the incident
	1. Do you know why I want to talk with you?
	2. What happened when…(refer to incident)?
	3. What exactly did (student name) say or do? (Write down their exact words.)
	4. What do you think they meant when they did that?
	5. How do you feel about what was said/happened? (Does the witness/target feel intimidated or scared about the incidents?)
	6. What was the reason (student name) said or did that? (Are there any prior incidents.)
	7. What are you going to do now? (Is there a need for a safety plan?)
	8. What do you think (student name) will do now?
* Consider student and witness credibility
* Contact North Bay Security for support
* Consult the [Threat Assessment Decision Tree](#_Threat_Assessment_Decision)

Step 2: Attempt to Resolve the Threat as Transient

* Transient threats may need further attention, including counseling, parent notification, conflict resolution, disciplinary action, or any other appropriate intervention(s)
* Mental health resource should be included early in the investigation, especially if the threat is to self
* Contact North Bay Security for support and intervention assistance
* To assess transient threats, consider:
	+ Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be quickly resolved or is already resolved?
	+ Does the person retract the statement, offer an apology or further explanation?
	+ Is there indication that the student does not intend to harm anyone or themselves?
* Seriousness of threat versus discipline violation
	+ “Do not classify a threat as substantive merely because the behavior is a serious discipline violation.” (Cornell, p. 23)
	+ Transient threats can still cross the line of serious discipline infractions
	+ Example: student calls in a bomb threat to disrupt the school environment. The student has no access to bomb making equipment, making the threat transient. However, this type of threat has serious legal ramifications and the student can face school discipline and law enforcement consequences

### Step 3: Respond to a Substantive Threat

* Never leave the student alone
* Alert Threat Assessment Team members to initiate a substantive investigation
* If not already with the student, pass student to mental health professional to start a full assessment
* Take immediate action to warn and protect potential victim(s)
* Caution the threatened parties
* Provide direct supervision of the student or make immediate effort to locate the student for direct supervision
* Contact student’s parents/caregivers
* Depending on the student and situation, SRO should be on-call for serious threats and should always assist with all very serious threats

### Step 4: Conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat

* Never leave the student alone
* Continue with mental health assessment
* Ensure safety of all potential targets
* Law enforcement should begin an investigation into possible criminal activity
* Develop a Safety Plan including an IEP review if applicable
* Initiate appropriate discipline consequences

### Step 5: Implement and monitor the Safety Plan

* Document the [Safety Plan](#_Safety_Plan) and review with student and parents/caregivers
* Assign a Case Manager
* If student is suspended, hold an Intake Meeting upon return that includes the principal, parent/caregiver, student, case manager, and anyone else connected with the interventions outlined in the Safety Plan
* Maintain contact with the student and family
* Review and revise the Safety Plan as necessary

# Assessment Team – District Level

NUSD’s District Office will convene a District-level Threat Assessment Team to support the School Level Threat Assessment Teams. The team will be comprised of:

* Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
* Director, Special Education
* Coordinator of Behavioral Health
* North Bay Security Group representative
* Novato Police Department representative
* Site level principal/asst principal to represent elementary, middle, and high schools
* Any other identified District Office or community personnel

The District Level Team will be responsible for:

* Supervision of the School Level Student Threat Assessment Teams
* Coordinating and mobilizing resources to assist the principals at the elementary schools and Marin Oaks High School
* Establishing regular meetings from representatives of the School Level Student Threat Assessment Teams
* Ensure communication procedures are established between school and community resources, including North Bay Security Group and law enforcement
* Assess the effectiveness of the threat assessment procedures and communication systems
* Schedule training throughout the year (at least 2 times a year)
* Ensure Student Threat Assessment protocols follow Best Practices and are implemented with integrity and adhere to confidentiality laws
* Implementing and updating School Board Policies and Administrative Regulations

# Assessment Team – School Level

NUSD’s School Threat Assessment Team should be comprised of individuals who will direct, manage, and document the treat assessment process at the District and School level. Team members receive reports about concerning students and situations; will investigate all reports; assess the potential risks posed to the student(s), school, and community; and develop intervention and strategies to mitigate a risk of harm.

