

Community VTRA Protocol: Violence Threat Risk Assessment

A Collaborative Response to Assessing Potential Violence



A protocol developed by Battle River Regional School Division (BRSD), Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS), Alberta Health Services Addictions and Mental Health (AHS), Ministry of Children's Services (CS), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Camrose City Police.

RATIONALE

Battle River School Division (BRSD), Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS) and our community partners are committed to making our schools and communities safe. The term “partner” in this document is not intended to mean a legal partnership, but rather a collaborative arrangement.

BRSD and EICS will respond to students’ behaviour that may pose a potential risk for violence to other students, staff and members of the community. The goal of early intervention is to reduce and manage school and/or community violence and students’ harm to self or others.

This protocol supports collaborative planning among schools, community partners, families, children and youths, to reduce violence and to reflect safe, caring and restorative approaches. It fosters timely sharing of information about a child or youth who poses a risk for violence towards themselves or others. It is the process of deliberately trying to, “connect the dots” that paints the picture” of a person moving on a path towards serious violence before a violent act occurs. The protocol promotes supportive and preventive plans being put in place.

The strength of this partnership between BRSD, EICS and community partners lies in the multidisciplinary composition of the Community Threat Assessment Team (C-TAT). The C-TAT members will strive to promptly share and review relevant information, details of threatening situation or evidence. This information will be used to collaborate effectively, and to make use of a broad range of expertise. This process will respect an individual’s rights to privacy and the safety of all, to the fullest extent possible.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

BRSD is the lead partner in the Community Threat Assessment Protocol for our geographical area of the City of Camrose, County of Camrose, County of Flagstaff and Beaver County.

Community Partners include:

- Family School Liaison Workers (FSLW);
- Ministry of Children’s Services Central(CS);
- Alberta Health Services Additions and Mental Health (AHS);
- The Open Door
- Camrose City Police;
- RCMP Detachments from Bashaw, Camrose, Killam, Tofield and Viking;
- Other local agencies.

VISION AND PRINCIPALS

All partners will share in the responsibility of taking active steps to reduce violence in schools and the community. Partners agree to work together for the common goals of reducing violence, managing threats of violence, and promoting individual, school and community safety by proactively sharing information, advice, and support.

As partners, we will work together for the benefit of students' by:

- building working relationships based on mutual respect and trust;
- working in ways that promote safe, caring and restorative school environments and practices;
- involving children, youth and their families in planning for services and supports;
- recognizing that each child and youth has unique strengths and needs that should be considered when developing an appropriate service plan;
- realizing that working together successfully is a process of learning, listening, and understanding one another;
- being patient, trusting and working together to help children and youth become happy, healthy, active, involved, and caring members of the community;
- participating in Threat-Risk Assessment Team meetings;
- designating a trained lead contact person and by advising community partners of who the lead is, their designate and any changes to the lead.

The overriding goal is risk reduction and violence prevention to promote the safety of students, parents/guardians, school staff, and community members.

The protocol is designed to facilitate communication so that when the Community Threat Assessment Team (C-TAT) is activated, appropriate community partners and BRSD, EICS may communicate relevant child/youth information.

As part of the protocol design, BRSD, EICS and community partners commit to:

- Developing staff through threat assessment training
- Participating in TAT meetings
- Designating a lead contact who has been trained
- Committing to staff training
- Participating in Advisory meetings

KEY APPROACHES IN THREAT/RISK ASSESSMENT

Sharing of Relevant Information

All partners will share relevant information to avert or minimize imminent risk of violence that affects the health and safety of any person.

Investigative Mind-set

An investigative mind-set is central to successful application of the risk/threat assessment process. Threat assessment requires thoughtful probing, viewing information with professional objectivity, and paying attention to key points about pre-attack behaviours. Personnel who carry out Risk/Threat assessment strive to be both accurate and fair.

Building Capacity

Threat Assessment training will be provided to as many school personnel and community partner staff as fiscally possible.

Contact List

BRSD will be the lead agency in the application of the protocol. The Coordinator-Division Supports and Services for Battle River School Division or designates, will maintain an up-to-date contact list of the Community Threat Assessment Protocol partners, and will distribute a copy of the list to all Community Partners.

Need for Training

This protocol document is not a substitute for training in the field of Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) and should **not** be used until adequate training is received. The VTRA protocol is intended to be used by multidisciplinary teams trained in the theory and practice of student threat-risk assessment through Level 1 Violence, Threat -Risk Assessment Training.

Importance of Safe School Culture

Positive school cultures are widely acknowledged as being a key to creating a safe environment. By placing a strong emphasis on safety, tolerance, and communication an environment is created where violence is less likely to occur and systems and problems are more likely to be identified. Programs designed to facilitate social responsibility assist students in being actively involved in safe school initiatives.

WHEN TO ACTIVATE THE VTRA PROTOCOL

Any VTRA-trained partner agency can activate the VTRA protocol at any time. Sometimes it's difficult to determine whether or not to activate a formal VTRA process. The following guidelines are intended to help protocol partners decide if a formal VTRA is needed. It's important to carefully consider each individual incident to ensure the most appropriate response.

Immediate Risk Situations

These situations include armed (weapons/device capable of causing serious injury or death) persons inside a building (or periphery) who pose a risk to some target(s) or active shooter scenarios. When immediate risk is identified, the school lockdown plan must be activated immediately, and 911 called. In these cases immediate police intervention and protection of students and staff is the immediate response – **NOT** a Stage 1 VTRA.

High-Risk Behaviours: Automatic Stage 1 VTRA activation

Formal categories for VTRA Protocol activation include, but are not limited to:

- Serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill;
- Verbal/written threats to kill self or others (“clear, direct, and plausible”);
- Internet website / MSN threats to kill self or others;
- Possession of weapons (including replicas);
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices);
- Fire Setting;
- Sexual intimidation or assault;
- Gang related intimidation and violence.

Stage 1 VTRA Team Leadership and Team Activation

In school-based VTRA cases, the principal and or their designate (V.P.) are the team leader. However, once the Stage 1 team is activated, leadership is shared as the team decides initial steps that need to be taken for immediate data collection and any immediate risk reducing interventions.

When a school administration becomes aware of any behaviour outlined in the “high risk behaviour” section they will inform the Coordinator-Division Supports and Services and the police member of the Stage 1 team. Other team members (school staff, agency staff, police, etc.) must promptly notify their supervisors of any behaviour that activates or should activate the protocol.

Anonymous Threats

Anonymous threats are typically threats to commit a violent act against an individual(s), specific group, or site (i.e. the school). They may be found written on bathroom walls or stalls, spray painted on the side of schools, posted on the Internet, letters left in a conspicuous place (teacher’s desk), etc.

Assessing the Threat

VTRA teams should consider the following in determining the initial level of risk based on the current data (i.e. the language of the threat):

- Amount of detail (location where the violence is to occur, target(s), date and time the violence is to occur, justifications, etc.).
- Threatened to do “what” with “what” (“kill”, “murder”, “ruin your lives”, “shank”, “shoot”, etc.)?
- Method of delivery of the threat (who found/received the threat, when did they receive it, where did they receive it, who else did they tell and who else knows about it?).
- Is the threat clear, direct, plausible, and consistent?

Suicide as a Special Consideration

When site-specific professionals are dealing with a situation where an individual is of concern because of suicidal ideation they should follow their existing protocols for suicide risk assessment. Most protocol partners have personnel who are trained in suicide risk assessment and intervention. Therefore, as a standard, this isn’t a category for VTRA Protocol activation. However, those trained in suicide risk

assessment should be VTRA trained and be open to the possibility the individual being assessed may be fluid (movement between the homicidal and suicidal domains). Additionally, when there is evidence of a suicide pact or a puppet-master peer dynamic, (someone in the background trying to drive the person to kill themselves), the VTRA Protocol should be activated.

Therefore, the VTRA Protocol should only be used as part of a suicidal ideation case when there is evidence of:

- Fluidity;
- Suicide pact;
- Conspiracy of two or more – puppet master;
- Multiple suicides in quick succession in a community.

Non-School Hour Cases

If information is received by a VTRA member regarding a threat that is “clear, direct, and plausible” before or after school hours, police will be called, parent(s) or caregiver(s) will be notified immediately so that they can take steps to inform and protect the target. The VTRA team will be activated if the situation is deemed to have potential to pose ongoing risk to member(s) of the school community.

