

Policy 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: ADOPTED

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The Board of Education recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that all suicide threats must be taken seriously. The Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures to be followed when a suicide attempt, threat or disclosure is reported. The district shall also provide staff and students with information that helps them recognize the warning signs of severe emotional distress and take preventative measures to help potentially suicidal students.

The Superintendent or designee shall also offer information that describes the severity of the youth suicide problem. There are student populations that are at elevated risk for suicidal behavior, including but not limited to:

- Youth bereaved by suicide
- Youth with disabilities, mental illness or substance use disorders
- Youth experiencing homelessness or in out of home settings, such as foster care.
- Youth identifying as LGBTQIA+

All Certificated staff, serving students in grades K-12, shall receive annual professional development on: suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, postvention, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.

Suicide prevention is a collective effort that requires stakeholders' and school personnel, who regularly interact with students and are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referrals and/or assistance. In an effort to reduce suicidal behavior, its impact on students and families, and other trauma associated with suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures, strategies, practices, and supports for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

In developing policy and procedures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with school and community stakeholders, school employed mental health professionals, suicide prevention experts, in developing policy for grades K-12, within the county mental health plan.

School and community stakeholders and school mental health professionals with whom the Superintendent or designee shall consult, may include district and school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, other staff, parents/guardians and caregivers, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, community organizations, law enforcement, legal counsel, and/or the district's risk manager or insurance carrier. The Superintendent or designee may also collaborate with county and/or city governments in an effort to align district policy with any existing community suicide prevention plans.

Measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for certificated staff.
2. Instruction to students in Social-Emotional Learning, including: problem solving, coping, and resiliency skills to promote student's mental, emotional and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others.
3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and its staff and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.
4. The review of materials and resources used in awareness efforts and communications to ensure they align with best practices for safe and effective messaging about suicide.
5. Parents/guardians and caregivers will be provided with information regarding risk and protective factors, warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, the importance of communicating with appropriate staff if suicide risk is present or suspected, and/or school and community resources (including, but not limited to contact information for: District Police for immediate Welfare Check, San Bernardino County Community Crisis Response Team, and the National Suicide Prevention Hotline) that can help youth in crisis. (See resources below for contact information)
6. Staff, parents/guardians, caregivers and community members shall encourage students to notify appropriate

school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

7. Staff shall promptly report suicidal threats or statements to the administrator, district identified and trained suicide risk evaluators (school counselor, school nurse, school psychologist, school social worker, mental health therapists and associates), who shall report the threats or statements to the student's parents/guardians as soon as it is practical to do so. School employees will act only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license, as based on job description. These statements shall otherwise be kept confidential. School Police and the San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health's Community Crisis Response Team (CCRT) may be notified in a case where the student may need to be admitted to the hospital.

8. Crisis Intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts.

9. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide.

10. Establishment of a district team that collaborates with community mental health organizations, identification of resources and organizations that provide evidence-based treatment, collaboration to build community response, and compliance with Education Code 215.

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 foster care; and students who identify at LGBTQIA+.

The Board of Education shall ensure that measures and strategies for students in grades K-12 are age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of student developmental levels.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-12 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 Board may, at its discretion, review the policy more frequently.

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically review district data pertaining to school climate and reports of suicidal ideation, attempts, or death to identify patterns or trends and make recommendations regarding program development.

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

Resources:

If you or someone you know is having feelings of suicide or self-harm, please contact:

- SBCUSD District Police Dispatch (909) 388-6130
 - Universal Emergency Services - 911
 - San Bernardino County Community Crisis Team (909) 458-1517
 - National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255, (after July, 2022 3-digit number - 988)
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