

Suicide Postvention Checklist

This adaptation of SAMHSA’s Immediate Response Protocol from [Preventing Suicide: A High School Toolkit](#) is meant to serve as a preliminary plan to guide schools and districts in preparing to respond to a suicide death. Schools and districts should complete this plan prior to an incident and review and update the plan annually.

Steps to Take in Immediate Aftermath	Staff Responsible	External Contacts & Notes	Tools and Resources
NOTIFY KEY INDIVIDUALS			
Verify death	Lead: Backup:	Police: Medical examiner:	Role of the crisis response team
Notify superintendent’s office <i>*In tribal communities, Bureau of Indian Education schools notify the main office and tribal schools notify the principal.</i>	Lead: Backup:	Superintendent: Backup/weekends:	
Notify and mobilize district crisis team	Lead: Backup:	District crisis team: Weekend/vacation/late night contacts:	Crisis response mobilization
Ensure staff know how to respond to inquiries and manage the campus for safety	Lead: Backup:		Sample script for office staff
Notify schools attended by family members of the deceased	Lead:	Other schools in district:	

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	Backup:		
Contact and coordinate with external mental health professionals	Lead: Backup:	Community mental health providers: External crisis response professionals:	Bringing in outside help
CONTACT AND SUPPORT FAMILY OF THE DECEASED			
Identify cultural considerations prior to communicating with family (language, religion, etc...)	Lead: Backup:		Cultural sensitivity
Make immediate initial contact to offer support and clarify communication about cause of death	Lead: Backup:		Guidelines for working with the family
Offer support for coordination of funeral logistics (timing, location, crisis support)	Lead: Backup:		
NOTIFY THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY			
Notify all faculty and staff	Lead: Backup:		Sharing the news with the school community Guidelines for notifying staff

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			Sample guidelines for initial all-staff meeting
Notify students about the death	Lead: Backup:		Sharing the news with the school community Guidelines for communicating with students Sample notification for students Sample announcements
Notify school families about the death and the school's response	Lead: Backup:		Sample death notification for parents Sample letter to families Having a conversation about suicide SDCOE Suicide Prevention Resources for Parents
SUPPORT STUDENTS AND STAFF			
Provide staff with guidance in talking to students	Lead: Backup:		Talking points for students and staff after a suicide Tips for schools: Dealing with students and suicide loss

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<p>Provide support to staff (consider hiring substitutes to provide backup support as needed)</p>	<p>Lead:</p> <p>Backup:</p>		<p>Guidelines for providing support</p> <p>Caring for the caregiver</p>
<p>Identify staff to shadow deceased student's schedule for one week</p>	<p>Lead:</p> <p>Backup:</p>		
<p>Identify, monitor, and support students who may be at risk</p>	<p>Lead:</p> <p>Backup:</p>		<p>Identifying high risk children</p> <p>Guidelines for providing support</p> <p>Helping students cope</p> <p>Treat with Care Memo</p> <p>Teen Guide to Mental Health and Wellness (English, Spanish)</p> <p>Preventing Youth Suicide for Teens (English, Spanish)</p>
<p>Implement steps to help students with emotional regulation</p>	<p>Lead:</p> <p>Backup:</p>		<p>Feelings wheel</p> <p>Anxiety cards</p> <p>Virtual wellness center</p>
<p>Participate in and/or advise on appropriate memorialization in the immediate aftermath</p>	<p>Lead:</p> <p>Backup:</p>		<p>Guidelines for memorialization</p> <p>Key considerations</p>

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			for memorialization Suggestions for memorials
MINIMIZE RISK OF CONTAGION THROUGH THE MEDIA			
Work with press/media	Lead: Backup:	Local media contact(s):	Guidelines for working with the media Safe suicide reporting
Monitor social media	Lead: Backup:		How to manage social media Post loss social media calendar
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS			
Remove student from SIS and ensure family will not receive absence notifications	Lead: Backup:		
Coordinate return of student items to family	Lead: Backup:		
Re-organize seating charts (2-3 weeks after the death)	Lead: Backup:		
Prepare for key dates	Lead:		Anniversary of the

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(birthday, anniversary of death)	Backup:		death
PROVIDE SPACE FOR REFLECTION & SUPPORT			
Provide mental health support for crisis team members as needed	Lead: Backup:	Available mental health providers:	Caring for the caregiver
Debrief the process and revise protocols and assignments as needed (suggested at one month & again at one year after the death)	Lead: Backup:		