

Regulation 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 06/06/2017

Staff Development

Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, counselors, and other district employees who interact with students at the secondary level. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor/psychologist and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.

Materials for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services at the school site and within the community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Materials also may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials. (Education Code 215)

Staff development shall include research and information related to the following topics:

1. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups, 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
2. Individual risk factors such as previous suicide attempt(s) or self-harm, history of depression or mental illness, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors
3. Warning signs that may indicate depression, emotional distress, or suicidal intentions, such as changes in students' personality or behavior and verbalizations of hopelessness or suicidal intent
4. Protective factors that may help to decrease a person's suicide risk, such as resiliency, problem-solving ability, access to mental health care, and positive connections to family, peers, school, and community
5. Instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health
6. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups
7. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide

Instruction

The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students and shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum at appropriate secondary grades and shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide
2. Develop coping and resiliency skills and self-esteem
3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent
4. Identify trusted adults, school resources, and/or community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking services for mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention

Intervention

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.

Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm, he/she shall

promptly notify the principal or school counselor.

Although any personal information that a student discloses to a school counselor shall generally not be revealed, released, referenced, or discussed with third parties, the counselor may report to the principal or student's parents/guardians when he/she has reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student. In addition, the counselor may disclose information of a personal nature to psychotherapists, other health care providers, or the school nurse for the sole purpose of referring the student for treatment. (Education Code 49602)

A school employee shall act only within the authorization and scope of his/her credential or license. An employee is not authorized to diagnose or treat mental illness unless he/she is specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall receive training that includes identification of the warning signs of suicidal

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall ensure student safety by taking the following actions:

1. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary
2. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened
3. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene
4. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible

The principal or designee shall document the incident in writing, including the steps that the school took in response to the suicide attempt or threat.

The Superintendent or designee shall follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed. If the parent/guardian does not access treatment for the student, the Superintendent or designee may meet with the parent/guardian to identify barriers to treatment and assist the family in providing follow-up care for the student. If follow-up care is still not provided, the Superintendent or designee shall consider whether he/she is required, pursuant to laws for mandated reporters of child neglect, to refer the matter to the local child protective services agency.

For any student returning to school after a mental health crisis, the principal or designee and/or school counselor may meet with the parents/guardians and, if appropriate, with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school.

Postvention

In the event that a student dies by suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall communicate with the student's parents/guardians to offer condolences, assistance, and resources. In accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the parents/guardians regarding facts that may be divulged to other students, parents/guardians, and staff.

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.

for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State References

Ed. Code 215	Suicide prevention policies
Ed. Code 215.5	Student identification cards; inclusion of safety hotlines
Ed. Code 216	Suicide prevention online training programs
Ed. Code 234.6	Bullying and harassment prevention information
Ed. Code 32280-32289.5	School safety plans
Ed. Code 49060-49079	Student records
Ed. Code 49602	Counseling and confidentiality of student information
Ed. Code 49604	Suicide prevention training for school counselors
Gov. Code 810-996.6	Government Claims Act
Pen. Code 11164-11174.3	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act
W&I Code 5698	Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
W&I Code 5850-5886	Children's Mental Health Services Act

Management Resources References

California Department of Education Publication	Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, May 2019
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008
CALSCHLS Publication	California School Staff Survey (CSSS)
CALSCHLS Publication	California School Parent Survey (CSPS)
CALSCHLS Publication	California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)
CDC and Prevention Publication	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009
Court Decision	Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District) (2009) 567 F.3d 554
Each Mind Matters Publication	Making Headlines: Guide to Engaging the Media in Suicide Prevention in California, 2012
Heard Alliance Publication	K-12 Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention, 2017
Mental Health Svcs Oversight & Accountability Pub	Striving for Zero: California's Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention 2020-2025
Nat'l Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication	Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015
Suicide Prevention Resource Center Publication	After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools, 2nd Edition, 2018
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Publication	Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Publication	National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, rev. 2012
Website	CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Website	Suicide Prevention Messaging
Website	National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention
Website	Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission
Website	HEARD Alliance
Website	Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement

Management Resources References

Website	Crisis Text Line
Website	CalSCHLS
Website	California Mental Health Services Authority
Website	Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Website	Suicide Prevention Resource Center
Website	National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Website	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Website	Trevor Project
Website	American Academy of Pediatrics
Website	American Association of Suicidology
Website	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
Website	American Psychological Association
Website	California Department of Education, Mental Health
Website	California Department of Health Care Services, Mental Health Services
Website	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health
Website	National Association of School Psychologists
Website	National Institute for Mental Health
Website	American School Counselor Association

Cross References

	Description
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
1112	Media Relations
1220	Citizen Advisory Committees
1220	Citizen Advisory Committees
1240	Volunteer Assistance
1400	Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies And The Schools
3515	Campus Security
3515	Campus Security
4121	Temporary/Substitute Personnel
4121	Temporary/Substitute Personnel
4127	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4131	Staff Development
4227	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4231	Staff Development
4327	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4331	Staff Development
5125	Student Records
5125	Student Records
5131	Conduct
5131.2	Bullying

Cross References

5131.2
5131.6
5137
5138
5141
5141
5141.22
5141.4
5141.6
5142
5145.3
5145.3
5145.7
5145.7
5145.71
5145.9
5148
5148.2
6142.8
6145.2
6145.2
6145.8
6164.2
6164.5

Description

[Bullying](#)
[Alcohol And Other Drugs](#)
[Positive School Climate](#)
[Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation](#)
[Health Care And Emergencies](#)
[Health Care And Emergencies](#)
[Infectious Diseases](#)
[Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting](#)
[School Health Services](#)
[Safety](#)
[Nondiscrimination/Harassment](#)
[Nondiscrimination/Harassment](#)
[Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment](#)
[Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment](#)
[Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Complaint Procedures](#)
[Hate-Motivated Behavior](#)
[Child Care And Development](#)
[Before/After School Programs](#)
[Comprehensive Health Education](#)
[Athletic Competition](#)
[Athletic Competition](#)
[Assemblies And Special Events](#)
[Guidance/Counseling Services](#)
[Student Success Teams](#)