

## General Suicide Intervention Procedures for School Staff

1. *Notify the principal.* The principal should be made aware of any suicidal ideation or behavior. Given the high stakes and the principal's responsibilities for the school, it is essential that the principal be aware that a student is being assessed for suicide risk. Take ALL threats seriously.
2. *Suicide Screening of Student:* This should be completed by appropriate school personnel such as the guidance counselor, school psychologist, or nurse.
3. *Determine if the student will relinquish the means.* If the student has means to attempt suicide readily accessible, staff members should request that the student relinquish the means. They should not force the student or put themselves or others in danger. If a student refuses to voluntarily relinquish the means of a threatened suicide, then the police should be called. The primary objective in this situation is to keep the person from committing the act. If the person has already hurt him/herself, provide immediate medical assistance. The longer you delay the act the more likely it is that the person will be rescued and receive the help they need.
4. *Take the student to a prearranged room.* As soon as possible, the student should be taken to a prearranged, nonthreatening room away from other students. There should be a phone in the room and another adult close by.
5. *Stay with the student.* A suicidal student should never be left alone. A staff member should maintain constant visual contact with the student until help is obtained. This is true regardless of whether the student has made a direct or indirect threat. Until a suicide risk assessment is conducted, every student who appears to have suicidal ideation should be viewed as being at risk for suicidal behavior.
6. *Contact the parent/guardian regardless of the degree of risk assessed, informing them of the situation and advising them as to the action that needs to be taken.* Inform parents of appropriate community mental health resources
7. *Do not allow the student to leave the school.* A student who has threatened suicide should not be allowed to leave school until the appropriate personnel (ideally a school psychologist or counselor) have conducted a Risk Assessment and until adequate supervision has been ensured. If a student does attempt to leave, staff members should ask the student to stay but should not do anything that puts themselves or other students or staff members in danger. If the student will not stay when requested, the police should be called.
8. *Do not promise confidentiality.* All staff members have a legal and ethical responsibility not to honor confidentiality when a student is threatening harm to self or others. No matter how much a student implores, a suicide plan must not be kept secret. It is better to have the student angry and alive than dead because confidence was maintained.
9. *Inform the youth of actions taken.* Before leaving a potentially suicidal student with the designated reporter, it is important to let the student know that help has been called and to describe what will happen next. The student should be told that his parents or guardians will need to be contacted. If the student is resistant to this idea, that information should be related to the designated reporter. If it is suspected that a student's resistance to parents contact is a consequence of abuse, a referral to child protective services must be made. Though staff members cannot promise that parents will not be informed of the suicidal threats, it would be appropriate to let a suicidal student know his concerns have been heard and are understood.

### 10. Document incident using the Suicide Risk Assessment Referral Data form.