

Suicide Prevention

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. In order to attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop preventive strategies, postvention and intervention procedures.

In developing policy and strategies for suicide prevention and intervention, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with school and community stakeholders such as administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, and students; school-employed mental health professionals such as school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses; suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations; law enforcement; and, in developing policy for grades K-6, the county mental health plan.

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

The Board shall ensure that measures and strategies for students in grades K-6 are age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students.

Prevention and Instruction

Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention 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 at all grade levels.

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)

The district's comprehensive 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.

The District shall provide instruction in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in themselves and others.

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

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 counselor/psychologist and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.

Suicide Prevention**Intervention**

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 any 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.

(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as students of color in foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning.

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.

The District shall provide counseling and postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan.

District employees shall act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging district employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so.

The Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years.

The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the district's web site, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.

Legal Reference Next Page:

Legal Reference:

Suicide Prevention

EDUCATION CODE

- 215 Student suicide prevention policies
- 215.5 Suicide prevention hotline contact information on student identification cards
- 216 Suicide prevention online training programs
- 234.6 Posting suicide prevention policy on web site
- 32280-32289.5 Comprehensive safety plan
- 49060-49079 Student records
- 49602 Confidentiality of student information
- 49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors

GOVERNMENT CODE

- 810-996.6 Government Claims Act

PENAL CODE

- 11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

- 5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
- 5850-5886 Mental Health Services Act

COURT DECISIONS

- Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

- Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2019
- Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2003

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS

- School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS PUBLICATIONS

- Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS

- National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, ~~2004~~ rev. 2012
- Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012

WEB SITES

- American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <http://afsp.org>
- American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>
- American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>
- California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh>
- California Department of Health Care Services, Suicide Prevention Program: <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth>
- National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org>
- National Institute for Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://sprc.org/about-suicideSuicide Prevention Lifeline>: <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>
- Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>

Policy

- adopted: December 13, 2016
- Revised: October 15, 2019
- Revised: October 20, 2020

SAN LUIS COASTAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
San Luis Obispo, California