

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION

The San Rafael City Schools Board of Trustees recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and should be taken seriously. In order to attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop preventive strategies and intervention procedures.

The Superintendent or designee may involve school mental health professionals, school counselors, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies and professionals, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention.

Prevention and Instruction

Suicide prevention strategies shall include, but not be limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.

The district's education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and resilience.

The Superintendent or designee may offer parents/guardians education or information which describes the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention efforts, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, the stigma surrounding mental illness and how that prevents help seeking, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide at least the following actions:

- Cooperation that enables school personnel to identify and access appropriate community resources for use in times of crisis;
- Effective reintegration of high-risk youth into school following a crisis, hospitalization or residential treatment;
- Leadership, planning and support for students and school personnel to ensure appropriate suicide intervention and postvention responses; and
- Regular evaluation and revision of the policy and procedures

Staff Development

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help staff identify and respond to students at risk of suicide. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district staff person and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies and may include information on:

1. Research identifying risk factors, such as previous suicide attempt(s), history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, family history of suicide or

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violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, and other factors. Special emphasis will be given to identifying and addressing the specific needs of high-risk student populations, including but not limited to: youth bereaved by suicide; **youth bereaved by the loss of a parent or family member**, youth with disabilities, mental illness or substance use disorders; homeless and foster youth; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning youth.

2. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in students' appearance, personality, or behavior. Special risk factors may also include previous hospitalizations, suicidal attempts, and/or self-harming behavior.
3. Research-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health and help seeking.
4. School and community resources and services for students and families in crisis and ways to access them.
5. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide.

Intervention

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the principal, another school administrator, school psychologist or school counselor. The principal, another school administrator, school psychologist or school counselor shall then notify, if appropriate and in the best interest of the student, the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible and may refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community.

Students shall be encouraged through the education program and in all school activities to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications in the event that a suicide occurs or an attempt is made by a member of the student body or staff on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

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