

Regulation 5141.5: Mental Health

Status: ADOPTED

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The Governing Board recognizes that students' emotional well-being and mental health are critical to their ability to perform to their full academic and personal potential. The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies and services to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, facilitate access to mental health services, and help students build resiliency skills, including digital resilience, increase social connections, and cope with life challenges.

The Superintendent or designee shall consult and collaborate with school-employed mental health professionals, the county mental health department, psychologists and other health professionals, social workers, and/or community organizations to strengthen local mental health services and develop and implement an integrated plan to support student mental health.

To the extent possible, the district shall focus on preventive strategies which increase students' connectedness to school, create a support network of peers and trusted adults, and provide techniques for conflict resolution. The district shall investigate and resolve any complaint of bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination in accordance with law and district policy.

The district shall provide instruction to students that promotes their healthy mental, emotional, and social development. Health education courses shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework and shall include, but not be limited to, instruction related to identifying signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, developing coping skills, and identifying resources that may provide assistance.

Information and Training

The Superintendent or designee shall provide school staff with information and training to recognize the early signs and symptoms of an emerging mental health condition or behavioral health disorder, including common psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders such as opioid and alcohol abuse, identify risk factors and warning signs of suicidal intent, respond to students who have been impacted by traumatic stress, safely deescalate crisis situations involving students with a behavioral health disorder, and link students with effective services, referrals, and supports. Such training shall also provide instruction on how to maintain student privacy and confidentiality. Behavioral health information and training may also be provided to parents/guardians, students, and families. (Education Code 49428.15)

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a protocol for identifying and assessing students who may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, depression, eating disorder, or other severe or disabling mental illness. The Superintendent or designee may establish districtwide or school-site crisis intervention team(s) to respond to mental health concerns in the school setting.

At least twice per school year, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each school provides notice regarding how to initiate access to student mental health services on campus and/or in the community. The notification shall be in at least two of the following methods: (Education Code 49428)

1. Distributing the information, electronically or in hardcopy, in a letter to parents/guardians, and in a school publication or other document to students
2. Including the information, at the beginning of the school year, in the parent handbook for parents/guardians and in student orientation materials or a student handbook
3. Posting the information on the school's website or social media

Parents/guardians and students shall each receive two notices on how to initiate access to student mental health services, which may be delivered by different methods. (Education Code 494280)

Each school site that serves students in any of grades 6-12 shall create an age appropriate and culturally relevant poster that identifies approaches and shares resources about student mental health, and that includes the following information: (Education Code 49428.5)

1. Identification of common behaviors of those struggling with mental health or who are in a mental health crisis, including, but not limited to, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, emotional dysregulation, bipolar episodes, and schizophrenic episodes
2. A list of, and contact information for, school site-specific resources, including, but not limited to, counselors, wellness centers, and peer counselors
3. A list of, and contact information for, community resources, including, but not limited to, suicide prevention, substance abuse, child crisis, nonpolice mental health hotlines, public behavioral health services, and community mental health centers
4. A list of positive coping strategies to use when dealing with mental health, including, but not limited to, meditation, mindfulness, yoga, breathing exercises, grounding skills, journaling, acceptance, and seeking therapy
5. A list of negative coping strategies to avoid, including, but not limited to, substance abuse or self-medication, violence and abuse, self-harm, compulsivity, dissociation, catastrophizing, and isolating

The poster shall be displayed in English and any primary language spoken by 15 percent or more of the students at the school site and be no smaller than 8.5 by 11 inches and at least 12-point font. The poster shall be prominently and conspicuously displayed in public areas that are accessible to, and commonly frequented by, students at each school site such as bathrooms, locker rooms, classrooms, classroom hallways, gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, wellness centers, and offices. Additionally, at the beginning of each school year the poster shall be distributed online to students through social media, websites, portals, and learning platforms. (Education Code 49428.5)

Mental Health Counseling and Referrals

A school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker may provide mental health counseling to students in accordance with the specialization(s) authorized on the individual's credential. As needed, students and their parents/guardians may be provided referrals to mental health services in the community and/or to mental health services at or near district schools.

Mental health and behavioral health services for students on campus may be provided by way of telehealth technology. (Education Code 49429)

If a student has an emotional or mental illness that limits a major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment, or may need special education and related services, the student shall be referred for an evaluation for purposes of determining whether any educational or related services are required in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as applicable. (Education Code 56301-56302; 29 USC 794; 28 CFR 35.108)

Funding Resources

The Superintendent or designee shall explore potential funding sources for district programs and services that support student's mental health. In accordance with local plans and priorities, the district may apply to the county for grants for prevention and early intervention activities that are designed to prevent mental illness from becoming severe and disabling and to improve timely access for underserved populations.

Policy Reference Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State References

Ed. Code 215-216

Description

[Student suicide prevention](#)

Ed. Code 234.6

[Bullying and harassment prevention information](#)

Ed. Code 32280-32289.5

[School safety plans](#)

Ed. Code 49060-49079

[Student records](#)

Ed. Code 49428.1	Student mental health referral protocols
Ed. Code 49428.15	Identification of evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health
Ed. Code 49428.5	Student mental health poster
Ed. Code 49600	Responsibilities of school counselors
Ed. Code 49602	Counseling and confidentiality of student information
Ed. Code 49604	Suicide prevention training for school counselors
Ed. Code 56171	Duty to identify and assess children in private schools who need special education services
Ed. Code 56300-56385	Identification and referral; assessment, instructional planning
W&I Code 5698	Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
W&I Code 5840-5840.8	Prevention and early intervention programs
W&I Code 5850-5883	Mental Health Services Act

Federal References

20 USC 1400-1482	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
28 CFR 35.101-35.190	Americans with Disabilities Act
29 USC 794	Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Section 504
34 CFR 300.1-300.818	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

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Management Resources References

California Department of Education Publication	Youth Behavioral Health Training Programs
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, May 2019
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008
CDC and Prevention Publication	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009
Nat. Child Traumatic Stress Network Publication	Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, 2008
US Department of Education Publication	Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program, Frequently Asked Questions, April 2023
US Department of Health and Human Services	Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, 2023
US Dept of Health and Human Services Publication	Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Health Effects of Social Connection and the Community, 2023
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website	National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Website	National Council for Behavioral Health, Mental Health First Aid
Website	Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Website	Suicide Prevention Resource Center
Website	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Website	American Association of Suicidology
Website	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Website	American Psychological Association
Website	California Department of Health Care Services, Mental Health Services

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Website	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health
Website	National Association of School Psychologists
Website	National Institute for Mental Health
Website	California Department of Education, Mental Health
Website	American School Counselor Association
Website	Office of the Surgeon General

Cross References

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