High Functioning Safe2Tell Teams

This guide provides recommendations from High Functioning Safe2Tell Teams (HFS2Ts) and is intended for local multidisciplinary teams **already familiar** with Safe2Tell and P3. If you would like a 101 level training, please reach out to **info@safe2tell.org.** The best practices outlined in this guide are in the area of technical operations, paradigms, and responding to student frequently asked questions.

If you have suggestions or improvements for this guide, please contact us at **info@safe2tell.org** or **720-508-6800.**

safe2tell™ Colorado

I. Technical Operations

Technical Operations are how Safe2Tell multidisciplinary teams maximize and streamline coordinated efforts in the P3 system.

Utilize the Disposition tab to view and update In-Progress Notes. More than just checking the boxes, teams share notes relevant to the investigation. This can include, but is not limited to:

- Law Enforcement entering the Call For Service (CFS) Number for the school team to cross reference if needed.
- Law Enforcement copying/pasting information from internal reports about the result of a welfare check or law enforcement contact because of a Safe2Tell tip, in P3.
- Asking Safe2Tell Dispatch to ask the reporter specific questions via Two Way Dialogue.

Sample of in progress notes between responders

Tips are quickly and consistently closed out. Safe2Tell does not consider an event resolved until it is closed out. Effective Safe2Tell Teams close out tips in a timely fashion. To close out a tip, change the drop-down menu near the top of the window to closed.

P3 Campus Tip Manager			Safe2Tell Colorado		🔔
Tip ID	P3 ID	Other ID	Case ID	Status	Event Type
				Closed ⌄	

One contact point to close out tips. Information sharing is central to the Safe2Tell infrastructure. However, to eliminate group confusion, one designated individual should be the one to close out tips (or monitor that tips are closed out). This individual can be at the school, district, or law enforcement level.

Intentionally teach team expectations. Below are sample questions to consider when establishing policy or expectations. When should individuals take the lead on investigations? If a school has a SRO, when are they on a FYI basis and when are they expected to respond?

Maintain reporter anonymity. Anonymity of the reporting party is a central feature of the Safe2Tell program and a motivating factor for students to break the Code of Silence and report. Senate Bill 21-081 *Measures to Prevent the Misuse of Safe2Tell* outlines a procedure for, "A court-ordered production of records when local law enforcement, public safety agencies, or district attorneys determine probable cause a tipster used the program in the commission of false reporting of an emergency. The release of program materials is justified on balance in view of the probable violation and the program purpose of anonymity."

Narrate dispositions. High functioning Safe2Tell teams continually work to eliminate silos of information. Narratives may include rationale for decisions, context of the student, and other pertinent information. The detail included in dispositions are sufficient that no additional context is required to comprehend the response to the tip.

Ask for assistance when needed. From resetting P3 passwords to trainings on P3 and Safe2Tell statute, Safe2Tell is happy to provide local multidisciplinary teams with any assistance needed.

II. Paradigms

Prior to a challenging situation occurring, high functioning Safe2tell multidisciplinary teams take active steps towards maintaining positive attitudes around students and tipsters.

1. High Functioning Safe2Tell Teams keep tip contents confidential

> Rather than sharing Safe2Tell as the source of information, use generic phrases like **"It was brought to our attention"**

Remember that Safe2Tell tip contents cannot be disclosed (C.R.S. Section 24-31-601 et seq). Sharing tip contents (including forwarding or copying information in the tip to others) is not permitted (C.R.S. Section 24-31-607) to maintain tipster anonymity. If you need to assign someone else who did not receive the tip initially, please contact 1-877-542-7233 and request the re-assignment.

- **Cross referencing a Safe2Tell report in other forms.** Only the Safe2Tell tip number may be entered in follow up documents (i.e., threat assessment) when necessary for cross reference.

- **Focus on solutions.** When Safe2Tell is disclosed in a conversation, individuals a conversation may move from resolving the concern to other matters. Individuals may wonder:
  - If they can see the tip. Sharing tip contents verbatim is prohibited (C.R.S 24-31-607 et seq.).
  - The identity of the tipster. Tipster anonymity is protected by statute (C.R.S 24-31-607 et seq.).

