

Stockton USD

Administrative Regulation 5141.52

Students

Suicide Prevention

Staff Development

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)

Additionally, staff development shall include research and information related to the following topics:

1. Research identifying risk factors, such as previous suicide attempt(s), history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, and other factors
2. Addressing the needs of high-risk groups, including, but not limited to, youth bereaved by suicide; youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.
3. 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 or traumatic stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors.
4. Identification of students who may be at risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, 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.
5. Protective factors that may help to decrease a student's suicide risk, such as resiliency, problem-solving ability, access to mental health care, and positive connections to family, peers, school, and community.
6. Researched-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum,

promoting mental and emotional health, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, and using safe and effective messaging about suicide.

7. The importance of early prevention and intervention in reducing the risk of suicide and common misconceptions about suicide.
8. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups.
9. Appropriate ways to interact with a student who is demonstrating emotional distress or is suicidal and procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide, including, but not limited to, appropriate protocols for constant monitoring and supervision of the student, during the time the student is in the school's physical custody, while the immediate referral of the student to medical or mental health services is being processed.
10. District procedures for responding after a suicide has occurred.

The District may provide additional professional development in suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention to District mental health professionals, including, but not limited to, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses.

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 in an age and developmentally appropriate manner 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. Identify alternatives to suicide and develop coping and resiliency skills for dealing with stress and trauma, and building 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 mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention services

5. Develop help-seeking strategies and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking services for mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention
6. Recognize that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide

The Superintendent or designee may develop and implement school activities that raise awareness about mental health wellness and suicide prevention.

Intervention

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, designated reporter, 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, the staff member shall promptly notify the principal, school counselor, or designated reporter, who shall implement District intervention protocols as appropriate.

Although any personal information that a student discloses to a school counselor shall generally not be revealed, released, discussed, or referred to with third parties, the counselor may report to the principal or student's parents/guardians when there is reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student or others within the school community. 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, or to report child abuse and neglect as required by Penal Code Sections 11164-11174.3. (Education Code § 49602)

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 behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall take the following actions in order to ensure student safety:

1. Immediately secure medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary;

2. Notify law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened
3. Keep 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

The Superintendent or designee shall document the incident in writing as soon as feasible, including steps taken by the District 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 it is necessary, 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 steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school and determine the need for ongoing support.

Postvention

In the event that a suicide occurs or is attempted on campus, the principal or designee shall follow the crisis intervention procedures contained in the school safety plan. After consultation with the Superintendent or designee and the student's parents/guardians about facts that may be divulged in accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the principal or designee may 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.

In the event that a student dies by suicide, the Superintendent or designee may 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. The Superintendent or designee shall provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. Students significantly affected by suicide death and those at risk of imitative behavior should be identified and closely monitored. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how to best 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 the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions. Student Identification Cards

Student identification cards for students in grades 7-12 shall include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number and may also include the Crisis Text Line and/or a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number. (Education Code § 215.5)

References:

- .BP/AR 0450 - Comprehensive Safety Plan)
- BP 1112- Media Relations
- BP/AR 5125 - Student Records
- BP/AR 5141 - Health Care and Emergencies
- BP/AR 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs
- BP/AR 5141.6 - School Health Services
- BP/AR 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education
- BP/AR 6164.2 - Guidance/Counseling Services

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