

SUICIDE PREVENTION/CRISIS RESPONSE

POLICY

There are times when the school needs to intervene quickly in certain situations that may occur during or after school hours, on or off the school premises. Situations that involve attempted suicide or completion of an act of suicide need a quick and orderly response to such crises.

The attempt or completion of a suicide act by a student during or after school hours impacts not only on the school, its employees, and its students but also on the community. The role of the school is to respond promptly to the act and minimize any negative effect such an act might have upon its students and staff.

The policy of the Board shall be to follow designated procedures whenever:

1. Any suspicion or concrete evidence reveals that a student is contemplating suicide.
2. Any student has completed the act of suicide.
3. Either of the aforementioned acts has occurred to initiate a response to the act that will have a calming effect on the school and the community.

The procedures listed below for suicide prevention/crisis response may be used also when other types of problems occur such as death in a student's immediate family, accidents or violent crimes involving students or their families.

PROCEDURE

I. Identification

- A. If any staff member has reason to believe a student is considering or threatening suicide, a counselor, the principal or Crisis Team member must be notified. All information pertaining to a potential suicide is to be considered confidential and is to be shared only with members of the Crisis Team.
- B. One or more members of the Crisis Team will make a determination of the threat. After determination of the threat has been made, all decisions regarding lethality and the resolution of the crisis will be made by two members of the Crisis Team.
- C. If the Crisis Team has assessed lethality:
 1. Imminent Danger (high lethality)
 - a. The student is not to be left alone. He/she must be left in the presence of a school staff member.

- b. The parent or responsible adult must be contacted by the principal or his/her designee and encouraged to come to the school.
- c. If the parent/responsible adult refuses to come to school or cannot be contacted, then,
 - (1) Protective Services shall be notified by the principal/designee.
 - (2) The police or E.M.S. may also be notified.
 - (3) One or more members of the Crisis Team may meet the student at the emergency facility.
- d. The above process must be documented.

2. Potential Danger (moderate lethality)

- a. An attempt will be made to have the student agree to a "no suicide" contract.
- b. The student is not to be left alone. He/she must be left in the presence of a school staff member.
- c. An attempt will be made to contact the parent/responsible adult by the principal/designee as determined by the Crisis Team.
- d. The parent/responsible adult will be:
 - (1) Requested to talk with one or more members of the Crisis Team.
 - (2) Given a list of appropriate referral sources.
 - (3) Contacted by a Crisis Team member to inquire as to whether or not recommendations have been followed.
- e. If the parent/responsible adult refuses to come to the school or has not made the appropriate referral after a reasonable period of time, the building principal or principal/designee shall contact Protective Services.
- f. The above process must be documented.

D. After completion of the activities in paragraph C above, the Crisis Team must meet to:

- 1. Debrief and/or evaluate the activities of the Crisis Team.
- 2. Determine the appropriateness of giving information to the general staff.

3. Determine the appropriate support services in the school to help the student when he/she returns to school.
- E. A Crisis Team member will confer with another member to determine level of lethality.

II. Attempted Suicide

The Crisis Team will meet to evaluate the impact upon the school as well as upon the student. If deemed appropriate, the team will determine actions and/or activities to be undertaken.

III. Completion

- A. The Crisis Team should be notified as soon as possible.
1. If the completion is during the school day, the team will meet immediately.
 2. If the completion is after the school day, the Crisis Team will meet the next day.
 3. The team may develop an information sheet for distribution to the school staff.
 4. Appropriate actions will be determined as the result of the team meetings.
- B. The staff will be invited to a meeting the next school day, one hour before the normal start of school. Each school will develop a system for contacting their staff. If an information sheet has been promulgated, this shall be distributed and discussed.
- C. The principal/designee will meet with the student body. He or she will relate the facts of the suicide, as well as inform the students of the existence of a Crisis Team.
- D. A crisis room shall be designated in the school building. Every student shall have access. Crisis Team members shall staff the room.
- E. The superintendent or his/her designee shall be the only individual to communicate with the press.
- F. The superintendent or his/her designee shall contact all of the other schools in the district, as well as the administration building.
- G. Teachers may request a member of the Crisis Team to visit their class if this seems to be an appropriate action.
- H. Teachers will stress the finality of suicide. They will challenge any attempt to glamorize or memorialize the event.

- I. After the principal/designee assesses the parental wishes, students who plan to attend the funeral must follow the building's attendance policy for obtaining an excused absence.
- J. The Crisis Team shall determine:
 1. Appropriate support services for members of the school staff.
 2. Appropriate support services to the parents and siblings.
 3. Duration of the support services to the students, teachers, parents and siblings.
- K. The Crisis Team shall include:
 1. Building principal - liaison
 2. District social workers
 3. High school counselors
 4. Middle school counselors
 5. School psychologist
 6. Substance Abuse Coordinator or Student Assistance Team Coordinator shall serve as chairperson.

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