



Hawthorne School District

Youth Suicide Prevention Policy and Referral Steps

Student Behavioral Health Concerns

Flesch-Kincaid: Below Grade 6 | Adopted March 11, 2026

Purpose of this Youth Suicide Prevention Policy and Referral Steps: Student Behavioral Health Concerns Version

This draft uses short words and short lines, and it is made for families, students, and staff.

1. Why this policy matters

- Hawthorne School District wants each student to be safe.
- Some students may think about death or suicide.
- Staff must act fast when a student may be in danger.
- This policy tells what schools must do to help prevent suicide, respond to risk, and give care after a crisis.
- Some students feel very sad, scared, angry, or alone.
- Staff must take these signs seriously.
- Staff must help students and families find support.

Key rule

- If a student may hurt themselves or may want to die, do not leave the student alone.
- Get trained help right away. Call 9-1-1 if there is clear and present danger.

2. Goals

- Help students feel safe at school and know how to ask for help
- Protect student privacy as much as the law allows.
- Teach staff to spot warning signs.
- Link students and families to school and local support.

3. Policy Development

This policy was made with help from school staff and local partners. The group included school leaders, counselors, school psych staff, social workers, nurses, after-school staff, police partners, and mental health partners.

4. Who leads this work

- The district's lead is the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.
- District social workers may help when the site staff is not there.
- Each school has two suicide prevention liaisons.
- The district will review this policy each year.

5. Safe words about suicide

- Words matter. Calm words can help a person ask for help. Do not share graphic facts.
- When suicide is named, also share ways to get help.

6. Staff training

- All staff who work with students must complete training each year.
- Staff will learn ways to support mental health, the risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors
- Staff will learn that a student at risk must always stay with an adult.
- Training will be led by trained school mental health staff or a trusted mental health partner.
- Staff will learn when and how to refer a student for help.
- Staff will learn that a risk check must happen right away.

7. Students who may need extra support

- This may include students who lost someone to suicide or experience trauma.
- It may include students with mental health or drug use concerns.
- It may include students with a disability.
- It may include students who are LGBTQ+ or are asking about who they are.

8. Staff roles and limits

- Staff must stay within their job role and notice warning signs.
- Only licensed or credentialed staff may diagnose or treat a mental health condition.
- School staff can stay with a student and keep them safe.
- The district will train staff in their role.

9. Extra training for mental health staff

- Counselors, school psych staff, social workers, and other trained staff should get deeper training.
- Staff should learn how to use the district crisis steps.
- They should learn how trauma can affect mental health, myths about suicide, and safe ways to talk with a student in crisis
- Staff should learn how to respond after an attempt or death and reduce shame about mental health.

10. Parent, guardian, and caregiver education

- When possible, the district will include families in this work.
- Families should know how to get help in a crisis.
- Families should know school and local resources.

11. Student education

- Students in older grades will learn about mental health in ways that fit their age and learn how to ask a trusted adult for help.
- They will learn how to cope with stress, trauma, and how to spot warning signs in themselves or a friend. They will learn about school and local support options.

12. Student privacy

- The district will follow state and federal privacy laws. This includes FERPA and California student record laws.
- Student facts should be shared only with people who need them to keep the student safe, give care, or follow the law.

13. Non-school day or non-ELP day concerns

- If staff learn that a student may be suicidal when school or ELP is closed, staff should call 9-1-1.
- Hold a meeting before the student comes back to school.
- Ask Hawthorne Police for a welfare check when needed.
- Use re-entry steps, such as medical clearance, a Release of Information, and an updated Safety Plan.

14. Parent or guardian notice

- The principal, designee, counselor, or school psych staff member should notify the parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- Staff may need to complete a risk assessment before notice is given.
- This should happen when it is safe and in the student's best interest.
- If the student needs fast care, call PMRT or law enforcement based on the facts.
PMRT: (800) 854-7771.
- The principal or designee must notify Cabinet if PMRT or law enforcement is called.

15. Return to school after a hold or attempt

- A re-entry meeting is required before the student returns when PMRT was called by school or district staff or when Hawthorne Police conducts a welfare check.
- The student should get time and support to make up work.
- The team should create or review the Safety Plan. The team should get written clearance from a medical provider and a signed Release of Information
- The student should be part of the plan when possible.

16. Forms, Tools, Resources

- Columbia Screener (CSSRS), Safety Plan, Parent Notice Letter, Release of Information, and List of local resources.
- District local mental health resources:
<https://www.hawthorne.k12.ca.us/mentalhealthservices>
- California Department of Education referral protocols:
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/mh/referralpolicy.asp>
- Youth Mental Health First Aid:
<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/course-types/youth/>

17. Final safety reminder

- When there is a safety concern, act right away. Contact the school crisis team.
- Keep the student with an adult. Call 9-1-1 if there is clear and present danger.