Worrisome Behaviours

Worrisome behaviours are those behaviours that cause concern for members of the school or community and may indicate a student/person of interest is moving towards the risk of serious violent behaviour. Often, worrisome behaviours are grey-area cases that may or may not result in the activation of the VTRA Protocol.

Worrisome behaviours include, but aren’t limited to, the following:

- writing stories, journal entries and blog posts containing violent content;
- social media messaging;
- drawing pictures of a violent nature;
- making vague threatening statements;
- unusual interest in fire;
- significant change in aggressive or anti-social behaviours – a change in baseline;
- signs of domestic violence.

In these cases, the VTRA team isn’t automatically activated. However, these warning signs shouldn’t be ignored. The primary standard for assessing these of cases: when they become closer to reality, the greater the concern. In other words, when a person of concern draws mythical creatures engaging in scenes of brutal violence we don’t assume the author poses a risk, as mythical creatures aren’t real. However, a picture depicting a realistic violent act with details that parallel real life is more worrisome.

In many cases, following up on worrisome behaviours results in good early intervention measures. There are also cases where a little data can lead to a lot and what seems like a minor case can quickly evolve to the formal activation of the VTRA team. If further data is obtained suggesting the person was violent,

uttered threats or is in possession of a weapon then the VTRA Protocol is activated to investigate the threat.

Early Elementary Students

Generally most threat-related behaviour exhibited by elementary aged students would fall into the category of “worrisome behaviour”. If there is a significant change in baseline behaviour, weapons possession or clear, direct, and plausible threats, the formal VTRA protocol will still be activated. Simply because a child/youth is elementary age does not mean they cannot pose a risk.

Students with Diverse Learning Needs and VTRA

The multidisciplinary VTRA protocol will not be activated when child/youth with special needs engage in threat-making or aggressive behaviour that are typical to their “baseline”. In other words, if their conduct is consistent with their diagnoses and how it has been known to manifest in them then the VTRA Team may not be called upon to conduct an assessment. If the child/youth with special needs moves beyond their typical baseline behavior then the VTRA Team would be activated to assist in determining the reason for the increase in baseline and whether or not the child/youth poses a risk to self or others.

Once the VTRA Team is activated the process of data collection and assessment is not modified other than to ensure appropriate interviewing strategies with the child/youth with special needs. Staff members from the school and district level responsible for program planning and service delivery to child/youth with special needs will be consultants to the VTRA Team in these cases.

A note of caution: Sometimes school and community members may under react to a serious threat posed by a child/youth with special needs assuming that all of their behaviour are caused by or a result of their diagnoses rather than consider that a child/youth with special needs can move along a pathway of “justification” as well. The same dynamics that can increase the risk of violence in the general student population can also be factors in contributing to the violence potential of the child/youth with special needs independent of their diagnoses.

VTRA REMINDERS

Threat Assessment Trumps Suspension

In most cases, the Stage 1 team is activated and the Stage 1 REPORT FORM data is collected within reason before a suspension is considered. A poorly timed “out of school” suspension is high risk as this period is often viewed by high-risk student as the “last straw”. VTRA may or may not result in a suspension. Threat/ Risk Assessment is not a disciplinary measure.

Criminal Charges

The police officer assigned to the VTRA team will determine whether or not to lay charges. The police officer assigned has the full authority under their act to proceed with a criminal investigation or to lay charges. The VTRA protocol will not interfere with any criminal investigation. If the law enforcement team member chooses not to proceed legally at the time then the officer will continue with Stage 1 VTRA Team. A police investigation does NOT prevent the remaining VTRA members from continuing on with data collection relative to the threat assessment including obtaining history of prior target selection, site selection, and changes in baseline behavior.

VTRA Is Not a Disciplinary Measure

In the past, there have been VTRA trained professionals who have failed to activate the VTRA Protocol for legitimate cases and instead chose to threaten to activate a VTRA if the behaviour continues. It's not appropriate for an administrator to tell a student of concern if they engage in similar behaviour again, a threat assessment will be conducted. Doing this is contrary to the purpose of VTRA and a dangerous unidimensional practice. By doing so, the professional, intended or not, has essentially done a VTRA on their own and determined that the person doesn't pose a risk. The purpose of VTRA is to determine the plausibility of risk, not to be a punitive measure.

Guidelines for Re-entry into School

When the data suggests that a student poses a threat to others, he/she may be suspended from school until a more comprehensive assessment can be conducted. VTRA teams will guide the process from the initial assessment, to planning intervention and developing a plan for re-entry into school where a suspension has occurred. This is best accomplished when the VTRA teams outlines, in writing, steps the student, family, school, and others need to follow to ensure an appropriate assessment(s) has been conducted prior to re-entry into the school. Following the completion of necessary assessments, the initial VTRA members may work with the student and the parent(s)/ (caregiver) to develop a plan for re-entry that becomes a signed contract by all participants including the student and parent(s)/caregiver(s), if circumstances warrant.

VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT INTERVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Supportive Services

Each of the VTRA members needs to have the authority within his/her own organization to make immediate decisions with regard to supportive services. For example, it may be necessary to provide secure residential treatment or increased supervision in the school setting. It is also important to ensure that the support services and interventions extended to the student and family are culturally appropriate and/or accessible within the context of the limitations of the community.

Supporting Targeted or Victimized Students or Staff

The VTRA support person (psychologist, therapist, and FSLW) is responsible for ensuring that the recipient(s), victim(s) or target(s) of the threats are assessed and that services are provided as necessary. As the threat may be directed towards one or more students, staff, an entire class, or the school population, the circumstances will dictate how far reaching an intervention may be. The Coordinator-Division Supports and Services and the school administration will determine if crisis counselling or a crisis response team is needed.

Key Point: There may be cases where the recipient of a threat has been engaged in high-risk behaviour that may have lead to the threat(s) in the first instance. In those situations, the recipient of the threat(s) may also need to be assessed for high-risk behaviour.

CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

The partners collaborating on the community Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocols are committed to the sharing of relevant information to the extent authorized by law. All participants in the VTRA process are bound by the legislation and policies that guide their agency or organization regarding confidentiality and information sharing. It's their responsibility to know the legislation, take it into account and guide actions accordingly.

Section 126(6) of the Youth Criminal Justice Act enables information in a Youth Criminal Justice Act record to be shared, within the access period, with any professional or other person engaged in the supervision or care of a young person to document this information – including the representative of any school board or school, or any other educational or training institution only in limited circumstances. Information may be shared to ensure the safety of staff, students or to facilitate rehabilitation of the young person or to ensure compliance with a youth-justice court order or any order of the provincial director, respecting reintegration leave. Such sharing of information doesn't require the young person's consent.

In addition, the more recently proclaimed Children First Act (2014) is based on the philosophy programs and services that support children are most effective when provided through a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach. Such collaboration can only be effective when appropriate information sharing occurs between individuals and organizations involved in planning or providing programs and services for children. The philosophy is critical to ensuring successful outcomes for children and their families.

The Children First Act allows for greater information sharing among government departments, law-enforcement and other service providers when dealing with children. It changes the test within the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and Health Information Act by changing imminent danger to risk of harm to the health or safety of a minor when a decision regarding information sharing is being made. The Act allows for information sharing among parents and service providers for the purpose of providing services or benefits to the child that are in the best interests of the child. In addition, the Act provides liability protection in legislation for frontline workers who act in good faith and within the scope of their positions. For more about this and the Health Information Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Personal Information Protection Act and Children First Act is available at www.humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/information-sharing-decision-tree.pdf.

COMMUNICATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Welcoming, caring, respectful and safe schools are schools promoting open communication in a culture of information sharing and reporting of concerns. Throughout the entire school community, school administrators, teachers, support staff, students and parents must be encouraged and supported to openly voice concerns about school safety.

Responsible Reporting

All staff and students must be advised that any person in a school community having knowledge of high-risk student behaviour or having reasonable grounds to believe there is potential for high-risk or violent behaviour should promptly report the information to the school principal or another staff member. Students should be actively taught that seeking adult support for worrisome behaviour isn't ratting or snitching. Rather it's a social responsibility for the well-being of all. School staff need to actively counter the code of silence.

Fair Notice

The Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol partners are committed to keeping our schools and community safe for all people. As a result, schools and partner community agencies respond to youth behaviours that pose a potential risk to other members of the community.

It's the responsibility of each agency to communicate fair notice as appropriate for their site. School divisions provide fair-notice letters and/or post fair-notice information on their school websites (see Appendix I: Fair Notice Letter).