Required team members are:

* Person with counseling expertise such as, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker)
* School administration

Potential team members can include:

* North Bay Security Group
* Law enforcement
* Coordinator of Behavioral Health
* Director of Special Education

The Team should: create a checklist that includes room to identify team members, duties, etc.

* Have a designated team leader at the School and District level
* Assign specific duties to team members, such as who will interview the student, talk with witnesses, who will contact additional team members or District Office personnel, and who is responsible for documentation
* Assign a triage team which will:
	+ Include the two Required STAT team members
	+ May include a person from list of Potential Team members
	+ Screen cases and determine appropriateness of full team activation
	+ Will determine appropriateness and identification of resources needed to address the situation
* Establish a schedule for regular meetings to continually assess students who may pose possible risks to themselves and/or others and to ensure and practice clear communication strategies during Threat Assessments
* Work collaboratively and on a continual basis to assess appropriate school personnel and community involvement and ensure continuous quality improvement as additional needs are identified
* All team members should be involved if the threat rises to a Direct High or Imminent Threat level
* Anyone activated during an assessment will actively, lawfully, and ethically communicate and collaborate with each other (adhere to confidentiality)
* Provide information to students, faculty, and staff regarding Threat Assessment reporting, protocol, and communication systems, as appropriate

# Prevention

## School Prevention

Campuses in Novato Unified School District have developed programs and implemented practices to create safe learning environments and support the social and emotional well-being of our students. Creating positive school climates is a crucial component of preventing school threats. Our schools are built on a culture of safety, respect, responsibility, trust and collaboration. All staff members take priority to promote school environments that are equitable, foster positive relationships between students and staff, develop conflict resolution strategies, and work to prevent unkind behaviors. All of these components are highlighted through many programs and practices used throughout our schools.

## School Climate

Our schools make it a priority to:

* Create school climates that are positive, caring environments
* Build relationships and collaborate with our students and school community to ensure safe schools
* Utilize all resources and personnel to support students in social emotional and academic learning

### School-wide Positive Programming to Support Students

A school’s positive programming approach can be used to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. Our schools focus on teaching kids about behavior, just as they would teach about any other subject—like reading or math. Our schools recognize that kids can only meet behavior expectations if they know what the expectations and what’s appropriate behavior.

### Culture of Caring, Collaboration, and Excellence

All Elementary Schools are working with the Marin Community Foundation and Peter E. Haas, Jr. Family Fund to support school cultures that create an environment and instructional practices that achieve equity for all. Through a development of a school culture of caring, students are provided with nurturing relationships, strengthen self-efficacy and racial/cultural identity, and staff supports development of the whole child. While setting a standard of a culture of competence, lessons prioritize communication skills, promote peer interactions, develop self-regulation skills, and encourage independence and interdependence. Finally teachers set a standard for a culture of excellence that includes a balanced teaching approach, integrates a balanced curriculum, and builds higher order thinking skills.

### Do Good. Be Kind. Assemblies

Do Good. Be Kind. is a school-wide program, starting with an assembly, to promote kindness and a sense of community in our schools. Students and staff practice being kind to ourselves, being kind to others, and being kind to the world. Schools can relate Do Good. Be Kind to anything, such as a daily motto or daily reminder. These simple words have the power to to influence and power to change a school culture. It is visual, impactful, outward, and personal.

### Student Voice and Choice Groups (Student Advocacy Groups, Student Councils)

Elementary and Middle Schools work with Youth Leadership Institute and other agencies to create student leadership group opportunities in schools and our community. These groups allow students to create connections and set goals that can make a difference in policies, procedures and routines.

