

Regulation 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: 09/20/2001 | Last Revised Date: 03/07/2024 | Last Reviewed Date: 03/07/2024

Definitions

Mental health professional means an individual licensed or registered, or an intern or associate working towards licensure, by the Board of Behavioral Sciences or the Board of Psychology in the Department of Consumer Affairs. (Education Code 215)

Student suicide crisis means any of the following: (Education Code 215)

1. A student who is exhibiting suicidal thoughts or behaviors
2. A student who has completed a suicide risk assessment and is determined to be at risk of suicide
3. A student who is attempting to physically harm themselves or others

School mental health professional means a school employee with a clear or preliminary pupil personnel services credential with a specialization in school counseling, school social work, or school psychology, a credentialed school nurse, or a licensed, registered, or associate marriage and family therapist, professional clinical counselor, clinical social worker, educational psychologist, or psychologist under the supervision of a school employee with a pupil personnel services or administrative services credential. (Education Code 215)

Staff Development

Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, interns, counselors, and other district employees who interact with students, including, as appropriate, substitute teachers, coaches, expanded day learning staff, tutors, and volunteers. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor, psychologist, and/or social worker who may collaborate 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. Training materials may also 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. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups, including, but not limited to, students who are impacted/bereaved by suicide; students with exceptional needs/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
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, recent severe or traumatic stress or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors
3. 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
4. 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
5. Instructional strategies for teaching the social emotional learning curriculum, promoting mental and emotional health, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, and using safe and effective messaging about suicide
6. The importance of early prevention and intervention in reducing the risk of suicide

7. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups
8. 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 monitoring the student while the immediate referral of the student to medical or mental health services is being processed
9. District procedures for responding after a suicide has occurred
10. Common misconceptions about suicide

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 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. Board approved curriculum is Second Step is used for grades TK-8 and 7 Mindsets for grades 9-12 use a scope and sequence created by counselors, teachers, administrators, and students. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum in an age and developmentally appropriate manner.

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

Student Identification Cards

Student identification cards for students in grades 7-12 shall include the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and 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)

Intervention

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the name, title, and contact information of the members of the district and/or school crisis intervention team(s) to students, staff, parents/guardians, and caregivers and post on school and district websites. Such notifications shall identify the mental health professional who serves as the crisis intervention team's designated reporter to receive and act upon reports of a student's suicidal intention.

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, referenced, 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 11164-11174.3. (Education Code 49602)

When the district determines that a student is in need of mental or behavioral health services, the services shall be provided in accordance with protocols specified in Board Policy 5141.5 - Mental Health.

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 and providing comfort to the student 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 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 next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school and determine the need for ongoing support.

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. 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 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.

Policy Reference Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the Governing Board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State

Ed. Code 215

Ed. Code 215.5

Description

[Suicide prevention policies](#)

[Student identification cards; inclusion of safety hotlines](#)

State

Ed. Code 216
 Ed. Code 218.3
 Ed. Code 234.6
 Ed. Code 32280-32289.5
 Ed. Code 49060-49079
 Ed. Code 49428.15
 Ed. Code 49428.2
 Ed. Code 49428.5
 Ed. Code 49429
 Ed. Code 49602
 Ed. Code 49604
 Gov. Code 810-996.6
 Pen. Code 11164-11174.3
 W&I Code 5698
 W&I Code 5850-5886

Description

[Suicide prevention online training programs](#)
 Training curriculum to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning students
[Bullying and harassment prevention information](#)
[School safety plans](#)
[Student records](#)
[Identification of evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health](#)
 Referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns in grades 7-12; certification of youth behavioral health training for employees
[Student mental health poster](#)
 Telehealth technology in schools
[Counseling and confidentiality of student information](#)
[Suicide prevention training for school counselors](#)
[Government Claims Act](#)
[Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act](#)
[System of care for children and youth with serious emotional disturbance](#)
[Children's Mental Health Services Act](#)

