

Policy 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

- **Board Policy**
- **K-6 Readability BP 5141.52 Suicide Prevention.pdf**

Policy 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 10/15/2024

K-6 Readability

COMPTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT Youth Suicide Prevention Policy

CUSD knows many young people pass away by harming themselves. Many students think about or try suicide. It's important for school staff to notice students who are thinking about suicide. Staff have a duty to act quickly and in the right way when any student wants to hurt themselves. We want to make our school a safe place where students don't feel like giving up. Schools should keep students safe and healthy. This policy is to keep students and staff safe from hurting themselves. Schools help anyone hurt by suicide. Students do best in school when they're happy and safe. This policy goes along with others that help youth. This policy is based on research. Actions to stop self-harm help students stay safe. They also help students get help when they need it. Research shows discussing suicide doesn't cause it. CUSD will make plans to prevent suicide, help if it happens, and support after. They will name the mental health issues tied to self-harm. These plans will include teaching all school staff to notice warning signs.

Plan to Stop Suicide

CUSD will work with school counselors, social workers, and nurses. They will talk to school staff, students, families, health groups, police, and outside groups to see how well the school's plans to stop suicide are doing. Schools will work with local helpers if needed.

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and Schools)

The district will choose someone to make sure the rules about stopping suicide are followed and kept up to date. Each school will pick one person to do things to stop suicide. This policy will be checked and changed, at least once a year, with the groups above.

Resources:

There is a Toolkit for schools to help with mental health and suicide. This Toolkit follows AB 2246, which makes sure schools have plans to stop student suicide. It helps schools with mental health and suicide.

To learn more about this Toolkit, visit <http://www.heardalliance.org/>.

Prevention

Messaging

Talking about suicide can affect how one thinks and acts. CUSD looks at all items used to make sure they are safe.

Resources:

- Public messaging:
<http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>
- Media: <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/making-headlines-guide-engaging-media-suicide-prevention-california-0>
- Social Media: <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/how-use-social-media>

Training

CUSD has looked at the staff training to make sure it focuses on mental health. The training does not say that stress causes suicide. All school workers and adults on campus will get training.

Training:

Every year, all staff will learn about things that can cause suicide and signs that someone is at risk. They will learn how to stop suicide, what to do if they're worried, where to get help, and what to do after. School mental health staff who know a lot about suicide will lead these trainings. They might work with outside mental health helpers. The training might change each year based on what was learned before and new ways to help. All new staff must attend training when they start working. Returning staff should do one hour of training once a year.

This includes:

- Signs that someone might be thinking about suicide
- How to talk to a student who is at risk
- What to do if a student is at risk
- How to get help right away
- How to not judge people with mental health issues
- How acting early can help stop suicide
- Every year, the school looks at trends to see if there are any patterns. See: <http://cal-schls.wested.org/>.

Each year, all staff will learn about:

- How trauma can affect our feelings and thoughts
- Things people might not know about suicide
- Help in and out of school to stop suicide
- Using the right words to talk safely about suicide
- Things that can make someone more at risk, signs to watch for, and things that can help them
- Finding students at risk
- How to support a student showing sad feelings or talking about suicide. This includes talking about their thoughts and helping based on school rules
- School rules for handling suicide risk. Students need to be watched closely until a risk check is done.
- Steps to take after a suicide
- Resources to stop youth suicide
- How to stop judgment and how to help early to stop suicide
- Knowing that a student at risk must be sent for a check right away and watched by a staff member

The training will also teach more about students who might be at higher risk of suicide. These students are:

- Youth bereaved by suicide.

- Youth who have thought about or tried suicide.
- Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or issues with drugs.
- Youth who are LGBTQ.
- Youth who are homeless or in places like foster care.
- Youth who have gone through trauma.

Resources:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA): <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/course-types/youth/>
- Free YMHFA Training: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/projectcalwell.asp>
- Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR): <http://www.qprinstitute.com/>
- SafeTALK: <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/safetalk/>
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST): <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/asist/>
- Kognito At-Risk: <https://www.kognito.com/products/pk12/>
-

Employees

Staff from CUSD must follow the rules of their license to work. School staff should know about signs that someone might want to hurt themselves and can help. But, people outside school might need to help students who think about suicide. People who are struggling with their feelings usually need help from someone who knows a lot about mental health, not just at school.