Communicating with the Media

When a case draws, or has the potential to draw, high-profile media attention formal communication should be collaborative between BRSD and or ECIS Community Relation Advisor and the City of Camrose Police or the RCMP and Children Services. The release of information should take into consideration those statutes guiding the release of information. Additionally, timing and content of the release must take into account police investigations so as not to jeopardize the investigation or the safety of any individuals. Additionally, all media releases need to be prepared collaboratively and released jointly with the agency involved and the City of Camrose or the RCMP and Children Services.

Documentation

Community Threat Assessment Report Form will be the written documentation of the School TAT or C-TAT meetings. The minutes taken in these meetings regarding the community threat/risk assessment, and the resulting shared information, are highly confidential. Only information required for the assessment can be shared, and only with the C-TAT involved in the particular assessment. The information cannot be redistributed or exchanged except for the purposes of the assessment itself. A copy of the Risk/Threat Assessment Summary Form (Appendix C) will be distributed to each community partner involved with a students' intervention plan. The official report will be stored in the student's confidential file and be kept at the applicable school. School-TAT minutes will be stored in a confidential file in the principal's office and copied to the Coordinator-Division Supports and Services. Documentation will be maintained in compliance with legal requirements with respect to disclosure. Additional information may be added as appropriate for implementation and monitoring. Worrisome behaviour reports will be stored in the student's confidential file and kept at the appropriate school.

THREAT ASSESSMENT RESPONSE

When a student engages in behaviours or makes threatening comments or gestures that may result in serious injury to self and/or others, the School Threat Assessment Team (School TAT) and

Community Threat Assessment Team (C-TAT) will respond in the manner identified in: **Appendix A – Overview of Procedure**. This Community Threat Assessment Protocol is based on The Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response’s Canadian Model of Violence Threat/Risk Assessment (VTRA).

The Violence Risk Threat Assessment (VTRA) follows a three-step process:

- Stage 1 Data collection and immediate risk reducing interventions;
- Stage 2 Comprehensive Risk Evaluation - Multidisciplinary risk evaluation; and
- Stage 3 Comprehensive multidisciplinary interventions

Stage 1: Data collection and immediate risk reducing interventions

Stage 1 VTRA Teams must include the following three professionals and others as the team or committee deems appropriate:

- School Principal and/or designate
- Coordinator-Division Supports and Services or designate
- RCMP or Camrose City Police

The initial data collection is often accomplished in one to two hours. It focuses on gathering case specific data using the **Threat Assessment Report Form (Appendix B)**.

Note: VTRA cases can be resolved at the Stage 1 level where the incident proves to either be a moment-in-time bad judgment call by the threat maker that is low risk; information that resulted in the activation of the Stage 1 Protocol proves to be unsubstantiated; or adequate interventions are able to be put in place under the direction of the school/police team that address the needs of the threat maker, target, etc.

Stage 2: Comprehensive Risk Evaluation

Stage 2 is a “multidisciplinary risk evaluation” which often involves some or all of the following:

- RCMP or Camrose City Police Member
- Psychologists, community counselling, Alberta Mental Health, Family School Liaison Worker (FSLW)
- Children’s Services and other community partners.

This second stage is focused on further data collection beyond the initial data set obtained by the Stage 1 Team and as such the Stage 2 members are charged (in collaboration with the Stage 1 Team) with the formal risk assessment and evaluation which may include the use of tests and measures.

Stage 3: Longer Term Treatment Planning -Multidisciplinary Intervention

This stage requires reconvening all the Stage I and/or II team members who are involved in the case at hand for the “development and implementation of a comprehensive multidisciplinary intervention” and to pre-determine a follow-up date for case review. In complex cases one agency will take the initial lead but, after stabilization, another agency may assume the leadership/coordinating role.

The three stages of the VTRA combine all appropriate threat assessment concepts and risk assessment factors. Stage 2 and Stage 3 may be simultaneous. This protocol allows for a comprehensive determination of violence risk posed, and the identification of appropriate interventions. It prevents under-reaction by professionals who may use general violence risk assessment tools as the unilateral measure to determine risk of violence of a young person. The three stages promote understanding that some individuals may not pose a risk for general violence, yet may be moving rapidly on a pathway of violence towards a particular target they consider justifiable.

School Threat Assessment Team

Typically the School Threat Assessment Team will consist of trained individuals, that include the principal, assistant principal, learning coach, teacher, FSLW, community partner if appropriate and either the assigned school resource officer or an assigned trained police or RCMP member. The school team participants should have threat assessment training. The school team will assess whether a risk to child/youth/staff safety still exists, and develop an intervention plan to support child/youth(s) involved, the greater student body, staff and the community.

The Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/Division VTRA lead or designate will be consulted and will participate in the threat assessment process as required.

Community Threat Assessment Team C- TAT

The C-TAT will consist of trained individuals that include the School TAT members, as well as the Student Services Coordinator or designate, police officer, RCMP member and appropriate community partners. When a school TAT has determined that a child/youth poses a medium or high level of concern to child/youth/staff safety, the principal will call the Student Services Coordinator to request that the C-TAT be activated. When a community partner determines the need to activate the C-TAT the partner will contact the Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/Division VTRA lead person.

Whenever possible, Threat Assessment Team (TAT) meetings will occur on school premises. The lead partner will be the school board/ school administration. In most cases the child/youth behaviour that activates the community partnership will be observed in or affect the school.

Activation of the School and Community Threat Assessment Teams by a Community Partner

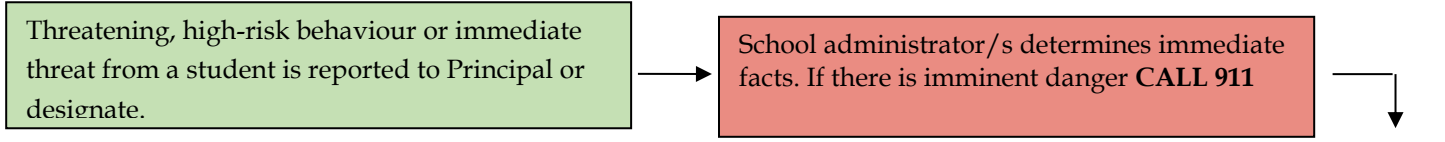
When staff members of a partner agency determine the need to activate the C-TAT, they will notify their designated lead C-TAT member. The community partner’s lead C-TAT member will contact the Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/Division VTRA lead or designate. C-TAT members will, at all times, take any actions necessary to facilitate immediate safety, without delay, regardless of the involvement or availability of other C-TAT members.

In most cases, the child/youth behaviour that activates the community partnership will be observed in, or affect, the school. Therefore, whenever possible, C-TAT meetings will occur on school premises. The lead C-TAT member will be the Coordinator-Division Supports and Services or designate

