

# Board Policy

## Suicide Prevention

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and that all suicide threats must be taken seriously. ~~To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. Superintendent or designee shall establish procedures to be followed when a suicide attempt, threat or disclosure is reported. The district shall also provide students, parents/guardians and staff with education that helps them recognize the warning signs of severe emotional distress and take preventive measures to help potentially suicidal students.~~

~~In developing measures and strategies for use by the district, the Superintendent or designee may consult with school health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations. Suicide prevention training for certificated and classified staff shall be designed to help staff recognize sudden changes in students' appearance, personality or behavior which may indicate suicidal intentions, help students of all ages develop a positive self image and a realistic attitude towards potential accomplishments, identify helpful community resources, and follow procedures established by the Superintendent or designee for intervening when a student attempts, threatens or discloses the desire to commit suicide. The training shall be offered under the direction of a trained district counselor/psychologist or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.~~

~~(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)~~

~~(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)~~

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

~~(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)~~

~~(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)~~

~~(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)~~

~~(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)~~

~~(cf. 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services)~~

~~Staff shall promptly report suicidal threats or statements to the principal or mental health counselor, who shall promptly report the threats or statements to the student's parents/guardians. These statements shall otherwise be kept confidential.~~

~~(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)~~

Legal Reference:

[49602](#) Confidentiality of student information

[49604](#) Suicide prevention training for school counselors

## WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

[5698](#) Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

Management Resources:

## CDE PUBLICATIONS

Suicide Prevention Program for California Schools, 1987

Health Framework for California Public Schools, 1994

### **Prevention and Instruction**

Suicide prevention strategies may include, but not be limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)*

The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and self-esteem. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum in the secondary grades. Such instruction shall be aligned with state content standards and shall be designed to help students analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, including potential suicide, and to identify suicide prevention strategies.

*(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)*

The Superintendent or designee may offer parents/guardians education or information which describes the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.

**BP 5141.52**

### **Staff Development**

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students in the secondary grades

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

2. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)

4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
5. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
6. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. (Education Code 215)

## **BP 5141.52**

### **Intervention**

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the principal or school counselor. The principal or counselor shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible and may refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community.

(cf. 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies)

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall complete the suicide prevention curriculum, including identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

(cf. 5138 - Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)

The Superintendent or designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications in the event that a suicide occurs or an attempt is made on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

## **Postvention**

The Superintendent or designee shall implement procedures to address students' and staff's grief and to minimize the risk of imitative suicide or suicide contagion. He/she shall provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

Any response to media inquiries shall be handled by the district-designated spokesperson who shall not divulge confidential information. The district's response shall not sensationalize suicide and shall focus on the district's postvention plan and available resources.

After any suicide or attempted suicide by a student, the Superintendent or designee shall provide an opportunity for all staff who responded to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.

After any suicide or attempted suicide by a student or staff member, the superintendent or designee shall work in collaboration with parents/guardians/family members to develop a plan to return the person to school in a safe, nurturing manner.

Whenever the school community is aware of a suicide on campus attempts will be made to provide a triage system for counseling, memorials and an eventual return to school operations in order to address the physical, social and emotional needs of the school community members.

### Legal Reference:

#### EDUCATION CODE

215 Student suicide prevention policies

32280-32289 Comprehensive safety plan

49060-49079 Student records

49602 Confidentiality of student information

49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors

#### GOVERNMENT CODE

810-996.6 Government Claims Act

#### PENAL CODE

11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

5850-5883 Mental Health Services Act

COURT DECISIONS

Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008

Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2003

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS

**BP 5141.52**

School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS PUBLICATIONS

Preventing Suicide, Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS

Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, rev. 2012

WEB SITES

American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <http://afsp.org>

American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>

American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>

California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh>

California Department of Health Care Services, Suicide Prevention Program:

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth>

National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org>

National Institute for Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:

<http://www.samhsa.gov>

Policy MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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