### Social Emotional Curriculums

For a growing number of schools and districts, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has become a coordinating framework for how educators, families, and communities partner to promote students’ social, emotional, and academic learning. NUSD embeds

SEL in their strategic plans, staffing, professional learning, and budgets. It guides our curriculum choices and classroom instruction. It drives many of our schoolwide practices and policies and it informs how adults and students relate with each other at all levels of the school setting, creating a welcoming, participatory, and caring climate for learning. It shapes our partnerships with families and community members, highlighting engagement, trust, and collaboration.

### Mind UP

Mind UP offers easy strategies for helping students focus their attention, improve their self-regulation skills, build resilience to stress, and develop a positive mind-set in both school and life. The lessons connect to content instruction, brain development and community awareness to build strategies for positive peer interactions and conflict resolutions.

### Second Step

Second Step is an evidence-based social-emotional learning curriculum that provides skills for social and academic success. It is designed to improve the lives of students every year because they will be better equipped to manage their own emotions and build positive relationships, they're better equipped to learn.

### Soul Shoppe

Soul Shoppe supports school communities by providing interactive programs and tools that teach students powerful life skills. In addition to working with students, the Soul Shoppe staff supports schools and parents by creating and facilitating dynamic development trainings that give the necessary tools to implement academic and personal growth. The goal is to create learning environments that bring forth a culture of compassion, connection and curiosity, eliminating bullying at the roots!

### Conflict Management and Resolutions

Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management in schools is to enhance learning opportunities to conflicts and educate students on strategies to find resolutions to conflicts. NUSD staff uses a variety of practices dealing with disputes in a rational, balanced and effective way. Conflict management implemented within a business environment usually involves effective communication, problem resolving abilities and good negotiating skills to restore the focus to the company's overall goals.

### No Bully Solution Teams

The No Bully System is a step-by-step process and set of interventions for teachers and administrators to prevent and stop bullying at their school. It guides the adults on campus through a series of interventions for responding to bullying and harassment, depending on the severity of the incident.

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice practices in a school community emphasis honest communication and accountability among all individuals at school. Utilizing a combination of discussion, role-plays, and direct personal experience to develop the skills needed to effectively apply restorative principles in school relationships, participants will be able to immediately apply their learning in whatever role they hold in the school.

### Community Circles

Community circles is a foundational practice to cultivate meaningful connections within a school or other community settings. Through direct experience and reflective dialogue, participants are introduced to the skills practiced by a circle keeper to create and hold an intentional space for deep listening, honest sharing, and an exploration of shared values and the stories that define us.

### CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and Prevention

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention provides for the Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security of everyone involved in a crisis situation. The principles provides trained staff with techniques that have been proven effective in resolving potentially violent situations. Staff gains skills and confidence to handles crisis intervention with minimal anxiety and maximum security. The training provides strategies for intervening more safely when behavior becomes dangerous.

### Counseling

Novato Unified School District contracts with outside counseling agencies to support students in all of our schools. Bay Area Counseling Resource, North Marin Community Services, and Partners all provide counselors for three to five days a week. The counselors provide support to social emotional program implementation, social group and conflict resolutions, and 1:1 counseling services.

### North Bay Security Group

NBSG provides support for staff, students and families with school safety and conflict resolutions. The staff is available to NUSD to service schools and support administration. The staff has an expertise in criminal justice, restorative justice, bully solutions, drug and alcohol interventions, and evaluating crisis/threat risks. They are available to staff to intervene or support NUSD with student mentoring, school-to-home connections, restorative circles, conflict management and protocols to ensure school safety.

### School Resource Officers (SROs)

School resource officers are assigned to Novato High School, Hill Education Center/Marin Oaks School, San Marin High School and Sinaloa Middle School. The primary focus is to build relationships with students, parents, school staff, and other organizations that have a direct impact on making NUSD students successful.

