

Title	Risk of Violence Assessment Procedure	Procedure No.	5014
Department	Learning Support Services - Psychology		
Reference(s)	<i>Safe Schools Act, 2006</i> <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> <i>Safe School Policy (4008a)</i> Emergency Procedure- Operations (4001) Safe School Procedure – Suspension of Students (4003) Police/School Board Protocol (4008e) Traumatic Events Response Team Procedure (9005) School Response to Threatening Behaviours Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario <i>Policy: Health and Safety (2005)</i> <i>Independent Procedure: Employee Accident/ Incident Report (9009)</i>	Effective Date	2010 May 11

1.0 Introduction

All school administrators are required to develop plans and introduce measures to create caring and safe schools. While the emphasis needs to be placed on the prevention of incidents, procedures need to be in place to respond to incidents when they occur.

A Risk of Violence (ROV) assessment is a comprehensive clinical assessment conducted by a Psychologist in order to understand the determinants of aggressive behaviour in a student in order to provide information and decision support for ongoing behaviour, safety and educational plans. It involves extensive history taking, multiple interviews and use of tests and instruments. A ROV assessment is requested when there is a history of uncontrolled aggressive behaviour and there have been longstanding challenges with respect to the student's behaviour. Often mental health/psychosocial concerns are present. ROV assessment requires informed parental (and normally, student) consent. An ROV assessment is requested through the Superintendent of Student Achievement Safe Schools when a student has been given a long-term suspension or suspension pending expulsion and there is no effective plan in place a) to maintain school safety; b) to prevent further occurrences; and c) to assist the student to develop alternatives to aggressive behaviour.

Administered By	Learning Support Services
Amendment Date(s)	2013 February

The purpose is not to exclude a student from a school but to inform decision makers about the needs of the student and to recommend interventions that will reduce the probability of future incidents.

2.0 What is involved in a ROV Assessment

A ROV assessment generally includes an in-depth examination of i) individual student characteristics ii) family factors iii) social-cultural factors (iv) protective factors (v) historical factors. Additional information also may be obtained regarding personality and social-emotional functioning. This information is generally collected through a detailed clinical interview with the student; his or her family and several staff with an approved instrument using the Structured Professional Judgment methodology (e.g. Earl -20, SAVRY). Review of available school records (e.g. OSR and any reports/assessments from external sources) will also be undertaken. Other psychological assessment instruments will be used as appropriate with the discretion of the psychologist responsible for the assessment. Other risks may be considered on a case by case basis as appropriate including assessment of risk of suicide, self-harm, substance abuse or sexual perpetration at the discretion of the psychologist.

It is important to note that no psychological test is completely accurate in predicting future violence although it is equally important to note that a careful and thorough evidence-based psychological assessment of factors pertinent to violence can significantly improve judgements relating to the level of risk posed by a particular student and can contribute significantly to safety planning.

Note: This is a significant intervention with potentially serious repercussions for the student.

3.0 When to refer for a ROV assessment

Assessment takes place after incident(s) in contrast to Threat Risk Assessment (see: Responding to Threats made by Students Procedure). It is appropriate for an ROV assessment to be requested if a decision has been made to not reinstate a student following an incident of violence and there is no effective safety plan in place. The assumption is that the school team cannot determine if the student is safe to return until the assessment has been completed.

3.1 Referral Process

It is presumed that there have been previous unsuccessful attempts to deal with the aggressive behaviour, possibly including interventions by school support personnel, collaboration with parents, consultation with outside agencies (mental health, child protection, youth justice) as well as the use of progressive discipline and/or restorative practices. Following consultation with the school team, the Principal (or designate) will contact the Superintendent of Student Achievement Safe Schools and his/her Superintendent of Student Achievement to discuss the referral and receive approval. If approval is given by the Superintendents, the Superintendent of Student Achievement Safe Schools will contact the Coordinator, Psychological Services, who will also be involved in the decision to proceed with a ROV assessment.

3.2 Involvement of the Police

Threats and Assaults fall under the Criminal Code of Canada. If the behaviour is deemed significant by school administrative staff or serious enough to warrant charges, contacting local police is recommended (even for students under 12 years of age).

Note: School administrators need to follow mandatory police reporting requirements under the Safe Schools Act and the Police-School Board Protocol.

Note: victims may independently pursue charges even if not recommended by the school.

3.3 Consent

Prior to any referral for psychological assessment consent needs to be obtained by the school administration and documented on the Support Services Referral Form (SSRF).

It is the assigned psychologist's responsibility to complete and document an informed consent with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) using the standard consent form used by Psychological Services. It is important for students and parents to understand that the purpose of the assessment is to identify those factors that can be addressed so that efforts can be made to prevent future problematic behaviours.

Parents and students will be informed that the assessment may be used by administration to inform decisions regarding suspension and expulsion.

3.4 Assignment of Psychology Staff

The Coordinator, Psychological Services will assign one of the psychologists to be responsible for the assessment, along with the psychological staff member assigned to the school. Psychologists responsible for the assessments will have undertaken some additional training in ROV assessment.

4.0 Refusal to consent or cooperate

A parent's or student's refusal to consent to participate in the risk assessment or a lack of cooperation with the ROV assessment will be communicated to the Superintendent of , Safe Schools. The refusal to participate in the assessment in itself should not be used as grounds to not return the child to school. The decision regarding whether or not to return the student to school must be related to the assumption of a continued threat to school safety given the absence of critical risk information and the absence of a viable safety plan.

4.1 Timelines

ROV assessments are considered a priority by Psychological Services. Recommendations based on the evaluation of protective and risk factors will be available within a maximum of 20 days from the 1st day of suspension as they are

necessary to inform decisions regarding re-entry or extended suspension/expulsion decisions. The benchmark set by the Psychology Department is to have the assessment completed within 10 school days from the referral at step 2.

5.0 Role of Psychological Services Coordinator

The Coordinator of Psychological Services will be responsible for maintaining a group of qualified and trained psychologists who will conduct the ROV assessments. The Coordinator will assign a psychologist who will be responsible for producing the assessment report and who will work in collaboration with the school personnel and social work/counselling staff to obtain the necessary background psychosocial, educational information for the report.

All psychologists who perform the ROV assessments will have met the standards required to perform ROV assessments. This includes graduate level psychological training in normal human development, developmental psychology, psychopathology, personality dynamics and clinical interviewing. Additional specific risk assessment training in order to reliably administer and score test instruments is required.

Assigned psychologists will have the benefit of peer consultation and peer review to ensure that there is consistency in decision making and continued in-service professional development in the area.