

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District

Students

5141.52 – AR

SUICIDE PREVENTION

A. Purpose and Scope

To provide procedures and guidelines on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

B. General

Education Code mandates that districts serving students in grades 7-12 adopt a policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The policy shall specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including suicide awareness and prevention training for teachers.

C. Procedures

1. Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, school counselors, and school psychologists 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.
2. Materials approved for training of teachers shall include risk factors, warning signs of suicide, prevention strategies, intervention strategies, and referral procedures. Materials approved for training of school counselors and school psychologists shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services, both at the school site and within the larger 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.
3. Staff development shall include information related to the following topics:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.

- c. Warning signs that may indicate depression, emotional distress, suicidal intentions, such as changes in students' personality or behavior and verbalizations of hopelessness or suicidal intent.
 - d. 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.
 - e. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups.
 - f. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide.
4. Students in middle and high school shall receive instruction in 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.

The district's high school health education curriculum 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:

- a. Identify signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide.
 - b. Develop coping and resiliency skills and self-esteem in high school health classes.
 - c. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent.
 - d. 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.
5. 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.
6. Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the site administrator, school counselor, or school psychologist.
7. 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 shall 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 or school psychologist 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.

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall ensure student safety by taking the following actions:
 - a. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary.
 - b. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened.
 - c. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene.
 - d. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible.
11. 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.
12. The Superintendent or designee shall follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to suggest 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.
13. 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 students readiness for return to school.
14. 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.

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. 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.

D. Reports Required

None

E. Record Retention

Documentation of Incident Form

F. Responsible Administrative Unit

Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services

Executive Director, Instructional Support

G. Approved by:

Candy Plahy	9/12/17	Greg Plutko, Ed.D.	9/12/17
Responsible Division Head	Date	Superintendent	Date