## Promotions

September – Suicide Prevention Month

 Activities

October – Bullying Prevention Month

 Activities

May – Mental Health Awareness Month

 Activities

# Intervention

### Provide Supportive Interventions

The goal of threat assessment is not only to keep schools safe but also to help potential offenders overcome the underlying sources of their anger or hopelessness. Effective threat assessment provides useful information about a student’s risks and personal resources. In most cases, students will not carry out their threat but still need help. T h e assessment process should incorporate a referral to appropriate mental health and social services, a system for following up on the effectiveness of interventions, and a means of monitoring the student’s progress and behavior. Among the other potential risks that can be identified and prevented are suicide, alcohol and drug use, physical abuse, dropping out, and criminal activity.

### Options for Interventions

* Bring the student in question under adult supervision (long-term planning or monitoring)
* Can student stay at school?
* What alternatives are needed?
* How and when to notify families
* If and when to notify law enforcement
* What mental health, social services, and school-based interventions are required to reduce the risk of violence?
* Law enforcement may choose to conduct a criminal investigation depending on criminal behavior
* Distinguish between school and law enforcement actions

## Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire

**While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  **Question** | **If yes, enter 1** |
| 1. | Did a parent or other adult in the household **often**...swear at you, insult you, put you down or humiliate you? **Or** act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt? |  |
| 2. | Did a parent or other adult in the household **often…** push, grab, slap or throw something at you? **Or** ever hit so hard that you had marks or were injured? |  |
| 3. | Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**…touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? **Or** try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you? |  |
| 4. | Did you **often** feel that…no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? **Or**, your family didn’t look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other? |  |
| 5. | Did you **often** feel that … you didn’t have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? **Or**, your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it? |  |
| 6. | Were you parents **ever** separated or divorced? |  |
| 7. | Was your mother or stepmother: **often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? **Or**, sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? **Or Ever**, repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife? |  |
| 8. | Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs? |  |
| 9. | Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide? |  |
| 10. | Did a household member go to prison? |  |

Add up your “Yes” answers: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score.

## Threat Assessment Decision Tree

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Step 1: Evaluate the threat** Obtain a detailed account of the threat, usually by interviewing the person who made the threat, the intended victim, and other witnesses. Write the exact content of the threat and key observations by each party. Consider the circumstances in which the threat was made and the student’s intentions. Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm?  | **No**  | Not a threat. Might be an expression of anger that merits attention.  |
| **YES**  |   |   |
| **Step 2: Attempt to resolve the threat as transient** Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be easily resolved so that there is no intent to harm? Does the person retract the threat or offer an explanation and/or apology that indicates no future intent to harm anyone?  | **Yes**  | Case resolved as transient; add services as needed  |
| **No**  |   |   |
| **Step 3: Respond to a substantive threat** For all substantive threats: 1. Take precautions to protect potential victims
2. Warn intended victim and parents
3. Look for ways to resolve the conflict
4. Discipline student, when appropriate

*Serious* means a threat to hit, fight, or beat up, whereas a *very serious* threat meant to kill, rape, or cause serious injury with a weapon.   | **Serious**  | Case resolved as serious substantive threat; add services as needed  |
| **Very Serious**  |   |   |
| Step 4: Conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat In addition to a-d in Step 3: 1. Screen student for mental health services and counseling, refer as needed
2. Law enforcement investigation for evidence of planning and preparation and criminal activity
3. Develop a safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of IEP, if receiving special education services and further assessment if possible disability
 |   |   |
|   |   |   |
| **Step 5: Implement and monitor the safety plan** * Document the plan
* Maintain contact with the student
* Monitor the safety plan and revise as needed
 |   |   |

## Elementary and Marin Oaks Threat Assessment Checklist

* Notify the principal
* Principal does an initial interview with student
	+ Initiate documentation with the [Threat Assessment Decision Tree](#_Threat_Assessment_Decision) and Threat Report

Is this a **transient threat** that can be resolved through principal or mental health intervention? (Follow checklist below)

* Complete the Threat Report including the [Safety Plan](#_Safety_Plan)
* Identify and secure appropriate school resources, including having the mental health professional conduct an mental health assessment
* Call North Bay Security Group of consultation
* Monitor the student(s) involved over the next few days