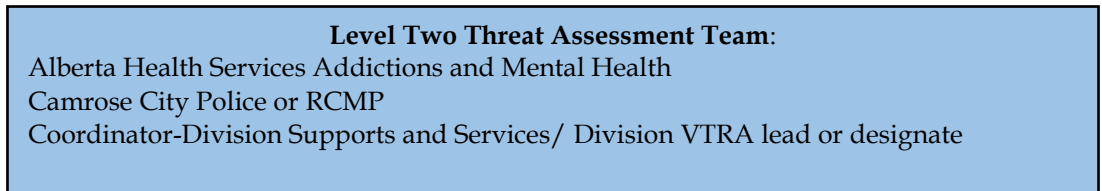
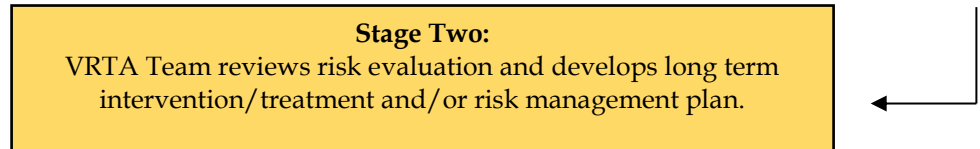
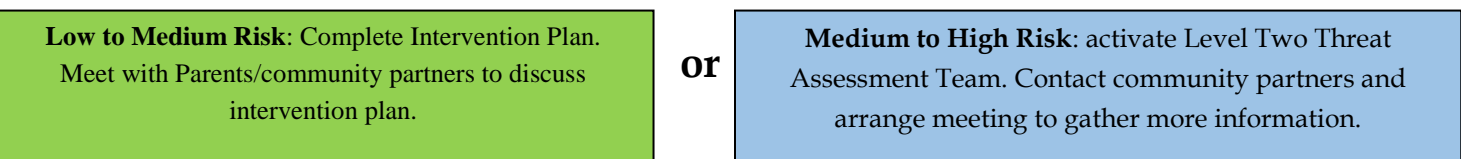
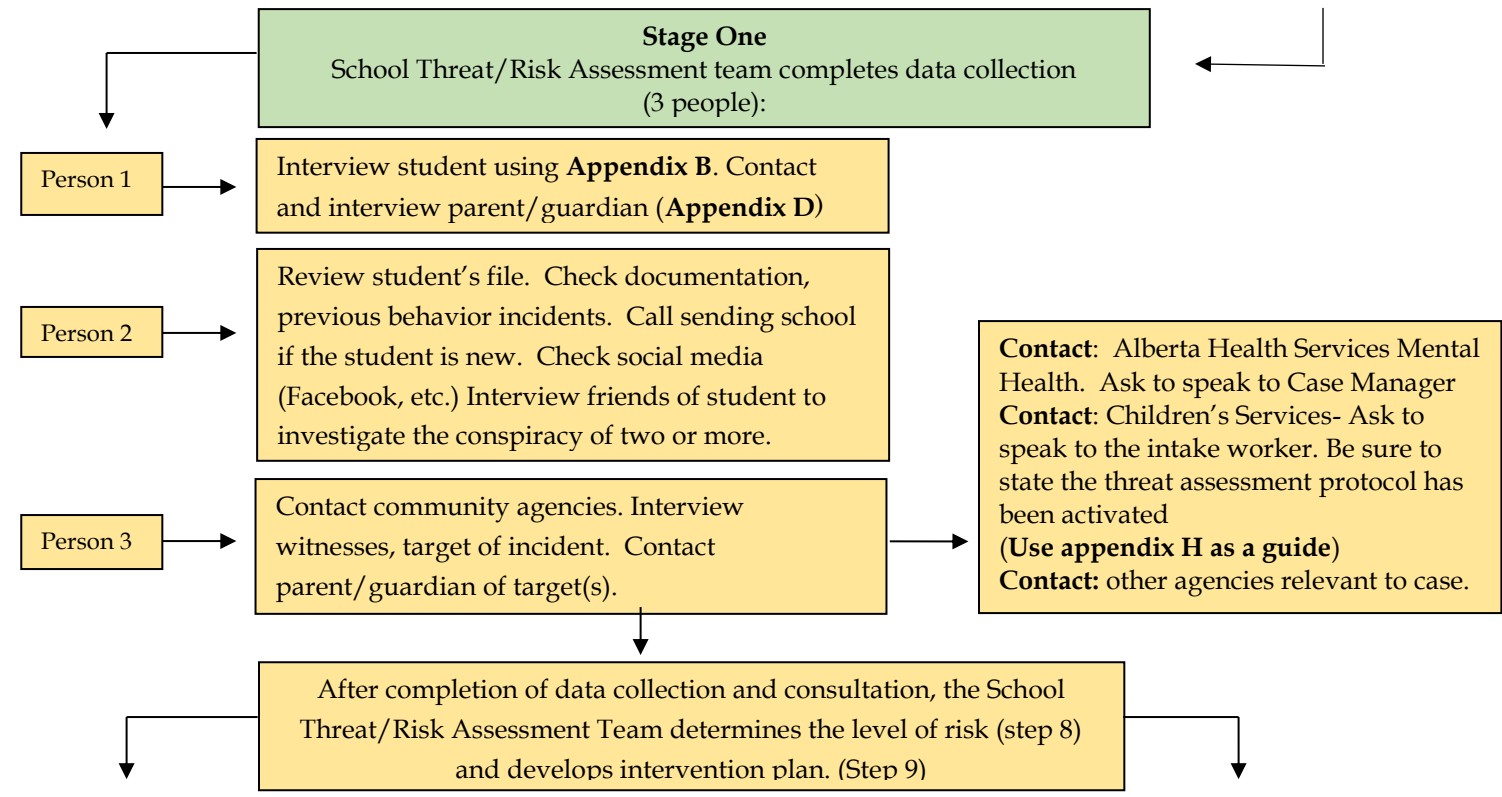
Appendices

APPENDIX A: Overview of procedure	page 15
APPENDIX B: Community threat assessment report form	page 19
APPENDIX C: Threat/risk assessment summary form	page 34
APPENDIX D: Parent/caregiver interview form	page 36
APPENDIX E: Worrisome behaviour flowchart	page 38
APPENDIX F: Worrisome behaviour risk assessment/management plan	page 39
APPENDIX G: VTRA follow up form	page 41
APPENDIX H: Contacting other agencies	page 43
APPENDIX I: Sample fair notice letter	page 44
APPENDIX J: Definitions	page 45

Appendix A: Overview of procedure



1. School Threat Assessment Team activates Stage One-data collection and immediate risk reducing interventions.
2. Be certain to know the whereabouts of the target(s) and the threat maker and address any immediate risk factors if they exist.
3. Check locker, backpack, desk and/or any relevant space of threat making student.
4. Administrator contacts Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/Division VTRA lead or designate, BRSD or ECIS Community Relation Advisor and RCMP/Camrose City Police to inform them that the process has been activated.



VTRA School Quick Guide

Steps	Actions	Completed yes/no
Step 1: Know the whereabouts of the target(s) and threat maker and address any immediate risk factors if they exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, appropriately monitor and/or detain the student(s) of concern until the police member of the team is present. • Ensure the student(s) of concern does not have access to weapons-do not allow them access to their lockers, backpacks, coat or cell phone. 	
Step 2: check locker, backpack, desk, car, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove and take photographs or copies of anything of concern found. 	
Step 3: Call the trained member of the Camrose City Police or RCMP detachment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share initial data and the police will determine if a student has a history of contact with the police or access to weapons. 	
Step 4: Notify BRSD Coordinator-Division Supports and Services or EICS Division VTRA lead and Community Relation Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicate the school has activated a stage 1 VTRA 	
Step 5: Determine interview plan and begin data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who will conduct interviews • Determine who will examine “hard” data (school records, internet history, surveillance footage, student records, contact previous school, social media) • Determine who will contact CS, Mental health (use Appendix H page 43) 	
Step 6: two members of VTRA team interview the threat maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the stage 1 VTRA report form (pg. 19) 	
Step 7: Parent notification and interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the basic facts have been determined, notify the parents/guardians of threat maker(s) and target(s). • Interview parents/guardians as part of the data collection (see appendix D page 36) 	
Step 8: Stage 1 meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VTRA teams comes back together to review all data and information collected • As a team, determine the level of risk and complete Stage 1 Assessment Form (page 29) 	
Step 9: Decide on a course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a team, determine a course of action (page 30) • If threat is assessed to be moderate to high level of concern, move student to stage 2. 	
Step 10: Intervention plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 Intervention Plan (page 31) with strategies to address all identified risk factors. • Have a meeting with parent/guardians to discuss intervention plan. • If moving ahead with stage 2, inform parent/guardians and explain rational for decision. 	

VTRA Community Response Guide

Steps	Actions	Completed Yes/no
1. Secure safety and address any immediate risk factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If possible, limit access to possible weapons and monitor the person(s) of concern until police member of the team has been contacted. 	
2. Inform agency VTRA lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the organization's VTRA lead of a Stage 1 VTRA activation. He or she will direct the process or provide consultation on how to proceed. 	
3. Contact police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call a VTRA-trained police member and share initial data. Police member will determine if there is a history of weapons possession/use or violence noted in police accessible records. 	
4. If the threat maker is school aged, contact the relevant school division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call the VTRA lead at either Battle River Schools or Elk Island Catholic Schools and share initial data. If unsure of where the child attends school, the VTRA lead can determine whether or not the child is enrolled in their school division. 	
5. Convene Initial VTRA team and determine plan for data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange a meeting of team members who will be involved in investigating this VTRA case (the investigation may be based out of the agency or school, depending on the situation). The VTRA team needs to determine a strategic plan for data collection (see pg. 19). Including who will interview the sources of data (all participants directly and indirectly involved), and who will examine hard data relevant to the case (school records, internet history, surveillance footage, etc). 	
6. Data collection, including interview with threat maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using the Stage 1 Report Form as a guide, conduct interviews and examine other sources of data. <i>NOTE:</i> more than two people should be present when interviewing threat-maker. 	
7. Parent notification and interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once basic facts are established, if possible or safe to do so, notify guardians/caregiver of both the threat maker(s) and target(s) at the earliest opportunity. Interview parents or guardians as part of data-collection process. <i>NOTE:</i> Police take the lead on inquiring about the "bedroom dynamic" 	
8. Stage 1 meeting review data and determine level of risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Stage 1 report form as a guide, VTRA team members come back together to review all information collected. As a team, determine the level of risk and record on the Stage 1 Report Form (pg. 31) 	
9. Decide on course of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a team, come up with a Stage 1 Intervention Plan with strategies to address all identified risk factors (see pg.31) If the threat is assessed to be moderate to high level of concern, advise agency and school division VTRA lead that Stage 2 is required. 	
10. Communication and storage of plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a meeting with threat maker and guardians to discuss the intervention plan. If moving to Stage 2, this will be a larger meeting with more community partners present. Send completed the Stage 1 Report Form and any supporting documentation to school division VTRA lead for safe storage. If the threat maker is not school aged, the team should together determine what protocol partner will store the VTRA documentation. 	