Special Training

Extra training will be given to mental health experts who work in our schools. This will help them find students who need help and help in a crisis.

Resource:

- Assessing and Managing Suicide Risk (AMSR): <http://www.sprc.org/training-events/amr>.

Family Participation

Families can help stop suicide. Schools must share the suicide prevention policy with them. It is on the school website and the parent handbook. Families can give input.

Families will get training that includes:

- Risk factors, signs to watch for, and things that help.
- How to talk to someone at risk and what to do. Someone should watch them and get help right away.

Resource:

- Parents as Partners: A Suicide Prevention Guide for Parents: <https://www.save.org/product/parents-as-partners/>
-

Student Participation

CUSD works to make sure student lessons talk about mental health and stopping suicide. CUSD does not believe stress causes suicide.

Here's what students will do:

- Learn about how to deal with bad feelings that can make them worry or feel down.
- Get help from adults if they or someone they know might be thinking about hurting themselves.
- Here's what the lessons will talk about:
 - Ways to handle stress and tough times.

- How to notice when someone might be going through a hard time.
- Ways to get help for themselves or others, like talking to someone at school or somewhere else.
- Not judging others who may be feeling sad, and knowing that getting help early can keep bad things from happening.

Students will have special lessons about these topics in classes like health and PE. The schools will also have programs and events to talk about mental health and how to stop suicide.

Resources:

- More Than Sad: <https://afsp.org/our-work/education/more-than-sad/>
- Break Free from Depression (BFFD): <http://www.childrenshospital.org/breakfree>.
- Coping and Support Training (CAST): <http://www.reconnectingyouth.com/programs/cast/>
- Students Mobilizing Awareness and Reducing Tragedies (SMART): <https://www.save.org/what-we-do/education/smart-schools-program-2/>
- Linking Education and Awareness for Depression and Suicide (LEADS): <https://www.save.org/what-we-do/education/leads-for-youth-program/>
-

Intervention, Assessment, Referral

Staff

Two specially trained staff members at the district are points of contact for suicide prevention. If a staff member thinks a student might be considering suicide, they must tell one of the points of contact right away. In normal situations, the contact will tell a staff member at the school. Crisis contact information will be shared with all staff, students, and families. In an emergency, call 911. If a student is at risk, they will be referred for help. If it is safe, the school will tell their parents. If a student is in danger, 911 will be called. Anyone suspecting a student might be suicidal must inform the trained staff right away. Students with such thoughts will not be left alone. All school staff will know how to help when there is a crisis and what resources there are. The school will have a plan in place to keep students safe and inform everyone if a suicide attempt is made on school grounds or at a school event.

A. Families

A clear way to get help should be shared with all families so they know how to react during a crisis. They should also know about the help available in the school and other places.

B. Students

Students should tell a staff member if they feel very sad or have thoughts about hurting themselves. They should also share if they think another student feels this way.

C. Parental Involvement

All schools in CUSD must have a plan in place to take care of students who may be at risk of suicide. Here are the steps to follow to make sure the student gets help:

- Once a student is referred, school staff will check with the family to see if the student received follow-up care. The family must show proof of care.
- If the family doesn't get care for the student, the school will talk with them to find out why. They will try to solve problems, like beliefs or money. They will also stress the value of care. If the student still does not get care, the school may need to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) to report neglect.
 - Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (CPS)
 - 1(800) 540-4000

D. Plan for Suicide Attempts at School

If a suicide attempt is made during the school day, the school must try to keep the student and other students safe. These steps should be followed:

- Stay calm and think about how the student feels.
- Move other students away.
- Tell the school leader or suicide prevention contact right away.
- Dial 911 and share any details.
- Give basic first aid if needed until help is there.
- Contact the student's family right away.
- Do not leave the student alone, even for the restroom.
- Listen to the students and help them talk.
- Talk about support and help.
- Be ok with silence to think with the student.
- Give comfort.
- Give help, but don't say you will keep things secret.
- Only release students to their family or trained helpers.