Is this a **substantive threat**? (Continue with the Threat Assessment Protocol)

**For Serious** (threaten to hit, fight, or beat up) **and Very Serious** (threat involves kill, rape, or serious injury with a weapon)

* Contact DO Threat Assessment Lead
* DO Lead contacts the rest of the Threat Assessment Team and assigns duties
* Mental health professional begins or continues the mental health assessment protocol
* Law enforcement to investigate possible criminal activity
* Interview witness(es)
* Is there a weapon?
* Is there a plan?
* Ensure the safety of any potential targets, including the student’s own safety
* Identify ways to resolve the situation as transient
* Assign appropriate discipline
* Convene as a Team to determine Threat Level
* Document the investigation and Team determination in the [Threat Assessment Team Summary](#_Threat_Assessment_Team)
* Develop a [Safety Plan](#_Safety_Plan)
* Assign a Case Manager

**Postvention**

* Case Manager maintains regular contact with student and monitor the safety plan, revising as necessary
* DO Lead support Principal until case is resolved
* If student was suspended, conduct an Intake Meeting the morning of their return
	+ Intake interview should include administrator, counselor, and representatives all other resources as assigned

## Middle School Threat Assessment Checklist

* Notify the principal
* Principal does an initial interview with student
	+ Initiate documentation with the [Threat Assessment Decision Tree](#_Threat_Assessment_Decision) and Threat Report

Is this a **transient threat** that can be resolved through principal or mental health intervention? (Follow checklist below)

* Complete the Threat Report including the [Safety Plan](#_Safety_Plan)
* Interview witnesses and other appropriate school staff members
* Identify and secure appropriate school resources, including having the mental health professional conduct an mental health assessment
* Call North Bay Security Group of consultation
* Monitor the student(s) involved over the next few days

Is this a **substantive threat**? (Continue with the Threat Assessment Protocol)

**For Serious** (threaten to hit, fight, or beat up) **and Very Serious** (threat involves kill, rape, or serious injury with a weapon)

* Contact members of the Threat Assessment Team
* Contact DO Threat Assessment Lead for additional support as needed
* If not already delineated, assign roles to Team members
* Mental health professional begins or continues the mental health assessment protocol
* Law enforcement to investigate possible criminal activity
* Interview witness(es)
* Is there a weapon?
* Is there a plan?
* Ensure the safety of any potential targets, including the student’s own safety
* Identify ways to resolve the situation as transient
* Identify necessary resources
* Convene as a Team to determine Threat Level
* Assign a Case Manager
* Assign appropriate discipline
* Document the investigation and Team determination in the Threat Report
* Develop a safety plan
* Assign a Case Manager

**Postvention**

* Case Manager maintains regular contact with student and monitor the safety plan, revising as necessary
* If student was suspended, conduct an Intake Meeting the morning of their return
	+ Intake should include administrator, counselor, and representatives all other resources as assigned

## High School Threat Assessment Checklist

* Notify the principal
* Principal does an initial interview with student
	+ Initiate documentation with the [Threat Assessment Decision Tree](#_Threat_Assessment_Decision) and Threat Report

Is this a **transient threat** that can be resolved through principal or mental health intervention? (Follow checklist below)

* Complete the Threat Report including the [Safety Plan](#_Safety_Plan)
* Interview witnesses and other appropriate school staff members
* Identify and secure appropriate school resources, including having the mental health professional conduct an mental health assessment
* Call North Bay Security Group of consultation
* Monitor the student(s) involved over the next few days

Is this a **substantive threat**? (Continue with the Threat Assessment Protocol)

**For Serious** (threaten to hit, fight, or beat up) **and Very Serious** (threat involves kill, rape, or serious injury with a weapon)

