



# SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

Board Approved May 17, 2018

**Students**

BP 5141.52(a)

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Governing Board 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 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, intervention and postvention.

## PREVENTION AND INSTRUCTION

Suicide prevention strategies may 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 comprehensive health 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 self-esteem. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum in the secondary grades. Such instruction shall be aligned with state content standards and shall be designed to help students analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, including potential suicide, and to identify suicide prevention strategies.

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 curriculum, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.

#### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help staff identify and respond to students at risk of suicide, signs of suicide, and strategies on suicide prevention, intervention, referral and postvention. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor/psychologist 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 violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, and other factors
2. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in students' appearance, personality, or behavior
3. Research-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health
4. School and community resources and services
5. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to commit suicide
6. How to identify youth who may be at risk of suicide
7. Responding after a suicide has occurred (postvention)
8. Emphasis that any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide is to be immediately referred (same day) for assessment while being constantly monitored by a staff member
9. The professional development also shall include additional information regarding groups of students judged by the school, and available research, to be at elevated risk for suicide. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - Youth affected by suicide;
  - Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts;

- Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth;
- Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care;
- Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences.

### INTERVENTION

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the principal or school counselor. The principal or counselor shall then notify 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 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.

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall complete the suicide prevention curriculum, including identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

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 on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

### POSTVENTION

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on students and staff. Therefore, it is vital that we are prepared ahead of time in the event of such a tragedy. The ICEF Executive Team's Suicide Prevention Liaisons shall ensure that each school adopts an action plan for responding to a suicide death as a part of the general Crisis Response Plan.