

REGULATION

Students

SUICIDE PREVENTION REGULATION

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide clear policies and procedures in the event of suicidal behavior being presented by any student in kindergarten through grade 12. These guidelines have been developed to address the roles of school and community service agency personnel in providing counseling crisis-intervention services. The procedures are designed to ensure that the district has done its best as an educational institution to prevent suicide, to obtain appropriate services for youth at risk of suicide, and to assist the school and community to deal effectively with suicide or suicidal behaviors.

A. General Provisions

Confidentiality: In the case of the threatening situations, students and staff members involved must understand that confidential information will only be released to parties designated by the Superintendent of Schools to assist individuals in suicide prevention. All reports on individual cases shall be kept in a confidential file by the Building Principal.

Staff members under no circumstances shall release information regarding an alleged student suicidal behavior, or actual suicides, to the media. The Superintendent or a designee is the sole person who shall communicate with the media with respect to such matters.

The Building Principal or a designee shall keep the Superintendent informed on an ongoing basis about procedures following suicidal behavior.

B. Definition of Terms

Suicide Ideation: Thoughts of killing oneself in however vague terms, i.e., "I don't want to go on any more," "They would be better off without me," "If he breaks up with me, I'll kill myself."

Suicide Gesture: Any self-destructive behavior that does not threaten a youth's immediate safety. Since gestures over time can escalate into attempts, it is vital that all such gestures be taken seriously.

Suicide Attempt: Any self-destructive behavior that threatens the youth's immediate safety.

Suicide Behavior: Includes suicide ideation, gesture, incident, or attempt.

Stabilization: Refers to the support necessary to ensure the immediate safety of the youth.

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Emergency Services: Will include, but will not be limited to, those provided by the school medical staff, school psychologist, social worker, guidance counselor, and community resources such as local emergency rooms.

C. Assessment Procedure

Any youth suspected by a member of the staff to be presenting a possible suicidal behavior will be referred to the Principal or a designee. Referrals may be made verbally or via the Suicide Incident Report.

The Principal will refer such youth to the school social worker and/or school psychologist or the school nurse if the school social worker or psychologist are unavailable. If intervention is deemed necessary, the parent/guardian shall be informed, and the Building Principal shall take appropriate actions to prevent suicidal behaviors.

When any youth is referred to the school social worker and/or school psychologist, the Building Principal shall document such referral. The documentation shall consist of initiating a Suicide Incident Report (in the event that the report has been verbal), or continuing an existing Suicide Incident Report. A copy of the Suicide Incident Report shall be forwarded to the Principal for filing in a confidential file other than the student's cumulative folder.

D. Intervention Services

After the school social worker and/or school psychologist completes the assessment, the following procedures will apply:

1. In the case of suicide ideation and gestures, but not attempt:

The school social worker and/or school psychologist will provide appropriate counseling services, utilizing community based referrals, as needed.

2. In case of a suicide attempt:

The school social worker and/or school psychologist shall address the immediate needs of the suicidal youth by mobilizing emergency services. These emergency services may include: emergency medical treatment, on-site crisis-intervention, and/or emergency psychiatric services.

If, in the opinion of the school social worker and/or school psychologist, the suicide attempt is related to abuse or neglect and the student is under eighteen years of age, the team will alert the Principal, who shall act in accordance with 5460, Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment.

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It shall be the responsibility of the Principal or designee to arrange for follow-up services such as reintegration of the youth at school and support services for the staff and student body.

Upon return to the school, the student shall be accompanied by a parent/guardian and shall report to the Principal. The Principal shall determine the appropriate educational program for the student. The School social worker and/or school psychologist may act as a consultant, providing expertise, assistance and guidance to address the long-term needs of the youth.

3. In the event of an actual suicide:

The procedures below are to assist school personnel in implementing appropriate activities for dealing with suicides or similar crises. It is important, however, to retain a measure of flexibility in all urgent situations, as events differ slightly and could require individual decisions made by the school social worker and/or school psychologist.

DAY 1:

First Hour

1. Verify death;
2. Protect privacy of family;
3. Notify Superintendent;
4. Convene District-wide Crisis Intervention Team;
5. Contact other Building School social worker and/or school psychologists;
6. Notify staff of death;
7. Direct media to Superintendent or designee; and
8. Announce the death to students and staff.

Second Hour

1. Provide rooms for students to meet in small groups with counselors;
2. Notify teachers of faculty meeting; and
3. Identify students about whom faculty are concerned.

End of Day Announcements

It is suggested that a follow-up announcement be made regarding:

1. Morning staff meeting; and
2. Providing the deceased student's parent(s) or guardian(s) have made known their wishes, direct students to evening newspaper for funeral details, if this had not been discussed earlier in the day.

DAY 2:

1. Morning staff meeting;
2. Counselors still available for both staff and students; and
3. Afternoon staff meeting.

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DAY 3:

1. Morning staff meeting;
2. Counselors still available for both staff and students;
3. Afternoon staff meeting; and
4. Reassurance group parent/guardian meeting.

DAY 4:

1. Morning staff meeting;
2. Counselors still available for both staff and students; and
3. Afternoon staff meeting.

4. Recognition of The tragedy

In order to prevent “suicide contagion,” it is important for school personnel not to glamorize the suicide death of a student. The school will not conduct a special memorial service or dedication to the memory of an individual who committed suicide. Student created, discrete remembrances, such as flowers, mementos or personal messages at a deceased, student’s locker, are permitted at the discretion of the Building Principal but must be removed after the funeral. Students who have parental permission will be excused from school to attend a funeral or memorial service. As much as possible, the school policy will be “business as usual.” Counseling services will be available to all students, but classroom teachers should continue to use class time for school work.

Memorial and memorial scholarships will be considered by the board on an individual basis. The Board will be mindful of “contagion” concerns and the effect of such memorials on other at-risk students. Those seeking such memorials should consider alternatives such as activity-focused memorials (e.g., a day of community service, fund raising for research and prevention, sponsoring mental health awareness programs) or the purchase of library books to address relevant educational topics.

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