Steps for School Administrators and VRTA team members

Step 1: Be sure you know the whereabouts of the target (s) and threat maker and address any immediate risk factors if they exist.

- If necessary, appropriately monitor and or detain the student of concern until the police member of the team is present
- DO NOT allow “student of interest” access to coats, backpacks, desks or lockers
- Determine if the threat maker has access to the means (knife, gun etc)

Step 2: Check the locker, backpack, desk, and/or any relevant space.

Step 3: Call the trained VTRA RCMP or Camrose City Police Member; share initial data and police will determine if a history of weapons possession, use or violence is noted in police accessible records.

Step 4: Notify BRSD Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/School Division VTRA lead or designate and Community Relation Advisor of the Stage 1 activation.

Step 5: In collaboration with the VTRA RCMP/Police Member and counselling member, determine who will strategically interview sources of data including all participants directly and indirectly involved as well as “hard” data collection.

Immediate data may be obtained from multiple sources including:

The threat making student
Parents/caregivers (call both parents)
Friends, classmates, acquaintances
Teachers and other school staff (e.g. secretaries, educational assistants, counsellors, Family School Liaison Workers, bus drivers and other staff who know the student)
Community partners
Reporter/s of incident
Witnesses
Target/s

It is also imperative to take action on the following items:

Review current and previous school records (call the sending school if applicable)
Contact Police and request a criminal record check
Examine student’s locker, desk backpack, recent text books, assignments, binders, car
Request parents/caregivers search the student’s bedroom, computer internet history, diaries, notebooks and car (if applicable)
Call Children’s Services for relevant record check.
Call AHS Addictions and Mental Health for relevant record check
Call Youth Probation for record check relevant to the case.

Please refer to Appendix D for further interview questions for parents/guardians.

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY THREAT ASSESSMENT REPORT FORM

STAGE 1 VTRA REPORT FORM

Data collection and Immediate Risk Reducing Intervention

Violence/Threat making behaviors examples (addressed in this protocol but not limited to)

- Serious violence with intent to harm or kill
- Verbal/written threats to kill other (**Clear, Direct and Plausible**)
- Internet (Facebook, YouTube, etc.) text messaging, other social media-threats to kill others
- Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- Fire setting
- Sexual intimidation or assault
- Gang related intimidation and violence

Student		School	
Date of Birth		Date of Incident	
Grade		Parents/Guardian Names	
Age			

Three Primary Hypotheses for VTRA

1. It could be a conscious or unconscious cry for help.
2. It might be a conspiracy of two or more. (Who else could know? Who else could be involved?)
3. There may be evidence of fluidity.

Pre-interview Considerations:

- When possible, interview the threat maker or student of concern **after** the initial data has been collected such as locker check, interviewing the individual who reported the threat as well as the police partner doing an occurrence check for prior police contact. This will help to avoid the “uni-dimensional assessment” and provide interviewer(s) with data to develop case specific hypothesis and verbatim questions that can be asked in a strategic VTRA interview to test those hypotheses.
- There should **never** be more than 2 people in the room interviewing the threat maker or student of concern
- Remember to distinguish between Assessing the threat versus Assessing the threat maker

Step 6: Stage 1 VTRA interview report form

Series 1 Questions: The Incident
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where did the incident happen and when?2. How did it come to the interviewee's attention?3. What was the specific language of the threat, detail of the weapon or gesture made?4. What was there stated?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Justification for the threat?• Means to carry out the threat?• Consequences weighed out (I don't care if I live or die!)?• Conditions that could lower the level of risk (unless you take that Facebook post down I will stick a knife in your throat!)?5. Who was present and under what circumstances did the incident occur?6. What was the motivation or perceived cause of the incident?7. What was the response of the target (if present) at the time of the incident? Did they add or detract from Justification Process?8. What was the response of others who were present at the time of the incident? Did they add or detract from the Justification Process?
Notes

Series 2 Questions: Attack Related Behaviours

1. Has the student sought out information consistent with his/her threat making or threat related behaviour?
2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intentions to attack a target currently or in the past?
3. Has the student attempted to gain access to weapons or do they have access to weapons they have threatened to use?
4. Have they developed a plan and how general or specific is it (time, date, identified target selection, site selection, journal or justifications, maps, floor plans)?
5. Has the student been engaging in suspicious behaviour? Such as appearing to show inordinate interest in alarm systems, sprinkler systems, and video surveillance in school or elsewhere? Schedules and location of police?
6. Have they engaged in rehearsal behaviour, including packing or brandishing fake but realistic looking weapons, air rifles, pistols, or engaged in fire setting?
7. Is there any evidence of attack related behaviour in their locker (back pack, car trunk, etc.) at the school or bedroom at home (shed, garage etc.)?
8. Have others been forewarned of a pending attack or told not to come to school because "something big is going to happen"?

Notes

Series 3 Question: Threat Maker Typology

1. Does the threat maker (subject) appear to be more:
 - Traditional Predominately Behavioural Type?
 - Traditional Predominately Cognitive Type?
 - Mixed Type?
 - Non-Traditional?
2. Does the threat maker (subject) have a history of violence or threats of violence? If yes, what is his/her past:
 - **(HTS)** History of Human Target Selection
 - **(SS)** History of Site Selection
 - **(F)** Frequency of Violence or Threats
 - Intensity of Violence or Threats
 - **(R)** Recency
3. In the case at hand, what is his/her current:
 - **(HTS)** Human Target Selection
 - **(SS)** Site Selection
 - Does it denote a significant increase in **BASELINE** behaviour?

***NOTE:** In Stage I VTRA, history of violence is a significant risk enhancer but the best predictor of future violent behaviour is an **increase or shift in Baseline**. This may also include an individual who has become more withdrawn or quiet as opposed acting out.*

- Does the threat maker (subject) have a history of depression or suicidal thinking/behaviour?
- Is there evidence of fluidity in his/her writings, drawings or verbalizations?
- Does the threat maker (subject) use drugs or alcohol? Is there evidence it is a risk enhancing factor in the case at hand?
- Is there a mental health diagnosis or evidence of a mental health diagnosis that may be a risk enhancing factor in the case at hand?

Notes

Series 4 questions: The Target

*Remember that in some cases the target is higher risk for violence than the threat maker with the most common case being where the threat maker is the victim of bullying and the target is the bully.

1. Does the target have a history of violence or threats of violence? If yes, what is his/her past:
2. If yes, what is the frequency, intensity & recency (FIR) of the violence?
3. What has been his/her past human target selection?
4. What has been his/her past site selection?
5. Is there evidence the target has instigated the current situation?

Notes

--

Series 5 questions: Peer Dynamics

1. Are others involved in the incident that may intentionally or unintentionally be contributing to the justification process?
2. Who is in the threat maker's (subject's) peer structure & where does the threat maker (subject) fit (i.e. leader, co-leader, and follower)?
3. Is there a difference between the threat maker's individual baseline & his/her peer group baseline behaviour?
4. Who is in the target's peer structure & where does the target fit (i.e. leader, co-leader, and follower)?
5. Is there a peer who could assist with the plan or obtain the weapons necessary for an attack?

