

8469 – SCHOOL CLEARANCE FOLLOWING CRISIS SITUATION

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of students during the school day, and will take action necessary to provide for the safety and security of its students, staff and/or property. In a “crisis situation,” the Board reserves the right to exclude a student who has been determined to pose an imminent or potential threat to student or staff safety, pending appropriate mental health clearance.

1. Examples of “Crisis Situations” (*not exclusive*)

- a. Actions creating an imminent danger to the student or others, e.g, suicidal or homicidal ideation(s) or attempt(s);
- b. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) threatening the health, safety or well-being of the student, staff or other students;
- c. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) reflecting an intent or plan to harm the student or others;
- d. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) indicating that the student may be at risk of causing harm to the student or others; or
- e. Possession of object(s) or material(s) posing a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the student, staff or other students.

2. Discipline

- a. A student’s exclusion based upon an identified crisis situation shall not be considered a disciplinary consequence.
- b. This Policy is intended to address mental health related issues only (i.e., to ensure that the student does not represent a danger to him/herself or others), and does not supersede the implementation of appropriate disciplinary action for infractions of school regulations or action required by *N.J.S.A 18A:40A-12* or *N.J.A.C 6A:16-4.3* as described in policies and explained in student handbooks and/or Code of Student Conduct.

3. Procedures

- a. In situations where a student presents as an imminent danger to him/herself or others, school emergency procedures will be followed, and supersede the provisions of Section III.C of this policy.

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- b. Staff members shall immediately notify the School Principal, or his/her designee, of any potential crisis situations.
- c. In response to every report, the School Principal (or designee) shall immediately:
 - 1. Notify the Crisis Team (or other designated team/individual responsible for the initial assessment of the student);
 - 2. Notify the Superintendent of Schools; and
 - 3. Notify the student's parent or legal guardian.
- d. In response to every report, the school psychologist, and/or social worker, shall conduct a student interview to assess whether or not the student presents as a potential danger to him/herself or others, and to determine whether or not the student requires a mental health assessment prior to reinstatement.
- e. Provisions shall be made for the appropriate care and supervision of the student pending either: (1) a determination by the school psychologist/social worker that the student's exclusion is not required; or (2) the student's release to his or her parent/guardian.

4. Assessment and Reinstatement

- a. If the school psychologist/social worker determines that the student presents as a potential danger to him/herself or others and requires a mental health assessment prior to reinstatement, the Principal shall notify the student's parent/guardian of the determination.
- b. The assessment must be completed by a licensed or certified mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker or psychiatric nurse) outside of school system.

The Principal shall provide the student's parents/guardians with appropriate referral information for qualified mental health providers.

- 1. Assessments completed by evaluators selected by the school district shall be at the expense of the school district.
- 2. Assessments completed by evaluators selected by the student's parent/guardian shall be at the expense of the parent.
- c. For purposes of the assessment, it is necessary for the evaluator to have access to all relevant information regarding the student and the incident giving rise to the exclusion. The student's parent/guardian shall be asked to provide consent for a school psychologist/social worker to contact the professional completing the evaluation to provide necessary background information.

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1. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached and the student is screened and/or assessed by the appropriate school personnel as being in imminent danger of harming him/herself or others, the school may initiate immediate assessment.
- d. The assessment must include:
1. Identifying information;
 2. Medical and family history;
 3. Review of presenting problems or incident;
 4. Mental status examination;
 5. Diagnosis, as appropriate;
 6. Recommendations for follow-up services, as appropriate;
 7. Other information deemed relevant by the evaluator.
- e. Clearance letter must include:
1. Evaluator's name and license number;
 2. Student's name and date of birth
 3. Confirmation that the evaluator assessed the student in accordance with standards set forth in Section IV.D of this Policy following and in connection with the precipitating school-based incident;
 4. The date of the assessment; and
 5. A specific statement that the student does not present as a danger to him/herself or others at this time.
- f. If the parents or guardians assume the cost of the assessment (through a provider of their own choosing), the resulting report is their property, and will require their consent before being released to the school district. Parents and guardians are encouraged to share such information with the school district. However, the required information (see Section IV.E above) must be included in the clearance letter.

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5. Re-Entry to School

Following receipt of the school clearance letter, the District shall schedule a re-entry meeting with the child and his/her parents/guardian and an appropriate school district designee. Discussion may include, but is not limited to:

- a. Consideration of CST referral, as appropriate
- b. Discussion with parents regarding follow-up treatment, as necessary
- c. Discussion with parents regarding access to additional evaluative information (beyond clearance letter)

6. Instruction During Exclusion

Students will be provided with appropriate home or other out-of-school instruction in accordance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10-1 et seq.* during any period of exclusion.

Adopted: 17 April 2023