



Book	POLICY MANUAL
Section	400 STUDENTS
Title	Suicide Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery
Code	457 AR
Status	Active
Adopted	November 10, 1992
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Prevention is defined as planned educational activities designed to promote the development of positive self-image and coping skills necessary to constructively deal with life. **Preparedness** focuses on developing the skills necessary to recognize and intervene in potential suicidal situations.

- **Prevention and Preparedness Activities for School Staff:** School staff is seen as the support system needed to be able to respond to crises as they occur within the school. Annually, as required by state law, staff will be informed of youth suicide prevention resources. The notification will be presented to all professional staff to:
 - Sensitize staff to the problem,
 - Promote understanding of warning signs to facilitate identification of a child at risk,
 - Be knowledgeable about best practices in positive interactions with students,
 - Delineate a referral chain within the school building of staff who would be available to help,
 - Familiarize staff with community resources that could be used when school staff are not available, and
 - Impart knowledge of basic crisis intervention theory.
- **Prevention and Preparedness Activities for Students:** Prevention activities for students occur as part of the health education course. The objectives of the curriculum are to:
 - Develop understanding of the emotional dynamics of depression and suicide in the context of normal development crises,
 - Acquire knowledge of warning signs to help students know when they need to seek guidance for themselves or someone else.
 - Be aware of resources for help within the school and community,
 - Develop an appreciation of the concept of shared responsibility,
 - Understand the importance of not letting a promise of secrecy prevent the referral of a suicidal person, and
 - Be aware of the steps to take to obtain help for an individual at risk or themselves.
- **Prevention and Preparedness Activities for Parent/Guardians:** Parents/Guardians are seen as a valuable resource for getting help for their children. Prevention and preparedness activities for parents/guardians will involve the access to literature and resources intended to:
 - Provide assistance in recognizing students at risk, and
 - Present information regarding resources for help in the school and community.

RESPONSE

Response is defined as action that is taken by a team of trained school staff when a student threatens or attempts suicide. The team shall include a school administrator, counselor, and/or school psychologist.

The following referral chain has been established to deal with such crises.

- Teachers, students, or other concerned persons should notify a counselor, school psychologist, or administrator as soon as possible. The individual informed of the situation is responsible for notifying the rest of the team. If necessary, medical attention is requested immediately.
- The student is interviewed by a pupil service staff member and/or administrator to assess the degree of risk involved, create a plan and take appropriate steps.
 - If the **risk is assessed to be immediate**, these procedures will be followed:
 - The student should not be left alone. A responsible adult shall remain with the student.
 - Contact Acute Care for assistance at 335-6565
 - The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified immediately. Along with supportive help, resources will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s), and it will be strongly recommended that they seek appropriate help. The student will be released to the parent(s)/guardian(s) unless further treatment is necessary.
 - School staff should not assume the responsibility for treating a suicidal student.
 - However, after a referral for treatment has been made to a community agency or mental health professional, the staff functions in a supportive way and may often coordinate their work in the school setting with the student's therapist.
 - The administrator, school counselor, or school psychologist involved in the response completes the form titled: Report of Suicide Risk (Documentation of Staff Response).
 - If the assessment indicated that the **situation is not life threatening** but that the student exhibits warning signs of potential suicide, these procedures will be followed:
 - The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified immediately, and the student may be so advised of said notification.
 - A school counselor, school psychologist, and/or administrator will develop a plan. The plan may include a list of resources that will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s). The person intervening will offer a strong recommendation that the parent(s)/guardian(s) choose a mental health professional with whom to consult. Parent will be provided with the handout: Parent Tips-Is someone you love or care about at risk of suicide.
 - School staff should not assume the responsibility of treating a potentially suicidal student. However, after a referral for treatment has been made to a community agency or mental health professional, the staff functions in a supportive way and may often coordinate their work in the school setting with the student's therapist.
 - The administrator, school counselor, or school psychologist involved in the response completes the form titled: Report of Suicide Risk (Documentation of Staff Response).

RECOVERY (Please refer to the District Recovery Plan for a Suicide, Sudden Death, or Tragedy)

Recovery is defined as the action taken when a suicide has occurred. It includes a plan to respond to the grief and shock of family, friends, school population and the community at large. The primary objective of recovery is to prevent the occurrence of the cluster suicide phenomena and to restore the learning and teaching environment after the crisis.

LIABILITY

Any school district officer, employee or volunteer who in good faith attempts to prevent suicide by a student is immune from civil liability under state law for his/her acts or omissions in respect to the suicide or attempted suicide.