Notes

--

Series 6 questions: Empty Vessel

1. Does the student of concern (subject) have a healthy relationship with a mature adult?
2. Does the student have **inordinate knowledge** versus **general knowledge** or interest in violent events, themes, or incidents, including prior school – based attacks?
3. How has he/she responded to prior violent incidents (local, national, etc.)?
4. What type of violent games, movies, books, music, Internet searches, does the student (subject) fill himself/herself with?
5. Is there evidence that what he/she is filling him/herself with is influencing his/her behaviour? (**Imitators vs. Innovators?**)
6. What related themes are present in his/her writings, drawings, etc?
7. Is there evidence of fluidity and/or religiosity?

Notes

Series 7 Questions: Contextual Factors

1. Has the threat maker experienced a recent loss, such as a death of a family member or friend; a recent break-up; rejection by a peer or peer group; been cut from a sports team; received a rejection notice from a college, university, military etc.?
2. Have his/her parents just divorced or separated?
3. Is he/she the victim of child abuse & has the abuse been dormant but resurfaced at this time?
4. Is he/she being initiated into a gang & is it voluntary or forced recruitment?
5. Has he/she recently had an argument or "fight" with a parent/caregiver or someone close to him/her?
6. Has he/she recently been charged with an offence or suspended or expelled from school?
7. Is the place where he/she has been suspended to likely to increase or decrease his/her level of risk?

Notes

--

Series 8 questions: Family Dynamics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many homes does the student (subject) reside in (shared custody, goes back and forth from parent to grandparent's home)? 2. Is the student (subject) connected to a healthy/ mature adult in the home? 3. Who all lives in the family home (full-time and part-time)? Has anyone entered or left the home who may be influencing level of risk? 4. Who seems to be in charge of the family and how often is he/she around? 5. Has the student engaged in violence or threats of violence towards his/her siblings or parent(s) caregiver(s)? If so, what form of violence and to whom including Frequency, Intensity, Recency (FIR)? 6. What is the historical baseline at home? What is the current baseline at home? Is there evidence of evolution at home? 7. Are parent(s) or caregiver(s) concerned for their own safety or the safety of their children or others? 8. Does the student's level or risk (at home, school, or the community) cycle according to who is in the home (i.e. the student is low risk for violence when his/her father is home but high risk during the times his/her father travels away from home for work)? 9. Does the student have a history of trauma? Including car accidents, falls, exposure to violence, abuse, etc. 10. Has the student been diagnosed with a DSM IV diagnoses? 11. Is there a history of mental health disorders in the family? 12. Is there a history of drug or alcohol abuse in the family?
Notes

Step 7: Notify the Threat Maker(s) and Target(s) Parent(s) or Guardian(s) at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/guardians have been notified of the situation and this Stage I data collection phase. Parents/guardians have NOT been notified because: _____ _____
--



Use appendix D form when interviewing the parents/guardians of threat maker.

Step 8: Review Findings with the Threat Assessment Team.

VTRA Team members collate the data and discuss all relevant information regarding the student. As a team, ask the question: “To what extent does the student pose a threat to school/student safety?” “Does the student pose a threat to himself/herself or someone outside the school (i.e. family)?” The Stage I Assessment is an overall assessment of current level of risk and is a precursor to (if necessary) a more comprehensive Stage II Risk Evaluation.

□ Low Level of Concern

Threat is vague and indirect.

- Categorization of low risk does not imply “no risk” but indicates *the individual* is at little risk for violence.
- Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail; threat lacks realism.
- Available information suggests that the person is unlikely to carry out the threat or become violent.
- Within the general range for typical baseline behaviour for the student in question.
- Monitoring of the matter may be appropriate.

□ Medium Level of Concern

The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible.

- Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat. Wording in the threat and information gathered suggests that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (e.g., possible place and time).
- There is no clear indication that the student of concern has taken preparatory steps (e.g., weapon seeking), although there may be ambiguous or inconclusive references pointing to that possibility. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty; e.g., “I’m serious!”
- There are moderate or lingering concerns about the student’s potential to act violently.
- There is an increase or change in baseline behaviour.
- Categorization of risk indicates *the individual* is at an elevated risk for violence, and those measures currently in place or further measures, including monitoring, are required in an effort to manage the individual’s future risk.

□ High Level of Concern

The threat or situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.

- Threat is specific and *plausible*. There is an identified target. Student has the *capacity* to act on the threat.
- Information suggests concrete steps have been taken toward acting on the threat. For example, information indicates that the student has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance.
- Information suggests **strong** concern about the student’s potential to act violently.
- There is a significant increase or change in baseline behaviour.
- Immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring.

Step 9: Determine a Course of Action

With the input of *all* Threat Assessment Team members, decide on a course of action. If the student presents a low to medium level of concern, the student can likely be managed at school with appropriate (increased) supervision. If the student presents a medium to high level of concern, the Threat Assessment Team has determined that more information is required and will initiate the Stage 2 threat assessment.

Low to Medium Level of Concern

Implement the Intervention Plan (*Most students can be managed at school with interventions.*)

Medium to High Level of Concern

The Threat Assessment Team has determined that a Stage II Threat Assessment is needed.

Step 10: Develop an Intervention Plan

Use the following Intervention Plan to address all concerns which were identified during Stage I Assessment.

Stage 1 Intervention Plan (attach additional pages as needed)	
Disciplinary action taken:	
Intended victim warned and/or parents or guardians notified.	
Suicide assessment initiated on:	By:
Contract not to harm self or others created (please attach).	
Communicate with staff and teachers on a need-to-know basis.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily or <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly check-in with (Title/Name):	
Hold student accountable for being on time and remaining where they expected to be.	
Backpack, coat, and other belongings check-in and check-out by:	
Late arrival and/or early dismissal.	
Increased supervision in these settings:	
Modify daily schedule by:	
Drug and/or alcohol intervention with:	
If relevant, IPP goals and placement options reviewed.	
Review community-based resources and interventions with parents or caretakers.	
Obtain permission to share information with community partners such as counselors and therapists.	

Other action:

PARENT/GUARDIANS (attach additional pages as needed)
Parents will provide the following supervision and/or intervention:
Parents will:

Possible Home and Community Interventions:

- Parents agree to make sure the student does not have access to materials to facilitate the implementation of the threat (inspection of bedroom and computer for evidence of plans, maps, lists or materials to implement the violent act).
- Parents agree to allow law enforcement officers to search student's belongings to help determine progress towards threat development.
- Parents have been provided contact information to Alberta Health Services Addictions and Mental Health and have agreed to follow up.
- Future internet access will be limited and/or monitored (i.e. computer will be in a public area of the house).
- Parents agree to inform school administration ASAP if student makes further threatening statements.
- Student's travel to and from school will be supervised by the parent or guardian.

Team members	Date	Name	Signature
Principal			
Assistant Principal			
Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/Division VTRA lead person or designate			
RCMP/City or Camrose Police			
FSLW			
Children's Services			
Alberta Health Service-Mental Health			
Other(e.g. Alberta Health Services-Addictions, Victim Services)			

Review date:	Meeting called by:
---------------------	---------------------------

Appendix C: Threat Assessment Summary Form

Student:	School:
DOB:	Date of the incident:
Age:	Parents Names:

The purpose of this process is to determine whether or not a student poses a risk/threat to the safety of others or themselves. The Level of Concern is listed below:

Note: A copy of the Summary Form will be distributed to each community partner involved with the student's intervention plan.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Low Level of Concern Risk to target/s, student/s, staff, and school safety is minimal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat is vague and indirect. • Information contained within the threat is inconsistent, implausible or lacks detail, threat lacks realism. • Available information suggest that the person is unlikely to carry out the treat or become violent. • Typical baseline behaviour.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Medium Level of Concern The threat could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat is more plausible and concrete than a low level threat. Wording in the threat and information gathered suggests that some thought has been given to how the threat will be carried out (i.e. possible place and time). • No clear indication that the child/youth of concern has taken preparatory steps (i.e. weapon seeking), although there may be an ambiguous or inconclusive references point to that possibility. There may be a specific statement seeking to convey that the threat is not empty "I'm Serious". • Moderate or lingering concerns about the child/youth's potential to act violently. • Increase or change in baseline behaviour.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>High Level of Concern The threat of situation of concern appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat is specific and plausible. There is an identified target. Child/youth has the capacity to act on the threat. • Information suggests concrete steps have been taken toward acting on the threat. For example, information indicates that the child/youth has acquired or practiced with a weapon or has had a victim under surveillance. • Information suggests strong concern about the child/youth behavior potential to act violently. • Significant increase or change in baseline behaviour.

