

August 31, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Fair Notice and Process, Student Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO)

In Medicine Hat Public School Division, the safety of our children is a top priority. Along with our community partners, we are committed to keeping our schools safe for students and staff. The community partners as members of the Southeast Alberta Regional Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) committee have developed a plan for responding to all situations in which students may be posing a threat to themselves or others, which includes that all staff must report all threat related behaviours.

What is the purpose of an Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) Process?

The Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) Process is designed to be proactive in developing intervention/safety plans that address the emotional and physical safety of those involved; to ensure a full understanding of the context of the threat; and to begin to understand the factors that contribute to the threat-maker's behaviour.

What behaviours warrant an Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) Process to be initiated?

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written, drawn, posted on the Internet, or made by gesture. Every threat must be taken seriously, thoroughly investigated and a response and follow through completed.

What is an Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) Team?

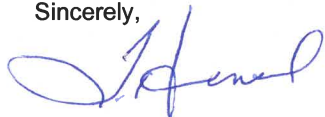
Each school has a multi-disciplinary ARTO team that includes the school administration, school-based counselors and support staff, and may also include division resource staff and community partners (i.e. police, mental health practitioners). It is important for all parties to engage in the ARTO process. If for some reason there is reluctance to participate in the process, by the threat-maker or the parent/guardian, the process will still continue to ensure a safe and caring learning environment for all.

What happens in an Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO)?

The ARTO process begins when threat making behaviours are reported. The ARTO process is then activated. Interviews will be held with the student(s), the threat-maker, parents, and staff to determine the level of risk and develop an appropriate response to the incident. An intervention plan will be developed and follow up meetings will occur, as deemed necessary, to ensure that interventions are supporting all those involved.

This letter is intended to serve our community with fair notice that we, as a school division, will not accept "no response" to a threat in our schools. We are proud to be able to provide this level of support to our school communities and we are fortunate to have the commitment of our community partners. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact your school administrator, or further information can be found on the division website.

Sincerely,



Tracy Hensel
Superintendent

The model presented reflects the thinking and work of J. Kevin Cameron, Executive Director of the Center for Trauma Informed Practices www.ctipractices.com.