

# G-21: Administrative Procedures

## Youth Suicide Prevention Programs



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### REFERENCES

[Board Policy G-21](#)

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### DEFINITIONS

**Intervention:** Suicide intervention means an effort to prevent a student from attempting suicide.

**Parent:** For purposes of these administrative procedures and the corresponding board policy, "parent" means:

- A. a biological or adoptive parent;
- B. a legal guardian or other individual legally authorized to make educational decisions for the child;
- C. an individual, with whom the child lives, who is acting as a parent in the absence of a natural parent or a guardian;
- D. a foster parent if the authority of the biological or adoptive parents to make educational decisions on the child's behalf has been terminated or specifically limited by a court order;
- E. in the absence of any individual qualified under parts A-D, a surrogate parent appointed pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and/or
- F. a stepparent if the stepparent is present on a day-to-day basis with the natural parent and child, and the other parent is absent from the home. A stepparent who is not present on a day-to-day basis in the home of the child does not have rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with respect to the child's education records. Stepparents without guardianship of a child do not have the authority to enroll or register a child in school.

"Parent" does not include the state or any political subdivision of government.

**Postvention:** Suicide postvention means mental health intervention designed to prevent or contain contagion and promote the healthy recovery of the affected community after the suicide attempt or death of a member of the school community.

**Risk Assessment:** An evaluation of a student who may be at risk for suicide, conducted by the appropriate school staff (e.g., school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker).

**School Administrator:** For the purposes of these procedures only, school administrator means the principal, or principal's designee who must be a qualified licensed educator.

**Self-harm:** Behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself.

**Suicide:** Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with an intent to die as a result of the behavior.

**Suicide Attempt:** A self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to kill himself or herself. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

**Suicidal Behavior:** Suicide attempts, intentional injury to self, associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

**Suicidal Ideation:** Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior which may result in death.

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### PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

#### I. Youth Suicide Prevention Program

- A. In accordance with state law, each elementary and secondary school will select and implement an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program for students that includes the following components:
  1. life affirming education, including the concepts of resiliency, healthy habits, self-care, problem solving, and conflict resolution;
  2. methods of strengthening the family; and
  3. methods of strengthening a youth's relationships in the school and community.
- B. In accordance with state law, each secondary school will select and implement an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program for students that also includes the following components:
  1. prevention of youth suicides;
  2. youth suicide intervention;
  3. postvention for family, students, and faculty.
  4. Prevention of underage drinking of alcohol and substance abuse;
  5. prevention of bullying and cyberbullying; and
  6. decreasing the risk of suicide among youth who
    - a. are not accepted by family for any reason, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth; or
    - b. suffer from bullying

- C. The secondary program must also include provisions to ensure that the school promptly communicates with the parent of a student in accordance with Section III below.
- D. All the components of the secondary program will also be provided to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students if they attend a middle or junior high school that includes grade 6.
- E. As part of the school's suicide prevention program, school personnel may ask students questions related to youth suicide prevention, intervention, or postvention.

## II. Crisis Response and Assessment

- A. If a school employee or school resource officer believes a student is at risk of attempting suicide, physical self-harm, or harming others, the school employee, or school resource officer may intervene and ask a student questions regarding the student's suicidal thoughts, physically self-harming behavior, or thoughts of harming others for the purposes of:
  - 1. referring the student to appropriate prevention services, and
  - 2. informing the student's parent.
- B. If a school employee becomes aware that a student is experiencing a crisis that may involve risk of harm to self or others, that individual should respond as follows:
  - 1. If the information comes directly from the student, expressed either verbally or through behavior, the school employee will:
    - a. obtain basic information from the student about the crisis, and
    - b. immediately share the information with the school administrator or counselor.
  - 2. If the information comes from another person such as a peer or a parent, the school employee will:
    - a. obtain the student's name and basic information about the crisis, and
    - b. refer the situation to the school administrator or counselor before the end of the school day, or at the beginning of the next school day if the information is shared outside of school hours.
- C. When a school employee identifies a student in crisis, the student will be seen by a school administrator or counselor within the same school day, or at the beginning of the next school day if the information is shared outside of school hours.
  - 1. The purpose of the meeting is to gather all further information necessary about the crisis in order to assess the risk.
    - a. A school counselor may administer the [Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale \(C-SSRS\)](#) screener to any student in crisis. The C-SSRS is the state approved screener for suicide ideation.
  - 2. If the school administrator or counselor cannot meet with the student within the time frame listed above, he or she must document why such meeting was delayed.
- D. At any time, the school administrator or counselor may consult with the district's student services department in assessing the level of risk or determining an appropriate response.
- E. In situations where a student exhibits any level of risk for suicide, or has threatened to commit suicide, the student's parent will be informed by the school administrator or counselor *without delay*.
  - 1. The school administrator or counselor will contact the student's parent with a personal phone call and with an invitation to come in immediately to meet with school personnel.
  - 2. As outlined in Section III.A., documentation must be made of this contact.
  - 3. If no parent is available, the school administrator or counselor must determine, based on the extent of the ideation, whether to call the emergency contact, police, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), 911, or wait until such time as a parent is available.
  - 4. If the school administrator or counselor reports the matter to DCFS, it is the responsibility of DCFS to notify the student's parent.
- F. If the parent meets with school personnel, such personnel will discuss the crisis situation, identify available resources, and determine whether the student should be checked out of school.
  - 1. A plan for supervision should be discussed prior to releasing any student who is being checked out of school in a crisis situation.
- G. In the event that the student is checked out of school, the parent should communicate with the school administrator or counselor before the student returns to school.
- H. Upon a student's return to school, the school administrator and/or counselor must follow-up with the student in a reasonable amount of time based upon the circumstances.

