



Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Wellington Catholic District School Board is committed to providing safe learning environments for all students, staff, school visitors, and community members. When safety is threatened by the potentially violent or dangerous behaviour of a student, which places either the student or others at risk, school staff follow specific protocols for the protection of all. It is important that you and your child(ren) are aware of these protocols as, in times of imminent risk, they will be followed and might include, a) the immediate involvement of emergency services or supports and, b) sharing of private information.

**Community Violent Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA):** This is a community-wide protocol that details the steps by which school staff quickly respond to threatening incidents, such as: possession of a weapon or replica, bomb threat or plan, verbal, written, or electronic (internet) threats to injure or kill oneself or others, or other threats of violence. The first step involves gathering the Principal/Vice Principal, school social worker or youth worker, Board VTRA advisor, and police to assess the immediate threat. If the situation is deemed one of imminent risk, the Superintendent is informed and community agencies that are part of the VTRA protocol, such as local mental health organizations, are consulted.

**Suicide Intervention Protocol:** The Suicide protocol details the steps by which school staff respond to a student at risk of suicide. The protocol details steps for responding quickly, sensitively, and effectively to ensure the student's safety. The steps include having a trained staff member interview the student and taking the necessary steps to ensure safety and arrange appropriate support for the student.

**The Connectivity Table:** The purpose of this community table is to provide coordinated support for individuals or families in the Guelph-Wellington area who are at risk of imminent crisis. When a student or family is identified as at risk, school board staff will make every attempt to support families using Board resources and by helping families connect to community services. However, in the rare circumstances that these attempts are not successful and it is agreed a crisis is imminent, the situation may be presented to the Connectivity Table for help connecting to appropriate services.

**The Issue of Privacy:** Students aged 14 or older are presumed to be capable of making their own decisions regarding collection or disclosure of personal information. Under the age of 14, parental/guardian consent is required to share information about a student. However, in any emergency situation, including imminent risk to the safety of a student or students, or others, the school may seek immediate assistance regarding a child under the age 14 without parental/guardian consent. Personal information shared during these processes will respect and balance each individual's right to privacy with the need to ensure the safety of all.

**Contact with Parents and or Guardians:** Parents and guardians play a vital role in maintaining the safety and well-being of their children. When a student is involved in a VTRA or Suicide Intervention protocol, every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians unless circumstances prevent us from doing so. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, or if they choose not to provide consent but a safety risk still exists, the processes outlined in the VTRA or Suicide Intervention protocols will still be followed.

As always, student safety is our first priority. If you have any questions regarding Wellington Catholic District School Board's Community Violent Threat Risk Assessment or Suicide Intervention Protocols, please contact the Superintendent of Education.

Sincerely,

Tamara Nugent  
Director of Education  
September 6, 2016