Intervention Plan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Intended victim warned and / or parents or guardians notified <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide assessment initiated on : _____ by _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Contract not to harm self or other created (attach) <input type="checkbox"/> Alert staff and teachers on a need to know basis <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplinary action taken <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative setting / long term suspension or expulsion program <input type="checkbox"/> Identify precipitating/ aggravating circumstances and develop Intervention Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Drug and/or Alcohol Intervention with : _____ <input type="checkbox"/> If special education student, review PLP goals and placement options <input type="checkbox"/> Review community based resources and interventions with parents/guardians <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain consent to share information with community partners <p>To be completed at re-entry meeting with school, student, and parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Daily or Weekly check-in with (title/name) <input type="checkbox"/> Backpack, coat and other belongings check-in and check-out by: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Late arrival and/or early dismissal <input type="checkbox"/> Modify daily schedule by: <input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour Management / Safety Plan (attach copy to this Threat Assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Increased Supervision in the following settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • <p>Parent/ Guardians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parents will provide the following supervision and/or intervention: <input type="checkbox"/> Parents will: 	
Threat Assessment Team Members	
Principal Assistant Principal Coordinator-Division Supports and Services or VTRA lead FSLW	RCMP/ City of Camrose Police Children’s Services Alberta Health Services-Addictions and Mental Health Other community partners
Date of Meeting:	Follow up Meeting within 30 Days:

Parent/Guardian name:	Signature:
Date:	

APPENDIX D: PARENT/CAREGIVER INTERVIEW FORM

Student Name:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Guardian name:	Relation to Student:

Be sure to ask parents to check student's bedroom, computer and social media

Family Dynamics:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family composition • Current living/custody arrangements • Relationship with siblings/parent • Other significant relationships • Privacy/supervision (e.g. computer in bedroom, etc.) • CFSA involvement
Medical Concerns:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prenatal/delivery complications • Developmental milestones • Previous/pending assessments/diagnoses • Medications (prescribed by who/when/ for what/ effectiveness) • Hospitalizations/ head injury with loss of consciousness • Seizures • Trauma • Suicidal ideation/ attempts • Sleeping / eating
Interests:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books/ movies / music • Videos games • Internet searches • Free time / evening activities
School:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family relationship with school • Student's relationships with teachers/ administration/ support staff • Attendance • General achievement
Peer Group:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who does person associate with? • What activities at school does the student participate in with peer group?
Questions Related to the Current Situation:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to weapons / materials • Indicators (drawings, comments, general concerns)
Other Worrisome Behaviour:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire-setting, cruelty to animals, etc • General school and community behaviour

Police Contact:	
Previous contact	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When: • Occurrences: 	
Family History:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning • Mental health • Drug / alcohol abuse • Trauma • Police involvement 	
Additional Comments:	

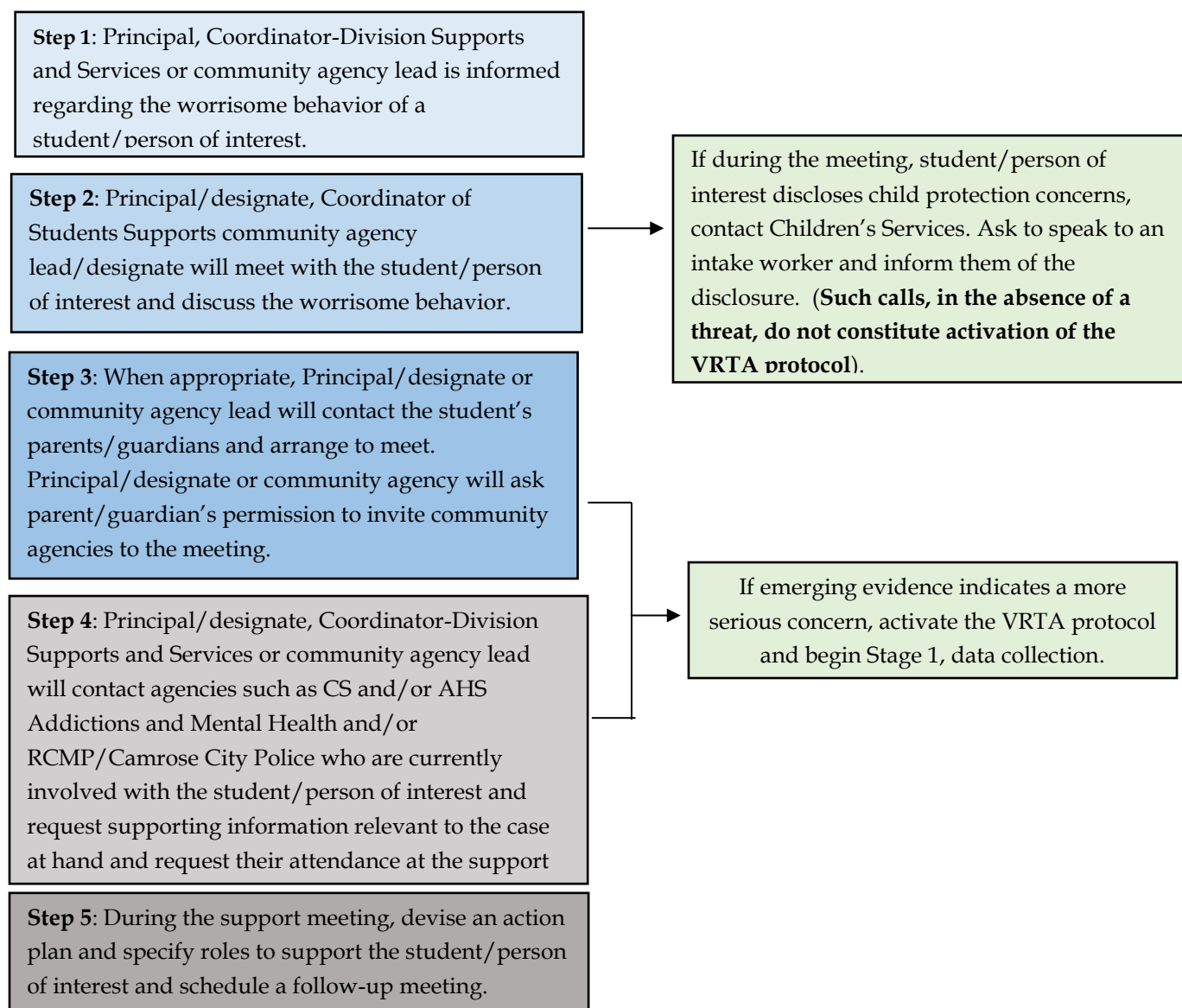
Completed By:	Date:

APPENDIX E: WORRISOME BEHAVIOUR FLOWCHART

Worrisome behaviour may be an early warning sign of more serious behaviour. Although the behaviour causes concern, it **may not constitute a threat assessment**. Worrisome behaviour should always be addressed so the situation does not escalate. Worrisome behaviour includes but is not limited to the following:

- Drawings and pictures that contains violence
- Writing stories/journal writings that contain violence
- Vague threatening generalized statements about violence towards others that do not constitute a threat
- Unusual interest in fire
- Significant change in anti-social or aggressive behavior.

A worrisome behaviour assessment can be completed at the school/worksite level. Principal or designate are welcome to connect Coordinator-Division Supports and Services/ Division VTRA lead person for support.



APPENDIX F: WORRISOME BEHAVIOR RISK ASSESSMENT / MANAGEMENT PLAN

Student/Person of Interest Name:	Date:
School/Worksite:	Grade:

Summary of Behaviour: *(attach drawings/notes/related documents if available)*

Social, Emotional, Behaviour Concerns:

<input type="checkbox"/> Recent loss	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in hygiene	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer conflicts
<input type="checkbox"/> Recent discipline	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of remorse	<input type="checkbox"/> Attention seeking
<input type="checkbox"/> Drug/alcohol use	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers to be alone	<input type="checkbox"/> Change in behaviour
<input type="checkbox"/> Social disengagement	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling that behaviour is justified
<input type="checkbox"/> Bully victimization		
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of empathy	<input type="checkbox"/> Rage outbursts	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor self-control
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of control	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor coping skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Easily agitated
<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression/anger		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recent family illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Family change	<input type="checkbox"/> Separation or divorce in family
<input type="checkbox"/> Home problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Family violence	
<input type="checkbox"/> Depression	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/> Hopelessness
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-Injurious behaviour		

Other(describe): _____

Investigation Notes:

Response Plan:

<input type="checkbox"/> Notify appropriate staff	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to AHS Mental Health
<input type="checkbox"/> Modify schedule as needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to AHS Addictions
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a student behaviour support plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to FSCD
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend universal supports in classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to Children’s Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral to FSLW	<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend Psychoeducational assessment
<input type="checkbox"/> Recommend community supports counselling	<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule action plan review date

Other: _____

Participants in developing the Response Plan:

Position	Name	Signature
Principal	_____	_____
Assistant Principal	_____	_____
Classroom Teacher	_____	_____
Parent/ Guardian	_____	_____
Coordinator of Student Supports	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

APPENDIX G: VTRA FOLLOW UP FORM

VTRA FOLLOW UP FORM

Student		School	
Date of Birth		Student Number	
Grade		Date of Initial VTRA	
Age		Parent/Guardian Names	

What was the nature of the original threat or risk?

