

PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Policy

Students

BP 5141.52

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Board of Education recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and should be addressed directly and affirmatively. In an effort to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop prevention strategies and intervention procedures for use in Piedmont schools. The Superintendent or designee shall involve school health professionals, school counselors, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies and professionals, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention.

Suicide prevention strategies shall include, but not be limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school, with extra care taken to ensure historically marginalized groups feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, and is characterized by caring staff and positive interrelationships among students. The district's instructional and student support programs 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 resilience. 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 efforts, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, reducing the stigma of mental illness, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help staff identify and find help for students at risk of suicide. The training shall be offered under the direction of district staff and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies and may include information on:

- 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 stress/loss, family instability, or other factors.
- Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in student appearance, personality, or behavior
- Research-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health.
- School and community resources and services for students and families in crisis and ways to access them.

- District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide.

When a student is identified as potentially suicidal, every effort will be made to ensure the student is assessed by a professional, or a mental health professional working under professional supervision of a district-employed mental health professional.

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 by a member of the student body or staff on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

Students shall be encouraged through education programs and in school activities to notify a teacher, principal, another school administrator, counselor, or other adult if they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

215 Pupil Suicide Prevention Policies
 32280-32289 Comprehensive safety plan
 49060-49079 Student records
 49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors

GOVERNMENT CODE

810-996.6 Government Claims 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

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PUBLICATIONS

California Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention: Every Californian is Part of the Solution, 2008

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS

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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS
National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, 2001

Web Sites:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention http://www.afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy_FINAL.pdf

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

California Department of Education, Youth Suicide Prevention for California Schools, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp>

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

California Department of Mental Health, Children and Youth Programs:

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/mh/Pages/ProgramsforChildrenandYouth.aspx>

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

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

Palo Alto Unified School District Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Schools <https://www.pausd.org/sites/default/files/pdf-faqs/attachments/ComprehensiveSuicidePreventionToolkitforSchools.pdf>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>

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PIEDMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Regulations

Students

AR 5141.52

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The District's suicide prevention curriculum shall be designed to help students to:

- Develop and understand the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies
- Learn to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others
- Learn and develop help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help
- Identify crisis intervention resources where help is available and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking support for mental health issues and concerns
- Understand the causal relationship between drug and alcohol misuse and depression, including suicidal behavior
- Address and understand 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, LBGTQ youth

Staff Development

Annual suicide prevention training/materials will be provided in order for the district staff to learn to recognize the warning signs of suicidal crisis, to understand how to help suicidal youths, and to identify resources at school and in the community. Teachers, administrators, and support staff will receive information to assist with identifying potentially suicidal students and to report suicide threats to appropriate authorities. Training will be offered under the direction of trained district staff.

Staff shall promptly report suicidal threats or statements to the principal or to a trained District counselor/psychologist, who shall promptly assess the level of threat and alert the student's parents/guardians as appropriate, remaining with the student until the parent or guardian arrives.

Intervention

If a student is determined to be at imminent risk for a suicide attempt (shows clear and immediate intent to carry through with the act and outlines a clear and realistic plan), the following steps will be taken.

- The mental health professional will inform a site administrator about the emergency.

- The mental health professional will identify additional staff to assist with crisis intervention efforts. If a mental health professional is not available, a school nurse or administrator will be asked to assist.
- The intervention team will work together to identify the least traumatic procedure for guaranteeing the child is evaluated at an adolescent psychiatric inpatient facility or by a psychiatric professional at a hospital emergency department.
 - The first choice for transport will be the student's parent or guardian. The administrator or mental health professional will contact parents and direct them to transport their child immediately to an adolescent psychiatric inpatient facility. In advance, the administrator or mental health professional will call the hospital to ensure they have space available, should the child require a psychiatric hold.
 - When a parent cannot be reached or the mental health professional's judgment indicates that transport by the parents is not possible or is not in the best interest of the child, the local police or fire department will be contacted to request a transport to an adolescent psychiatric inpatient facility that already has been identified as having space available. Police and fire professionals will conduct their own suicide risk assessment before transporting the student. If the student will be transported by ambulance and appears to need continuous emotional support, the mental health professional may ride with the student to the psychiatric inpatient facility. Parents will be contacted and instructed to meet their child at the psychiatric inpatient facility.
 - Throughout this intervention, one member of the intervention team will continuously supervise the student to ensure his/her safety and provide emotional support.

Education

Developmentally-appropriate, student-centered education materials will be integrated into the curriculum of all K-12 health classes. The content of these age-appropriate materials will include:

- the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies;
- how to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others;
- help-seeking strategies for individual students or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help;
- how bullying can lead to or worsen feelings of isolation, rejection, exclusion and despair, as well as leading to depression and anxiety.