  By not sharing the source of the information, the conversation is driven towards resolving the issue of concern and away from a focus on the source of information. Ideally, a conversation around a Safe2Tell tip looks and feels identical as if the information came in via any other means.

2. High functioning Safe2Tell Teams believe all good faith tips are good tips

- **Duplicate tips on an incident are the reflection of a healthy community** who is well trained with what to look out for and what to report. Although it can be burdensome, high functioning Safe2Tell teams celebrate the fact that multiple people noticed something and spoke up.

- **Unfounded tips are OK.** Our executive functioning doesn't fully develop until age 25. As such, we need to rely on students reporting anything that makes them feel unsafe. High functioning Safe2Tell Teams recognize they are the experts and can sift through the difference between credible and non-credible threats. They

don't place the burden on students to figure it out and encourage students to report if there is doubt.

- o For example, consider the hypothetical tip scenario: *After the school shooting in Parkland in February 2018, fear was running high of a similar attack happening in our schools. A S2T Team received a tip of fear of a classmate being a school shooter because they were cross-eyed and "weird".*
  - ▪ *This tip information alone may not call for a full threat assessment. However, the S2T Team recognized the value of the tip. The tipster, an elementary student, was afraid and feeling unsafe and knew where to report. This is a success.*
- **Reporting relieves stress in the tipster.** Worrying about a classmate can be burdensome and affect the social, emotional, and academic performance of a student. Regardless of the quality of the tip, tipsters can release the burden of worrying alone about a situation.

3. **High functioning Safe2Tell teams treat subpar tips as learning opportunities**

    When misuse tips, false tips, and/or tips with little to no investigative value occur, high functioning teams:

    - **Examine their assumptions** Continue to emphasize the positive messaging of Safe2Tell and do not overreact to disproportionately emphasize misuse. Best practice say educators should spend more time focusing on what to do than what not to do.
    - **Explore the role school culture and climate plays into Safe2Tell.** Sometimes, there is a larger culture and climate issue that is manifesting itself through Safe2Tell reports
      - o Examine the training students receive about Safe2Tell and ways to build awareness of the program for students. Reinforce that Safe2Tell reports are designed to protect (keep people out of hurt or harm) and not to hurt (get someone in trouble, get revenge, get a laugh, etc.)
      - o If possible, tipsters submitting false tips may face school and/or law enforcement consequences

4. High functioning Safe2Tell teams own their tips

When lackluster tips regularly come in, rather than blaming students, high functioning teams examine the **school culture** and **Safe2Tell training efforts**

- **Treat Safe2Tell Tips like any other tip.** For example, if the information received calls for a suicide assessment based upon district policy, it should be implemented regardless of if the information came in via Safe2Tell, in person, or in another method.
- **All tips are taken seriously and investigated.**
  - For example, consider the hypothetical tip scenario: *A tip was received from an elementary student who claimed he hadn't gotten his PBJ at home. The High Functioning Safe2Tell Multidisciplinary Team decided to be safe and dispatched a welfare check. The team found the student was a victim of neglect, a child abuse case was opened, and the student received additional services at school.*
- **Creativity in investigating tips**
  - *Consider how a High Functioning Safe2Tell Multidisciplinary Team would respond to the hypothetical scenario. In the case of a planned school attack tip received about a student who was looking at others cross-eyed and was acting "weird", the school principal conducted a routine spot assessment of the student the following day. In that spot assessment, the principal monitored the student's behavior. While the multidisciplinary team felt the description in the tip did not warrant a full threat assessment, the school investigated the tip appropriately.*
- **Apply additional background information to investigation.** Often, the Safe2Tell multidisciplinary team has more contextual information than is contained in the tip itself. The team applies this background to respond accordingly.

5. Consistent and empathetic responses to student FAQs

High functioning Safe2Tell multidisciplinary teams develop and reinforce positive messaging around the Safe2Tell program. This messaging is used by the team and is also relayed to the larger community of trusted adults that support students and schools.

