

## **Suicide Awareness and Prevention**

The following guidelines should be followed when working with a student who may be at risk of committing suicide.

### **Suicide Awareness and Prevention**

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 members 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. Staff members will work toward eliminating the stigma of talking about suicide.

#### **1. 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. Where appropriate, the district will use students to help educate their peers to identify the warning signs of suicidal behavior and to get a suicidal student adult help.

#### **2. Staff Member Training**

The district's school counselors, drug and alcohol interventionists, Native American interventionists and other selected staff will receive annual, intensive training on suicide prevention. All other staff members will receive training on suicide prevention in accordance to district policy and procedure. The training will be offered under the direction of a school counselor, drug and alcohol interventionist, Native American intervention, other trained staff member and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health or public health agencies. Suicide prevention training may include information on:

- a. Identifying risk factors such as previous suicide attempts, history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, bullying and harassment, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent server stressor or loss, family instability and other factors;
- b. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in students' appearance, personality or behavior;
- c. School and community resources/services; and
- d. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, discloses the desire to commit suicide or displays other indicators.

#### **3. Principal/Designees Prevention Planning**

School administrative teams will designate specific individuals to be contacted, with reasonable promptness under the circumstances, regarding a suicide threat, including as possibilities the school counselor, psychologist, nurse, superintendent, the student's parent/guardian and local law enforcement or mental health agencies. The principal or coun-

selor will develop a reentry plan, including a student/staff member support plan for use after a suicide attempt.

Any suggestion, demonstration, or communication of an intention to commit suicide must be taken seriously and such behavior shall be reported to the principal or designee. The situation will be evaluated through contacts with the student, parents, and other staff. The superintendent, with the principal and/or designee, shall be apprised of the situation and of the plan for monitoring the student's behavior.

Confidentiality is not applicable when the student threatens himself (or others). In such circumstances no matter what guarantees of privacy have been given the student, the information must be discussed with the appropriate staff. Parents or guardians shall be notified. Referral to an outside agency or private professional shall be made in cooperation with the parents. If it is determined that the student is seriously in need of professional intervention, and the parent refuses to cooperate, appropriate agencies shall be contacted by the school administration to intervene on the student's behalf; and

## **Intervention**

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

1. Ensure the short-term 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.;
2. Communicate with appropriate school personnel to inform (a) principal, (b) school counselor, (c) school psychologist, (d) school nurse, or € other designated professional to respond immediately
3. Referring to appropriate professional or agency and implementing a long-term plan of action.

The following procedures are intended to serve these purposes.

Supervising Staff will:

Talk calmly with the student and assess the risk for self-harm by asking the student if they are thinking about or have a plan for committing suicide.

- If the student will not relinquish dangerous instrument, and 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 (360-452-4500)
  - Have an available staff member contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible. If the student indicates that the distress is a result of abuse, then instead call CPS at 360-565-2240 to report and determine who will inform parents.
  - Note Follow-Up Actions if the student returns to school in the future.
- 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 (360-452-4500)
- Have an available staff member contact the parents/guardians as soon as possible. If the student indicates that the distress is a result of abuse, then instead call CPS at 360-565-2240 to report and determine who will inform parents.
- Note Follow-Up Actions if the student returns to school in the future.
- If the student expresses suicidal thoughts but has no plan
  - Have an available staff member contact the parents as soon as possible. If the student indicates that the distress is a result of abuse, then instead call CPS at 360-565-2240 to report and determine who will inform parents.
  - Give parents/guardians as much information as possible and ask them to come to school to meet with you to support their child.
  - Provide parents/guardians with resources for mental health assessments and crisis counseling supports.
  - Give the parent the Care Crisis Line phone number (360-452-4500) and encourage them to call if they have concerns for their child's safety.
  - Review the importance of supervision, removal of any dangerous implements, and conveyance of care/concern.

### **Actual Suicide**

In the event of an actual suicide, the school must exercise care to avoid contagion and to help deal with the grieving, guilt, and shock of students and staff members. The superintendent shall be contacted immediately. The police department also must be notified.

The superintendent's office will respond to all requests for information. Follow up actions to be taken are as follows:

1. Prior to the next school day, the principal will assemble the staff members and provide accurate information and plans for the day;
2. The superintendent, principal, and counselors or other relevant staff will need to determine steps to take to deal with the current school situation and plan for and deal with problems which may arise; and
3. Students will meet in order to receive all the facts;
  - a. They should be encouraged to discuss their shock, feelings of loss, good and bad memories of the person, and to participate in discussion of depression, death, and suicide.

Particular attention should be directed to students who had a close relationship to the victim. Trained staff members will also be able to support community and neighboring school districts in the event of a suicide.

Date: 7/14/2016