What level of risk was assigned to the original incident? (Please circle)

LOW / MED / HIGH

Based on the intervention plan, what strategies or services have been implemented or accessed since the first threat/risk assessment?

Comments on the effectiveness of these strategies:

Have there been additional threats or risks? (Please circle) YES / NO

If yes, please describe:

Does the student still present a risk? (Please circle) YES / NO

If yes, please describe:

What supports, actions or referrals are required to mitigate the risks or concerns?

Participants in follow up process:

Position	Name	Signature
Coordinator of Student Supports/Division VTRA lead	_____	_____
Principal	_____	_____
Assistant Principal	_____	_____
Classroom Teacher	_____	_____
Parent/ Guardian	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

APPENDIX H: CONTACTING OTHER AGENCIES

As per the formal signed protocol, other agency partners may be involved in the Stage I VTRA process as consultants to the school/police team and sources of initial data relevant to the case at hand such as past or current involvement by other agencies that once they are informed of the initial school/police data may release necessary information or physically join the team.

- Call Children’s Services for record check relevant to the case at hand. Indicate to the intake worker that the threat assessment protocol is being activated. Provide the intake worker with the name, birth date of student, nature of the threat as well as concerning behaviors. Provide if possible the names, and birthdates of all adults in students’ homes.
- Call Alberta Health Services, Mental Health for record check relevant to the case at hand
- Call other agencies relevant to the specific case.

Upon receipt of the Stage I data, partner agencies check to see if the student in question is or was a client and then the agencies determine if they are in possession of information that in conjunction with the Stage I data requires them to “disclose”. Generally Stage II VTRA Team designates will report that a record check has been completed and:

- 1) There is nothing to report.
- 2) There is information relevant to the case that needs to be disclosed as per the VTRA Protocol (significant risk of harm to the health or safety of others is present).
- 3) The risk is not immediate but a Release of Information Form should be requested to allow for a full disclosure of the contents of the file relevant to the case at hand.

Note:

At this point of the Stage I process, some initial data may not be available to complete this form but enough information is usually available to determine if 1) an immediate risk is posed and 2) if a Stage II evaluation is required.

APPENDIX I: SAMPLE FAIR NOTICE LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents

Battle River School Division is committed to ensuring that all students and their families, as well as staff, feel safe, welcome and cared for at school.

Part of our commitment to providing a safe and caring environment is working together with others in the community to deal with any potential threats our schools may receive.

Significant threats are not a common occurrence in our schools, but In order to protect students, we do take all potential threats seriously. Potential threats may be made through social media posts, verbal or written words, or various forms of intimidating action.

In that circumstance, we use a process called the Violent Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) protocol. The VTRA is a process which helps our school division and other agencies work cooperatively together to respond to concerning situations.

School Administration, the school division and the Police would always be the first to respond to any form of threatening behaviour. The VTRA protocol allows us to also bring in social workers, mental health clinicians or other professionals with skills relevant to the situation if necessary. Personal information shared between agencies in the VTRA process respects and balances each individual's right to privacy with the need to protect the safety of everyone involved.

Parents / guardians will be notified as quickly as possible if such a situation occurs.

A complete copy of the Violent Threat Risk Assessment protocol is posted on our BRSD website [http://www.brsd.ab.ca/Division/AnnualReports/Documents/Community VTRA Protocol Violence Risk Threat Assessment.pdf](http://www.brsd.ab.ca/Division/AnnualReports/Documents/Community_VTRA_Protocol_Violence_Risk_Threat_Assessment.pdf) If you'd like additional information on this protocol, please contact Coordinator-Division Supports and Services Christie Badry, at 780-672-6131 ext 5270.

Thank you for your support of our work to ensure our schools remain safe and caring places for all.

Sincerely,

Rita Marler,
Superintendent of Schools

This letter is to be shared with parents by each school. The letter can be shared using any two of these three options:

- *Post on your school website along with the school handbook*
- *Add to your school handbook*
- *Share in a school newsletter*

APPENDIX J: DEFINITIONS

- **Student** refers to all children and youth under the age of 18.
- **School Threat Assessment Team** is team of school based professionals (e.g. principals, vice principals,) trained to assess a threat to student safety by another student or group of students. The Student Services Coordinator will be consulted and will participate in the school based risk/ threat assessment process.
- **Community Threat Assessment Team C-TAT** is a team of community partners trained in violence/risk threat assessment, which can initiate the threat assessment protocol or be asked by a school to participate in the protocol.
- **Worrisome Behaviour** is behavior that causes concern and may indicate that a student/person of interest is moving toward a greater risk of violent behavior. This behavior includes but is not limited to: drawing pictures that contain violence, stories/journal writings that contain violence, making vague/generalized statements about violence towards others that do not constitute a threat. Worrisome behaviour may be an early warning sign of the development of more serious high risk behaviour. All worrisome behaviour should be addressed. These situations may involve activation of the In-School Treat Assessment Team (S-TAT).
- **High Risk Behaviour** expresses intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. This behavior includes but is not limited to: interest in violent content, unusual interest in fire/fire setting, escalation of physical aggression, significant change in anti-social behaviour, unusual interest in and/or possession of weapon/replica of a weapon, bomb threat, internet threat to kill and/or injury to self and/or others. The School TAT should be activated and after consultation with the Student Services Coordinator and may lead to the activation of the C-TAT.
- **Threat** is any expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be spoken, written, drawn, posted on the internet (MSN, Facebook) or made only by gesture. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.
- **Threat Assessment** is the process of determining if a threat maker (someone who utters, writes, emails etc. a threat to kill a target or targets) actually poses a risk to the target they have threatened.
- **Risk Assessment** is the process of determining if a student of concern may pose a risk to some unknown target or targets at some unknown time.
- **Violence** is a continuing process of thoughts and behaviour that are dependent on the interaction between a person who is inclined to violence; a stimulus that causes the violence; and a setting that allows for violence or does nothing to prevent a violent act from occurring. Violence is dynamic and multidimensional. It is a process that is developed over time.

- **Low Level of Concern** is a risk to target/s, student/s, staff, and school safety that is minimal. Low categorization of risk does not imply “no risk”, but indicates *the individual* is at little risk for violence, and monitoring of the matter may be appropriate. (*Most students can be managed at school with interventions*).
- **Medium Level of Concern** is a threat that could be carried out, although it may not appear entirely realistic. Violent action is possible. Moderate categorization of risk indicates *the student* is at an elevated risk for violence, and those measures currently in place or further measures, including monitoring, are required in an effort to manage the individual’s future risk.
- **High Level of Concern** is a threat or situation of concern that appears to pose an imminent and serious danger to the safety of others. High categorization of risk indicates *the student* is at high or imminent risk for violence, and immediate intervention is required to prevent an act of violence from occurring.

Signatories of the Protocol

Rita Marler

Superintendent of Schools, Battle River School Division



Norm Erickson

Board Chair, Battle River School Division



Shawn Haggarty

Superintendent of Schools, Elk Island Catholic Schools



Ted Paszek

Board Chair, Elk Island Catholic Schools



Melissa Elliot

Manager, Northeast Zone Central Region, Child Services



Brenda Nelson

Program Manager Central Zone East, Alberta Health Services



Corporal Mark Cusack

Camrose RCMP



Lee Foreman

Deputy Chief of Police, Camrose Police Service



Denis Potvin

Eastern Edge RCSD Regional Manager



Jessica Hutton

Executive Director, Camrose Open Door

