

**MILFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY
Suicide Prevention**

Policy 5111

The Milford School District (hereinafter referred to as “The District”) recognizes the serious problem of youth suicide and acknowledges that providing this policy for our schools related to youth suicide recognition and prevention is very important. The District also acknowledges that youth suicide is a complex issue, which cannot be addressed by the district and schools alone. This Suicide Prevention Policy (“Policy”) meets the requirements of 14 Del C. § 4165, relative to suicide prevention.

Suicide Prevention Training for Public School Employees

The District shall require its employees to receive 9 hours of training every 3 years consisting of Three hours of a suicide prevention training program established under § 4165(a) of Title 14 with each school district and charter school employee receiving 60 minutes of suicide prevention training each year. Any training required by this section shall be provided within the contracted school year as provided in 14 Del. C. §1305(e).

Suicide Prevention Program

The District shall develop a Suicide Prevention Program. The components of the District’s Suicide Prevention Program may vary to address the needs of different grade levels. Each school shall establish a committee that is responsible for coordinating the suicide prevention program within the school. The committee may be comprised of at least the following school-based personnel: Administration, School Counselor, Mental Health Counselor if present within the school, Nurse, and other staff members as assigned. The committee shall meet throughout the school year to discuss topics such as training, programs, and other as it relates to Suicide Prevention. The Suicide Prevention Committee shall meet the requirements assigned in the Communication section of this policy.

Communication

Procedures for confidential and anonymous reporting: School staff shall follow the District Suicide Prevention Manual to provide confidential and anonymous reporting of a student demonstrating the warning signs of suicide. Students and families can confidentially report any concern regarding a student demonstrating the warning signs of suicide to school personnel. Students and families can also anonymously report the need for assistance through the anonymous reporting application provided by the District. At a minimum, any privacy rules shall be followed, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Communications with Medical Professionals

Communications between healthcare professionals and school staff regarding any treatment of a student may occur for any student 14 years or older who has provided consent for voluntary outpatient treatment in accordance with 16. Del C. §5003. In accordance with FERPA guidelines, releases shall be signed before communication may take place.

Procedures for communications between school staff members and medical professionals who are involved in treating students for suicidal concerns: For a student who has not reached the age of 18, release of information forms shall be signed by a parent, guardian, or relative caregiver for the primary care physician or healthcare professional to communicate with school personnel regarding any treatment of a student.

Communications without signed releases in an emergency situation: School staff may release pertinent information to healthcare and/or first responder/emergency personnel as deemed necessary in an emergency. An emergency is defined by FERPA regulations as an actual, impending, or imminent emergency such as an articulable and significant threat.

MSD Suicide Risk Assessment Process

If an employee learns or observes that a student has threatened suicide, attempted suicide, expressed suicidal ideations, or demonstrated signs of being a suicide risk, the employee receiving the report will respond immediately, and accompany within his or her line of sight the student to a school counselor's office where the student shall remain under the supervision of a guidance counselor. If a school counselor is not present at arrival, the student shall similarly be accompanied first to the nurse's office then to the administrator's office. The above shall apply regardless of the severity or sincerity of the threat.

Unless the building administration determines that the report of a potentially suicidal student was fabricated by a third person, the student is not to be left alone in the school.

Unless the building administration determines that the report of a potentially suicidal student was fabricated by a third person, the student is not to be released from the line of sight of the school counselor, nurse, or administrator unless:

- The student is released into the care of law enforcement;
- The student is released into the care of a parent or guardian;
- The student is released into the care of an outside mental health agency;

- The student is released into the care of the Delaware Division of Services for Children, Youth, and their Families;
- The student is released to the State of Delaware Crisis response agency otherwise known as “Crisis.”

If the building administration determines that the report of a potentially suicidal student was fabricated by a third person, the building administration shall contact the parent or guardian of the student as soon as practical but within 24 hours and inform the parent or guardian of the report. Contact to the parent/guardian shall be documented via email and retained.

If school administrators determine that a student’s threat is of concern and is not fabricated the parent will be notified that the student must be evaluated by licensed healthcare professional, or a non-licensed healthcare professional working under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional, before returning to the school building. Documentation of such evaluation, including, but not limited to a safety plan or clearance must be provided to the building administration before the student returns to the school building.

MSD Documentation Process

Any employee who, before the student is released in accordance with this procedure, has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that a student has threatened suicide, attempted suicide, expressed suicidal ideations, or demonstrated signs of being a suicide risk shall prepare a report. The report shall be forwarded via email to building administration within one business day.

The transmittal email shall be kept, documenting the incident, for three years.

The written report from the employee shall be reasonably specific as to actions giving rise to the report, and include

- Persons involved, identifying all reporters, responders, the individual(s) into whose care the student was released, and the name of the student.
- Time and place of the incident.
- What gave rise to the incident; and
- All actions taken.
- All reports made.

Posting of the Suicide Prevention Policy

The District shall post this Suicide Prevention Policy in all student and staff handbook(s) and on the District’s website.

Retaliation Restrictions

No employee, school volunteer, or student shall be retaliated against for reporting a student thought to be demonstrating the warning signs of suicide.

ADOPTED: 12/21/15

REVISED: 6/17/24; 12/16/24