

Policy 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: DRAFT

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

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth, that prevention is a collective effort that requires stakeholder engagement, and school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. In an effort to reduce suicidal behavior, its impact on students and families, and other associated trauma associated with suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures, strategies, practices, and supports for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. District and school leaders underscore the importance of all staff and students working together to create safe, respectful, nurturing, and welcoming campuses in which students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or their peers. Leaders provide opportunities for continuous improvement and monitoring of school climate.

In developing and updating district policy and procedures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, suicide prevention experts, and, in developing, if the policy will affect for grades K-6 students, the county mental health plan shall also be consulted. (Education Code 215)

When developing or reviewing district policy on suicide prevention, the Superintendent or designee may make a recommendation regarding the need to hire a mental health professional for the district, or for any school that is not currently served by a mental health professional, and the possible funding source(s) for such hiring.

Measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students, including, as appropriate, substitute teachers, coaches, expanded day learning staff, tutors, and volunteers in all grades served by the district

Staff complete take suicide prevention training annually on Target Solutions every year.

2. Instruction to students in problem-solving, coping, and resiliency skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being; help-seeking strategies and resources; and instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others
3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students
4. The review of materials and resources used in awareness efforts and communications to ensure they align with best practices for safe and effective messaging about suicide
5. The provision of information to parents/guardians and caregivers regarding risk and protective factors, warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, the district's suicide prevention policy and procedures, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, the importance of communicating with appropriate staff if suicide risk is present or suspected, access to suicide prevention training, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
6. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
7. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
8. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide
9. Establishment of district and/or school-site crisis intervention team(s) to ensure the proper implementation and review of this policy and other district practices related to the emotional behavioral wellness of students, including, but not limited to, the oversight of mental health and suicide prevention training, ensuring the suicide prevention policy, protocols, and resources are posted on the district and school

websites, collaboration with community mental health organizations, identification of resources and organizations that provide evidence-based treatment, collaboration to build community response, and compliance with Education Code 215

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are 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. (Education Code 215)

In order to address mental health disabilities, the district may, as appropriate and in accordance with law, develop trauma-informed crisis management procedures that include an individualized assessment of the student's circumstances; provide and facilitate access to mental health evaluations and services; reasonably modify policies, such as attendance policies, for individual students; and train staff to recognize and respond appropriately to signs of distress and suicidal ideation in students.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a process for school staff to maintain daily or regular contact with all students, including during distance learning and school closures, and for such staff to communicate any concerns about a student's emotional wellbeing and/or safety to the appropriate authorities.

Additionally, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that school-based mental health professionals maintain regular contact with high-risk students, students who are on their caseloads, and those who are identified by staff as demonstrating need.

The Board shall ensure that measures and strategies for students in grades K-6 are age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. (Education Code 215) This policy in student-friendly language can be found on the district website.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

District employees shall act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging district employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

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.

The Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. The Board may, at its discretion, review the policy more frequently. (Education Code 215)

The Superintendent or designee shall periodically review district data pertaining to school climate and reports of suicidal ideation, attempts, or death to identify patterns or trends and make recommendations regarding program development.

The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the district's website, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students. (Education Code 234.6)

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	Description
Ed. Code 215	Suicide prevention policies
Ed. Code 215.5	Student identification cards; inclusion of safety hotlines
Ed. Code 216	Suicide prevention online training programs
Ed. Code 218.3	Training curriculum to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning students

State

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

[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
 Nat's Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication
 Nat's 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](#)
[Conducting a Virtual Suicide Assessment Checklist](#)
[Comprehensive School Suicide Prevention in a Time of Distance Learning, 2020](#)

Management Resources**Description**

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 (CalSCHLS)
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**Description**

0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
1112	Media Relations

Cross References

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[Infectious Diseases](#)
[Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting](#)
[Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting](#)
[School Health Services](#)
[School Health Services](#)
[School Health Services - Student Health And Social Services](#)
[Safety](#)

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[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](#)
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[Guidance/Counseling Services](#)
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