Guidance and Counseling

Suicide Awareness and Prevention:

Staff members shall be made aware of their responsibilities in the event of a potential or imminent suicide incident. Staff are expected to follow the procedures as specified. Three steps are vital in a suicide prevention program:

A. Ensuring the short-term physical safety of the student;
B. Communicating with appropriate school personnel, parents/guardians and local support personnel and establishing an interim plan of action; and,
C. Referring to appropriate professional or agency and implementing a long-term plan of action.
The following procedures are intended to serve these purposes.

Potential Suicide — No Physical Evidence

Any staff member who receives or discovers information about a potential suicide (notes, threats, conversations, etc.) will immediately notify the principal.

Suicidal Ideation (Verbal threat or communication of possible suicidal intent — Having thoughts of killing oneself).

A. Any suggestion, demonstration, or communication of an intention to commit suicide must be taken seriously.

B. Such behavior shall be reported to the principal, school psychologist, and to the impact team, who will act as an intervention team. The situation will be evaluated by this team through contacts with the student, parents, and other staff.

A. The superintendent, with the school psychologist, school nurse, and principal, shall be apprised of the situation and of the plan for monitoring the student's behavior.

B. Confidentiality is not applicable when the student threatens himself (or others). In such circumstances no matter what guarantees of privacy have been given the student, the information must be discussed with the appropriate staff. Parents or guardians shall be notified. Referral to an outside agency or private professional shall be made in cooperation with the parents. If it is determined that the student is seriously in need of professional intervention, and the parent refuses to cooperate, appropriate agencies shall be contacted by the school administration to intervene on the student's behalf.

E. The school administration shall monitor the student's functioning in school until a positive adjustment is evident.

Physical Evidence of Attempted Suicide

Any staff member, who discovers or is informed of physical evidence relating to an attempted suicide (drug overdose, self-mutilation, etc.), will take the student to the nurse's office; inform the nurse, leave the student in care of the nurse; and, immediately inform the principal.

Actual Attempt of Suicide

The following actions shall be taken:

A. Contact the medics if there is any question that a life-threatening situation is involved. B. Assign a staff member to remain with the person at all times.
C. Clear the area to minimize chaos and misunderstanding and to provide working room.

D. Contact the parent or guardian and advise them of the situation and what actions are being taken.

E. Notify the superintendent.

F. Accompany the student to the hospital, if such action is necessary.

G. Notify appropriate staff members for consultation during the crisis. Following the crisis staff will:

1. Contact the parents for follow-up

2. Contact other professionals involved in the case for educational planning and follow-up services

H. Readmit the student upon the recommendation of the student's medical advisor. Homebound instruction may be used on an interim basis.

Actual suicide:

In the event of an actual suicide, the school must exercise care to avoid contagion and to help deal with the grieving, guilt and shock of students and staff. The superintendent shall be contacted immediately. The police department also must be notified.

The superintendent's office will respond to all requests for information. Follow up actions to be taken are as follows:

A. Prior to the next school day, the principal will assemble the faculty and provide accurate information and plans for the day.

B. The superintendent, principal and psychologist or other relevant staff will need to determine steps to take to deal with the current school situation and plan for and deal with problems which may arise.

C. Students will meet in order to receive all the facts.

1. They should be encouraged to discuss their shock, feelings of loss, good and bad memories of the person, and to participate in discussion of depression, death, and suicide.

2. Particular attention should be directed to students who had a close relationship to the victim.