

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

Prevention and Instruction

The District's suicide prevention curriculum shall be designed to help students to:

- 1) Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide.
- 2) Identify alternatives to suicide and develop coping and resiliency skills.
- 3) Learn to share feelings and get help when friends are showing signs of suicidal intent.
- 4) Identify community crisis intervention resources where help is available
- 5) Access mental health supports by reducing the stigma associated with seeking mental health, substance abuse, gender identity, sexual identity or other support services.

Staff Development

Annual in-service suicide prevention training will be conducted in order for all district staff to learn to recognize the warning signs of suicidal crisis, to understand how to help suicidal youth, and to identify community resources. Training will be offered under the direction of trained district staff persons and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.

Special emphasis will be given and targeted instruction will be provided to identify and address the specific needs of high-risk student populations, including but not limited to: youth bereaved by suicide; youth with disabilities, mental illness or substance use disorders; homeless and foster youth; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth.

All staff will learn to identify potentially suicidal students, to take preventative precautions, and to report suicide threats to the appropriate authorities.

- 1) Staff shall promptly report suicidal threats or statements to the principal, another school administrator, school psychologist, school counselor or school social worker, who shall promptly report threats or statements, if appropriate and in the best interest of the student, to the student's parents/guardians and take appropriate action to keep the student safe.

Intervention

Immediate Intervention for a Suicide Threat or Attempt

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall:

- 1) Ensure the student's physical safety by one of the following, as appropriate:

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION (cont.)

- a) Securing immediate medical treatment if a suicide attempt has occurred.
 - b) Securing law enforcement, mobile crisis team and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened.
 - c) Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene. The student must not be left alone.
- 2) Designate specific individuals to be promptly contacted, including the school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, superintendent, and/or the student's parent/guardian, and as necessary, local law enforcement or mental health agencies.
 - 3) Document the incident in writing as soon as feasible.
 - 4) Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed.
 - 5) Provide access to counselors or other appropriate personnel to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident at the school.
 - 6) Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.
 - 7) Document the steps taken in the student's record.
 - 8) Develop an effective plan for reintegration of the student into school following the crisis. This will include a monitoring plan for staff to meet with the student for an appropriate amount of time.

Intervention after a Death Suggested to be Suicide

When a tragedy occurs and a student dies, the principal or designee shall:

- 1) Contact the Superintendent. Central Services Office staff will contact other schools and remind them to identify and offer counseling to any student or staff member who might have known or been connected in any way with the student who died.
- 2) Call an emergency staff meeting to relay known information and formulate appropriate procedures for supporting students, staff, and parents. The death should not be called a suicide. This is a legal determination that can only be made by the coroner's office. It should be referred to as a death or a tragic death.
- 3) Talk with students who were in class with the student by going to those classroom(s).
- 4) Contact other students who might know the student in direct, one-to-one conversations.
- 5) Provide counseling support to students. Contact additional psychologists/counselors to increase the available support. Have a place available for students to go to (Support Room) and walk around campus to be available for any student needing support. Counselors should follow the student's schedule and be available to assist the students and teachers in those classes. Students must be allowed to grieve, but

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION (cont.)

- there should be no large group gatherings such as an assembly. Students should not be allowed to congregate in groups without adult supervision. Identify any students who might be at risk and call them in to talk. Document the students who are asking for counseling support postvention for ongoing monitoring.
- 6) Contact the family to express condolences and to let them know what the school is doing. Ask when the family would like the student's personal items returned to them. The student's locker should be cleaned out and contents returned to the parents at an appropriate time.
 - 7) Designate a spokesperson who will respond to questions and inquiries from the media and work with the media to ensure responsible reporting (see American Foundation for Suicide Prevention guidelines).
 - 8) School will be conducted as usual to the greatest extent possible. School should not be canceled.
 - 9) Prepare a letter to send home to parents indicating that a tragic death has occurred and that postvention procedures and counseling has begun. The letter should contain information on how families can access community based resources.
 - 10) Schedule a parent meeting as soon as possible to help parents deal with the issue and to advise them how to help students.

cf. 4131 – Staff Development
cf. 5022 – Student and Family Privacy Rights
cf. 5125 – Student Records
cf. 5030 - Student Wellness
cf. 5141 – Health Care and Emergencies
cf. 5145 – Nondiscrimination/Harassment
cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education
cf. 6164.2 – Guidance/Counseling Services