- **Can I report _____ to Safe2Tell?**
  - No need to answer the question directly. Safe2Tell is designed to be a "catch all" for safety. If we limit what students report, we are placing doubt on what can be reported. Instead, consider a response such as:
    "If this is something that makes you feel unsafe, first talk to a trusted adult. If you don't feel comfortable talking and want to be anonymous, or if it's after hours, report it to Safe2Tell."

- **What happens when I make a Safe2Tell report? Or, what happens if I report _____ to Safe2Tell?**
  - The tips go to the same individuals as if you were to report this in person. As such, they are handled the same. (For example, if your school does Restorative Practices as an intervention for bullying, RP may be used for a S2T report just as it may be used for an in-person report).

- **Is it really anonymous? What if I'm the only one my friend told?**
  - Yes, it's anonymous.
  - We don't disclose the source of the information when investigating. To your friend, it may have been an observation by someone in the community. For example, a teacher may have noticed your friend behaving differently.

- **If it's anonymous, can't students use it to make things up?**
  - Yes. This is important. It's **not** OK to make something up.
    "We at this school take your safety seriously. We are willing to be vulnerable and put ourselves out there to allow anonymous reporting if that's what it takes to keep bad things from happening to you. In fact, there's a whole community rallying around the school that receive the tips: law enforcement, the school district, mental health agencies, etc.

    Safe2Tell tips should always be used to protect and not to hurt. Protect means we want to prevent bad or harmful things from happening. Hurt means our desire in reporting is to try to get someone in trouble, get revenge, get a laugh, etc. "
  - Even if the tipster is anonymous, there may be other ways to investigate who made the report.
  - However, it's OK if a tip comes back and is just a rumor, a misunderstanding, or unfounded. If you don't know, report it.

- **You overhear students joking "I'm going to Safe2Tell you…"**
  - This happens sometimes and students are typically joking about it.
  - We'd recommend, in a compassionate tone to share:
    "It seems like you may be confused about what unsafe behaviors are and could be reported to Safe2Tell. Let's set a good example for our classmates and be respectful of those that actually are struggling with serious things and need help from Safe2Tell."
  - Briefly say the statement and then walk away/move on without waiting for a response. It's important to address the issue but not escalate it into something more than it needs to be.

III. Collaborate with resources as needed

Safe2Tell encourages local partners to respond to Safe2Tell tips in the same fashion as if the information were received via other methods. The resources listed below can assist in this area and many other school safety topics.

i. Colorado School Safety Resource Center

Overview:

The CSSRC provides free consultation, resources, training, and technical assistance to foster safe and secure learning environments, positive school climates, and early intervention to prevent crisis situations.
We support schools and local agencies in their efforts to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and crisis situations. Information and resources from the CSSRC are available to all schools, school officials, and community partners throughout the State of Colorado.

Contact:

303.239.4435 or   CDPS_School_Safety_Center@state.co.us

www.Colorado.gov/CSSRC

Overview:

The hardest part about getting help for a mental health, substance use or emotional concern is knowing where to start—especially when an issue reaches the point of crisis. Whether it's for you, or someone you know, Colorado Crisis Services provides immediate and confidential help, 24/7/365. Just call 844-493-

TALK (8255), or text TALK to 38255, and you'll speak with a trained counselor who will provide support and connect you to further resources. For more information, or to find a crisis services walk-in center nearest you, visit ColoradoCrisisServices.org.

Contact:

1-844-493-TALK

https://coloradocrisisservices.org/

iii. Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, CU Boulder

Overview:
Safe Communities Safe Schools (SCSS) is an adaptive model for school safety grounded in community engagement, capacity building, and data-based decision making. Safety is a product of every school's individual climate, including settings, systems, and relationships. That is why our model supports schools to establish a diverse team of stakeholders who will collect and interpret data as well as develop, implement, and monitor an action plan specific to that school's goals, culture, and resources. Balancing data-driven prevention and intervention strategies, the comprehensive plan reflects both community voices and student needs. Our research-based model is designed to build a school's unique capacity to promote social, emotional, and physical safety—*because every educator deserves a safe place to work, and every student deserves a safe place to learn.*

Contact:

303-735-3655   or   cspv@colorado.edu