

# OLDHAM COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

5011

References: KRS 156.095

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support the health and well-being of district students by having procedures in place to reduce the risk of, intervene in, and respond to *suicide*. The Oldham County school district:

- a. Recognizes that physical and *mental health* are integral components of student outcomes, both educationally and beyond graduation;
- b. Further recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people;
- c. Will take a proactive approach in reducing the risk death by suicide;
- d. Will aim to provide an environment that is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide; and
- e. Acknowledges that comprehensive programs include awareness, risk minimization, intervention, and postvention components.

### II. SCOPE

This policy applies to events that take place on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles, and at school-sponsored out-of-school events where school staff are supervising students. This policy applies to school employees whose job responsibilities require them to have direct contact with students.

### III. PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

#### a. District Policy Implementation.

The district Mental Health Consultant team shall be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of this policy for the school district. The *School Suicide Prevention Coordinator* is the point of contact in each school for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation.

#### b. Reporting.

A covered employee who has reason to believe that a student is *at-risk for suicide* shall notify their district Mental Health Consultant, school counselor, or school psychologist within the same school day if possible. If none of them is available, the employee should notify the school principal or assistant/associate principal prior to student dismissal if feasible, and if not, then prior to the employee leaving the school building at the end of the day.

#### c. Staff Professional Development.

Employees whose job duties require them to have direct contact with students will receive, at minimum, annual professional development related to suicide awareness and deterrence.

#### d. Youth Suicide Prevention Programming.

Developmentally appropriate, student-centered education materials shall be provided to all 6-12 students each school year.

### IV. INTERVENTION, ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL

- a. When an employee makes a report required under paragraph 3.b., the person who receives the report will arrange for the student to be seen by a school mental health professional, such as a Mental Health Consultant, school counselor, or psychologist for a *risk assessment* and referral to outside resources if necessary.
- b. If a student is identified by a peer or other source as potentially suicidal - i.e., verbalizes thoughts about suicide, presents overt *risk factors* such as agitation or intoxication, has inflicted *self-harm*, or expresses or otherwise shows signs of *suicidal ideation* - the school employee receiving this information will make a report as required by paragraph 3.b.
- c. Teachers who have concerns about a student's well-being due to threats or expressions concerning *self-harm*, suicide or death in school assignments should consult with their district Mental Health Consultant, school counselor, or school psychologist. If none of them is available,

the teacher should report his or her concerns to the school principal or assistant/associate principal.

- d. When a student is determined to be *at risk* by a district Mental Health Consultant, school counselor, or school psychologist, the mental health professional making this determination will arrange for the student to be supervised by an adult to monitor the student’s safety until the assessment process is complete, or until a parent or guardian has the student under his or her care.
- e. If a student is actively engaging in *suicidal behavior* and the immediate safety of the student or others is at-risk (such as when a weapon is in the possession of the student), school staff should call the SRO or 911 immediately. The staff member calling shall provide as much information about the situation as possible, including the name of the student, any weapons the student may have, and where the student is located.

V. **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION AND INVOLVEMENT**

- a. When a student is identified as having a risk for suicide, or the student has made a suicide attempt, the school counselor, the district Mental Health Consultant, or a principal shall contact the student’s parent or guardian as soon as circumstances allow, unless doing so would put the student at increased risk of harm.
- b. The school counselor, district Mental Health Consultant, or psychologist may assist the family with urgent referrals, and recommend next steps based on perceived student need.
- c. When a student indicates suicidal intent, a school mental health professional or administrator shall attempt to discuss safety at home, or “means safety” with at least one parent or guardian, limiting the student’s access to mechanisms for carrying out a suicide attempt e.g., guns, knives, pills, etc.
- d. Staff should request a Release of Information allowing the school mental health professionals to communicate with the student’s outside mental health care providers regarding the student’s safety plan and access to lethal means.

VI. **RE-ENTRY PROCEDURE**

Whenever possible, prior to a student returning to school after a mental health crisis, a district mental health consultant, school counselor, or designee should meet with the student’s parent or guardian, and if appropriate the student, to discuss re-entry. This meeting shall address next steps needed to ensure the student’s readiness for return to school and plan for the first day back. Parents are encouraged to inform the school counselor or mental health consultant of the student’s hospitalization to ensure continuity of service provision and increase the likelihood of a successful re-entry.

VII. **AFTER A SUICIDE DEATH**

The *Crisis Response Team*, led by the Director of Student Services, shall develop a crisis response plan according to the [District Crisis Response Protocol](#) following a death by suicide (past or present student, staff member, or other prominent school community member). A meeting of the *Crisis Response Team* to implement the plan shall take place following word of the suicide death, even if the death has not yet been confirmed to be a suicide.

VIII. **IN-SCHOOL SUICIDE ATTEMPTS**

In the case of an in-school *suicide attempt*, the physical and mental health and safety of the student are paramount. In these situations:

- a. First aid will be rendered until professional medical services and/or transportation arrive.
- b. A school staff member will supervise the student to monitor his or her safety.
- c. Staff will move all other students out of the immediate area as soon as possible.
- d. The mental health professional or administrator shall contact the student’s parent, guardian or emergency as listed in the student’s Infinite Campus record.

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- e. Staff shall immediately notify the principal or *School Suicide Prevention Coordinator* of the in-school suicide attempt.
- f. The school administration shall engage Mental Health Team members as necessary to assess whether additional steps should be taken to ensure student safety and well-being, including for those students who may have had emotional or physical proximity to the victim.
- g. Staff shall request a Mental Health Assessment for the student as soon as possible.

#### **IX. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUICIDE ATTEMPTS**

If a staff member becomes aware of a *suicide attempt* by a student that is in progress in an out-of-school location, the staff member shall:

- a. Call 911 (police and/or emergency medical services).
- b. Inform the principal.

If a student contacts the staff member and expresses *suicidal ideation*, the staff member should attempt to maintain contact with the student (either in person, online, or on the phone) and enlist the assistance of another person to contact the police.