

**SUICIDE PREVENTION**

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a major cause of death among youth and that 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. To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop policies and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

In developing policies and strategies for suicide prevention and intervention, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with school and community stakeholders such as administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, and students; district-employed mental health professionals such as school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school mental health clinicians, and school nurses; suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations; law enforcement; and in developing policy for grades K-12, the county Mental Health Plan.

The Board shall ensure the policies and strategies for students in grades K-12 are age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students.

*(cf. 1020 – Youth Services)*

*(cf. 1220 – Citizen Advisory Committees)*

*(cf. 1400 – Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)*

Such policies and strategies 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, as described in the accompanying administrative regulation

*(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)*

*(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)*

*(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)*

2. Instruction to students in problem-solving and 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

*(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)*

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

**SUICIDE PREVENTION** (continued)

*(cf. 5131 - Conduct)*

*(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)*

*(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)*

*(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)*

4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.
5. 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
6. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

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 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. (Education Code 215)

If a referral is made for mental health or a related services for a student in grade K-12 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate and consult the county mental health plan.

*(cf. 5141.6 – School Health Services)*

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.

The Board shall review, and update necessary, this policy at least every five years.

The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the district's web site, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.

**SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)**

*Legal Reference:*

**EDUCATION CODE**

215 *Student suicide prevention policies*

215.5 *Suicide prevention hotline contact information on student identification cards*

216 *Suicide prevention online training programs*

234.6 *Posting suicide prevention policy on web site*

32280-32289 *Comprehensive safety plan*

49060-49079 *Student records*

49602 *Confidentiality of student information*

49604 *Suicide prevention training for school counselors*

**GOVERNMENT CODE**

810-996.6 *Government Claims Act*

**PENAL CODE**

11164-11174.3 *Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting 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*

**CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS**

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

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS PUBLICATIONS**

*Preventing Suicide, Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015*

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS**

*Preventing Suicide: A toolkit for High Schools, 2012*

*National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, 2001*

**WEB SITES**

*American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org>*

*American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <http://afsp.org>*

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

*American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>*

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

*California Department of Health Care Services, Suicide Prevention Program:*

*<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx>*

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

*National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org>*

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

*Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>*

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

Policy

**VACAVILLE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Adopted: September 1, 2005

Vacaville, California

Revised: December 10, 2009; June 15, 2017; October 8, 2020