

Crisis Prevention and Response

A. Prevention of Self-Harm

Suicide prevention strategies may include, but are not limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and each other, and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious relationships among students. District efforts to reduce suicide may also include systems targeted at creating this environment, identifying students in need, and disseminating information about local resources.

B. Student Responsibility

The district will encourage students to notify a teacher, principal, counselor or other adult when they are experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's despair or suicidal intentions. These systems should be proactive in nature and clearly understood by students. These may include broad or targeted suicide screening.

C. Intervention

Any staff member who receives or discovers any information about a potential suicide (notes, threats, conversations, etc.) will immediately take the following steps:

- Ensure the immediate physical safety of the student. In no circumstances is an acutely suicidal student to be left alone. Remove any dangerous instruments if the student will allow it.
- Communicate with appropriate school personnel to inform a (a) principal, (b) school counselor, (c) school psychologist, or (d) school nurse to respond immediately or other (e) designated professional.
- If needed for privacy, take the student to a secure and non-threatening place away from other students, nearby an additional school staff member (e.g., health room).

Supervising Staff will:

Talk calmly with the student and assess the risk for self-harm, which may include a risk assessment tool such as the C-SSRS as needed. Informed by this process, student's level of risk, Extreme, Severe, or Moderate may be more easily ascertained.

- Extreme Risk - If the student will not relinquish dangerous instruments, is highly agitated, or you are not able to ensure containment in a safe place.
 - Call 911.
 - Have staff continue de-escalation attempts.
 - Call the Crisis Care Line (1-800-584-3578, (425) 258-4357) OR Care Crisis Professional Triage Line for (for clinicians) (425) 258-1352, (1-800-747-8654 for consultation.)

- Have an available staff contact the parents as soon as possible. (If the student indicates that the distress is a result of abuse, then instead call CPS at (866) 829-2153 to report and determine who will inform parents.)
- Note Follow-Up Actions if the student returns to school in the future.
- **Severe Risk-** If the student is in danger of self-harm (has a plan) but has no dangerous instruments at hand and is calm enough to be safely contained.
 - Call the Crisis Care Line (1-800-584-3578, (425)-258-4357) OR Care Crisis Professional Triage Line for (for clinicians) (425) 258-1352, (1-800-747-8654 for consultation.)
 - Have an available staff contact the parents as soon as possible. (If the student indicates that the distress is a result of abuse, then instead call CPS at (866) 829-2153 to report and determine who will inform parents.)
 - Note Follow-Up Actions if the student returns to school in the future.
- **Moderate Risk-** If the student expresses suicidal thoughts but has no specific plan.
 - Contact the parents as soon as possible. (If the student indicates that the distress is a result of abuse, then instead call CPS at (866) 829-2153 to report and determine who will inform parents.)
 - Give the parents as much information as possible and ask them to come to school to meet with you to support their child.
 - Assist the parent in gaining immediate mental health assessment and crisis counseling support.
 - Give the parent the Care Crisis Line phone number (425) 258-4357 or (800) 584-3578 and encourage them to call if they become more concerned before their scheduled assessment.
 - Review the importance of supervision, removal of any dangerous implements, and conveyance of care/concern while waiting for appointment.

NOTE: As necessary, if you cannot reach parents or emergency contacts by the end of the school day, call the Care Crisis Professional Triage Line for consultation at (425) 258-1352 or (800) 747-8654. As a last resort they may instruct you to call 911 as police are the only authorized persons to detain a child.

D. Follow-Up Actions

1. For students that experienced an extreme or severe crisis in or out of school, an administrator must approve their request to return to school prior to the return date.

2. The results of the student's mental health evaluation and a Release of Information (ROI) with the licensed agency may be required.
3. Upon return from an extreme, severe, or moderate risk incident a reentry plan may be completed as a resource.
4. Confidentiality needs to be maintained as much as possible and information should only be shared on a need to know basis. Refer the student to the building's student intervention team and work with the parents and student to determine who in the school setting needs to be alerted to the student's possible mental health needs.
6. Provide access to counselors or other appropriate personnel to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident; or
7. Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used and make recommendations for future actions.

E. Postvention

Postvention refers to services offered to a school, program, or individuals following a traumatic event or death.

Tragically, it is true that even the most well-devised and carefully implemented prevention program will not necessarily ensure that a school will escape the trauma of a suicide or death of students or staff. In this, as in other areas, our best efforts may not suffice in turning a child from a self-destructive course. Thus, it is equally important that faculty and staff receive adequate in-service training in proper postvention procedures.

In the event that a student or staff death occurs, the principal or designee will contact the Crisis Response Coordinator to initiate a proper response using the after-incident guide.

Adapted from and informed by A Toolkit for Schools, created by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/Suicide Prevention Resource Center Workgroup, The Suicide, Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention manual – San Diego County, After a Suicide Toolkit from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, A Death in Your School, Randy Town ESD 171, Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High School, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, University of South Florida School Based Youth Suicide Prevention Guide, Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Intervention & Postvention Guidelines: A Resource for School Personnel by the Maine Youth Suicide prevention, NASP PREPaRE Curriculum.