

IDENTIFYING POTENTIALLY VIOLENT STUDENTS

CONCERN: For purposes of this procedure, a concern is defined as someone (staff or student) under the belief that a person or persons may be planning to harm themselves or others, or is already being harmed by themselves or others.

ADMINISTRATOR and/or ADMINISTRATOR'S DESIGNEE RESPONSIBILITY:

- If a potential threat is reported to you that involves any mention of the use of a weapon, possession of a weapon, anyone or any group wanting or planning to cause harm, contact your local police department.
- Consider putting the school in lockdown if the threat is imminent, and until the threat is contained.
- If the threat comes in with time to cancel school, consider doing so based on the level of threat, and until the threat is contained.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITY:

- Make sure staff understands that after students are educated on how, when, and where to report a concern, they may be more likely to report a concern.
- Make sure staff understands it is not their job to determine if the student reporting the concern is telling the truth. Their responsibility is to immediately inform an administrator. Leaving a voicemail or writing an e-mail or texting a message is not considered adequate reporting. Only personal contact (face-to-face or actual phone conversation) is considered proper notification.
- If staff has obtained independent information, it should immediately be reported to administration.
- Make sure staff understands that this reporting does not pertain to abuse situations. If abuse is suspected, follow the mandatory reporting protocol.
- Make sure staff is provided a "phone tree" of administrators' cell phones and home phones (in rank order) of who they are to contact if there is a potential crisis.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY:

- If a student hears, sees, or witnesses anyone claiming they are planning to harm themselves or another person or persons, they are to immediately report it to a school administrator, staff member, or teacher.
- Make students aware of remote reporting options to use, if they become aware of a threat while away from school.
- Make students aware of the difference between reporting and tattling. Encourage students to report the information to a staff member so they can make the appropriate notifications.

Signs of potential for violence may be historical or static (unchangeable) factors like:

- A history of violent or aggressive behavior
- Young age at first violent incident (either witnessing or causing)
- Having been a victim of bullying
- History of discipline problems or frequent conflicts with authority
- Early childhood abuse or neglect
- Having witnessed violence at home
- Family or parent condones/exhibits the use of violence

- A history of cruelty to animals
- Having a significant history of mental illness
- Being callous or lacking empathy for others
- History of vandalism or property damage

Other signs of potential violence may be present over time and may escalate or contribute to the risk of violence. These might include:

- Serious drug or alcohol use
- Two hours or more a day of exposure to violence in real or fantasy form
- Gang membership or strong desire to be in a gang
- Access to, or fascination with, weapons, especially guns or role playing with guns
- Trouble controlling feelings like anger
- Withdrawal from friends and usual activities
- Regularly feeling rejected or alone
- Feeling constantly disrespected

Some research indicates that new or active signs of violence may be more predictive of immediate risk of violence than historical factors. Indicators of potential violence may be new signs like:

- Increased loss of temper
- Frequent physical fighting
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Increased risk-taking behavior
- Declining school performance
- Acute episode of major mental illness
- Planning how to commit acts of violence
- Announcing threats or plans for hurting others
- Obtaining or carrying a weapon