Federal

42 USC 290bb-33

Description

Suicide Training and Awareness Nationally Delivered for Universal Prevention Act of 2021

Management Resources

California Department of Education Publication
 California Department of Education Publication
 California Department of Education Publication
 CALSCHLS Publication
 CALSCHLS Publication
 CALSCHLS Publication
 CDC and Prevention Publication
 Court Decision
 Each Mind Matters Publication
 Heard Alliance Publication
 Mental Health Svcs Oversight & Accountability Pub
 Mental Health Svcs Oversight & Accountability Pub
 Nat'l Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication

Description

[Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy for Local Educational Agencies that Serve Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade Students, February 2023](#)
[Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, May 2019](#)
[Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008](#)
[California School Staff Survey \(CSSS\)](#)
[California School Parent Survey \(CSPS\)](#)
[California Healthy Kids Survey \(CHKS\)](#)
[School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009](#)
[Corales v. Bennett \(Ontario-Montclair School District\) \(2009\) 567 F.3d 554](#)
[Making Headlines: Guide to Engaging the Media in Suicide Prevention in California, 2012](#)
[K-12 Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention, 2017](#)
[Accelerating Transformational Change: Strategic Plan for 2024-2027](#)
[Striving for Zero: California's Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention 2020-2025](#)
[Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015](#)

Management Resources**Description**

Nat's Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication	Conducting a Virtual Suicide Assessment Checklist
Nat's Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication	Comprehensive School Suicide Prevention in a Time of Distance Learning, 2020
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
USDOE Ofc for Civil Rights, USDOJ Civil Rights Pub	Supporting and Protecting the Rights of Students at Risk of Self-Harm in the Era of COVID-19, October 2021
Website	California Department of Public Health, Office of Suicide Prevention
Website	Mental Health Evaluation, Training, Research, and Innovation Center for Schools (METRICS)
Website	CalHOPE Schools Initiative
Website	California Surgeon General, Safe Spaces: Trauma-Informed Training
Website	Schoolsafety.gov
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
Website	Crisis Text Line
Website	California School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys (CaSCHLS)
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

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Description[Comprehensive Safety Plan](#)[Comprehensive Safety Plan](#)[Media Relations](#)[Citizen Advisory Committees](#)[Citizen Advisory Committees](#)[Volunteer Assistance](#)[Volunteer Assistance](#)[Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies And The Schools](#)[Campus Security](#)[Interns](#)[Interns](#)[Temporary/Substitute Personnel](#)[Temporary Athletic Team Coaches](#)[Temporary Athletic Team Coaches](#)[Staff Development](#)[Staff Development](#)[Temporary Athletic Team Coaches](#)[Temporary Athletic Team Coaches](#)[Staff Development](#)[Staff Development](#)[Temporary Athletic Team Coaches](#)[Temporary Athletic Team Coaches](#)[Staff Development](#)[Student Records](#)[Student Records](#)[Conduct](#)[Bullying](#)[Bullying](#)[Alcohol And Other Drugs](#)[Alcohol And Other Drugs](#)[Mobile Communication Devices](#)[Positive School Climate](#)[Health Care And Emergencies](#)[Health Care And Emergencies](#)[Infectious Diseases](#)[Infectious Diseases](#)[Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting](#)[Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting](#)[School Health Services](#)

Cross References

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Description

[School Health Services](#)
[School Health Services - Student Health And Social Services](#)
[Safety](#)
[Safety](#)
[Nondiscrimination/Harassment](#)
[Nondiscrimination/Harassment](#)
[Sexual Harassment](#)
[Sexual Harassment](#)
[Title IX Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures](#)
[Hate-Motivated Behavior](#)
[Child Care And Development](#)
[Child Care And Development](#)
[Before/After School Programs](#)
[Before/After School Programs](#)
[Comprehensive Health Education](#)
[Athletic Competition](#)
[Athletic Competition](#)
[Athletic Competition](#)
[Assemblies And Special Events](#)
[Guidance/Counseling Services](#)
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[Student Success Teams](#)
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