* Contact members of the Threat Assessment Team
* Contact DO Threat Assessment Lead for additional support as needed
* If not already delineated, assign roles to Team members
* Mental health professional begins or continues the mental health assessment protocol
* Law enforcement to investigate possible criminal activity
* Interview witness(es)
* Is there a weapon?
* Is there a plan?
* Ensure the safety of any potential targets, including the student’s own safety
* Identify ways to resolve the situation as transient
* Identify necessary resources
* Convene as a Team to determine Threat Level
* Assign a Case Manager
* Assign appropriate discipline
* Document the investigation and Team determination in the Threat Report
* Develop a safety plan
* Assign a Case Manager

**Postvention**

* Case Manager maintains regular contact with student and monitor the safety plan, revising as necessary
* If student was suspended, conduct an Intake Meeting the morning of their return
	+ Intake should include administrator, counselor, and representatives all other resources as assigned

## Threat Assessment Team Summary

**School:**

**Date of Incident:**

**Team Members** (names & titles)

**Incident Description:**

**Interviews**

Conducted by

* Witnesses
* Target Student
* Student of Interest

**Team Determination**

 Threat Level:

 Days of Suspension:

**Post-suspension Intake Meeting Details**

Intake Meeting Date:

Intake Meeting Participants:

 Principal:

 Parent:

 Student:

 Incident Case Manager:

 Mental Health Professional:

 Teacher:

 Other:

**Intake Meeting Agenda**

* Principal, parent, and student review and sign the Safety Plan
* Counselor should also be at meeting to get appropriate signatures and approval for counseling
* With the student, ask how the incident affected him, how it may have affected others, and determine what he would like to do to repair the harm caused
* Other:

## Safety Plan

**School:**

**Student:**

**Principal:**

**Case Manager:**

Due to the incident on [date], the following Safety Plan will be put into place for the student:

1.
2.
3.
4.

This Safety Plan has been reviewed with the student, parent(s), and Intake Team members. The Signatures below confirm agreement with the Safety Plan.

Student Date

Parent Date

Principal Date

Case Manager Date

## School Threat Assessment Team Template

School:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact Info** |
| Assessment Lead |  |  |
| Psychologist |  |  |
| Mental Health Professional |  |  |
| Interviewers |  |  |
| North Bay Security | Bill WelchJim ShirkMatt | 415…415… |
| Law Enforcement | Antonio Rodriguez (SRO)Nick Wagner (SRO)Chris Jacob (Supervisor)Sophie Winter (Supervisor) |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**District Office Resources**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Contact Info** |
| DO Lead | Amie Carter |  |
| Special Ed / Psychologists | Kelly Johnson |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Team Member Assignments**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Assignment** |
| Assessment Lead | Initial interview with witness(es) and/or student of concernInitiates 5150 process if needed |
| Mental Health Professional | Conducts mental health assessment and ACE evaluationInitiates 5150 process if needed |
| ??? | Identifies and interviews potential witness(es) |
| North Bay Security  | Supports Assessment Lead, including consultation regarding severity of situationConducts safety checks / home visit |
| Law Enforcement | Conducts investigation into possible criminal activities and penal code violations |
| ???? |  |

# Resources

National Association of School Psychologists

[Threat Assessment for School Administrators & Crisis Teams](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/threat-assessment-at-school/threat-assessment-for-school-administrators-and-crisis-teams)

[Threat Assessment: An Essential Component of a Comprehensive Safe School Program](https://www.nasponline.org/Documents/Resources%20and%20Publications/Handouts/Families%20and%20Educators/nassp_threat.pdf)

[Threat Assessment 11 Questions](http://www.pent.ca.gov/thr/elevenquestions.pdf)

[Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0711_USSS_NTAC-Enhancing-School-Safety-Guide.pdf)

[Virginia Model for Student Threat Assessment](https://curry.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/images/YVP/VSTAG%20summary%206-18-18.pdf)

1. This section is directly modeled from the *Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines: Intervention and Support to Prevent Violence*; Cornell, Dewey; 2018; ISBN: 978-0-692-19210-8 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)