E. Action Plan for Out-of-School Suicide Attempts

If a student attempts suicide outside school, the school will keep student privacy while giving help. These steps should be followed:

- Reach out to the family to help
- Talk with the family about how school can help while stopping gossip
- Get consent to share correct info from the family
- Choose a staff member to deal with the media
- Care for involved students
- Guide the student and family on coming back to school

F. Helping Students after a Mental Health Problem

It's important to help a student having trouble and to watch for any bad signs. Here are some things to do after a crisis:

- Deal with every threat and stay calm. Make sure the student knows they are important.
- Listen carefully and without judgment as the student talks.
- Accept their feelings and don't argue.

- Provide support and let them know they are safe and there is help. Don't promise secrecy or cause stress.
- Say things calmly and connect the student with a trained helper, counselor, or staff member who can give more help.
- Stay in touch with the student's family and mental health helpers to make sure they get the help they need.

G. Coming Back to School After a Suicide Attempt

A student who had thoughts about hurting themselves is more likely to feel that way again in the months after. Making sure they have a well-thought-out plan for coming back to school can keep them safe. It's important to have a good plan in place to help prevent suicide. When students help plan their return to school, they feel like they have some say, are helping themselves, and feel better.

Here are the steps to follow when a student comes back to school after a tough time:

- Get permission in writing from the family and any healthcare providers.
- Talk to the students and their family about any special needs or requests.
- Let the teachers know if the student might miss some days of school.
- Give the student extra time to catch up on missed work, knowing that it can be stressful.
- Keep checking in with mental health helpers or trusted adults to see how the student is doing.
- Work together with the family to make a plan for what happens next after the student comes back to school.

Resource:

- The School Reentry for a Student Who Has Attempted Suicide or Made Serious Suicidal Threats:
http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted_suicide_resources_for_schools-9/

H. Response After a Suicide Death

A suicide of a student or staff member is very hard for students and staff. It is vital that we are ready if this happens. Senior Directors of Child Welfare & Attendance, Ms. JaMaia Bond, will make sure every school has a plan for this. The Plan will have short and long-term steps and goals. In an emergency, call 911 right away.

- This Plan will:
 - Say which staff member will confirm the death and cause (school site leader)
 - Say which staff member will talk to the family (within 24 hours)
 - Use the Plan, including a first meeting of the district or school Team
 - Tell all staff members (best is in person or phone)
- Have a staff meeting to include:
 - Telling staff about suicide death
 - Support and resources for staff
 - Telling students about suicide death and what support there is.
 - Share relevant facts with permission.
- Prepare staff to help students:
 - How to refer students for help.

- How to tell students what happened.
- Help for students (on and off campus).
- Find students very upset about the death and other students at risk of doing the same.
- Find students upset about the death but not at risk.
- Tell others about the death.
- Think about service arrangements for family and school.
- Respond to memorial requests in a thoughtful way, thinking about other students.
- Find someone to talk to the media without being graphic or dramatic (see www.reportingonsuicide.org). Research shows some news can make other students at risk.
- Use and respond to social media:
 - Find where students are talking.
 - Train staff and students to watch social media.
- Long-term plans:
 - Think about important dates and what to do.
 - Help siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of deceased
 - Think about long-term memorials and how they impact students who are at risk.

Resources:

- After a Suicide: A Toolkit for School: <http://www.sprc.org/comprehensive-approach/postvention>.
- Help & Hope for Survivors of Suicide Loss: <http://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/help-hope-survivors-suicide-loss>.
- Mental Health Recovery Services Model Protocol: [http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted suicide resources for schools-9/](http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted%20suicide%20resources%20for%20schools-9/)
- CDE Safe Schools Planning: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/safeschlplanning.asp>.
- Responding to Student Mental Health Needs in School Safety Planning: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/el/le/yr14ltr0212.asp>.

The Board will update and make changes to this rule every five years. (Education Code 215)
 CUSD will share this plan on the school's website, where it's easy for parents and students to find. (Education Code 234.6)

Resources

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's ACCESS Hotline Phone
 800-854-7771:

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Address:

550 S Vermont Ave
 Los Angeles CA 90020
 (310)668-4272

Youth Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741

Envía un mensaje de texto con la palabra AYUDA al

Spanish Suicide Prevention Hotline:

1-800-SUICIDA

EDUCATION CODE Policy

Compton Unified School District

Compton, California

Adopted October 15, 2024