## III. Parent Notification

- A. The school must create and maintain a record that verifies the parents were notified of the threat involving their student. This record must include the date of contact, time of discussion, and information given to parent. See, Record of Parent Notification of Student Threat or Incident form, which can be found in the District Document Center.
- B. This record should not be used to notify a parent of the incident.

- C. Documentation should be kept in a locked file and not in a student's cumulative file.
- D. A school may not disclose this record, including any information obtained to prepare the record, to a person other than:
  - 1. the student's parent;
  - 2. the student involved; or
  - 3. the person identified to receive such information in a court order.
- E. A school may not use this record, including any information obtained to prepare the record, for the school's own purposes:
  - 1. for a report or study;
  - 2. for a statistical analysis; or
  - 3. to conduct research.

#### **IV. School Response to Suicide**

- A. Schools will coordinate with the student services department to implement an action plan to guide the school's response following a death by suicide.
- B. The action plan may include:
  - 1. Verifying the death. If the cause of death has been confirmed as suicide but the parent will not permit the cause of death to be disclosed, the school may not share the cause of death.
  - 2. Assessing how the death affected the school community, taking into account whether other traumatic events have occurred, and the time of year (during school, summer break, or a school vacation).
  - 3. Avoiding suicide contagion by identifying and offering support to those students who may be highly impacted.
  - 4. Identifying support services.
  - 5. Developing memorial plans. The school should not create on-campus memorials, funeral services, or fly the flag at half-mast because it may sensationalize the death. School should not be canceled for a funeral. Any school-based memorials must focus on how to prevent future suicides and prevention resources available.
  - 6. Identifying external communication spokesperson.

#### **V. Training**

- A. Employee training
  - 1. Training will be provided for all teachers, school counselors, and other staff who have direct student contact, that includes the following:
    - a. information about prevention of youth suicide, youth suicide intervention and postvention, and
    - b. identification of relevant school staff and their roles in a crisis.
  - 2. All licensed educators are required to complete a minimum of two hours of professional development training on youth suicide prevention every three years.
  - 3. This training shall complement the state mandated training on bullying and cyber-bullying training.
- B. Parent training
  - 1. The district shall offer a seminar for parents of students in the school district that:
    - a. is offered at no cost to parents;
    - b. begins at or after 6:00 p.m.;
    - c. is held in at least one school located in the school district;
    - d. covers mental health, depression, suicide awareness, and suicide prevention, including education on limiting access to fatal means; and
    - e. discusses resources that are available in the school and community for families and how to access them.
  - 2. The district shall annually offer one parent seminar for each 11,000 students enrolled in the district but is not required to offer more than three parent seminars per year.

#### **VI. Resources Available**

- A. Many crisis services are available for students and their families in the community. Students or families in need are encouraged to contact their school counselor for a list of available resources.
- B. Students or families needing immediate assistance may call:
  - 1. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: The Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis or their friends and loved ones. For assistance, call 1.800.273.8255 (TALK). Information can also be obtained on their website at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.
  - 2. The University of Utah Huntsman Mental Health Institute Crisis Line: The Utah Crisis Line provides 24 hour, 7 days-a-week phone crisis service and is staffed by mental health professionals providing emotional support, assistance, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention to individuals experiencing emotional distress or psychiatric crisis. For assistance, call 801.587.3000.

3. SafeUT: Call a crisis counselor at 1.833.372.3388, or chat online with a crisis counselor at <https://safeut.med.utah.edu/> or through the SafeUT App available on your phone.
  4. The Utah Department of Human Services' Utah Crisis and Suicide Prevention Resources handout is available [here](#).
- C. If there is a threat to loss of life or an emergency situation that requires the immediate assistance of emergency medical services, the police department, or the fire department, call 911.