

5350 PUPIL-STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Board of Education recognizes that depression-suicide is a serious public health problem that causes pain, suffering and can have a profound effect on the entire community. Suicide is one of the top 10 causes of death in the United States and the second leading cause of death for youth age 10-19. Depression and self-destruction are problems of increasing severity among children and adolescents. A pupil-student under severe stress cannot benefit fully from the educational program and may pose a threat to himself-themselves or herself or others. The Board of Education understands that it has a legal and ethical responsibility to recognize and respond to suicidal thinking and behavior.

The Board directs each school to develop a Crisis Response Team responsible for developing and implementing suicide risk assessment, intervention, re-entry and postvention procedures when a student exhibits suicidal thinking and/or behavior. The Crisis Team will include but not be limited to, an Administrator, Student Assistance Coordinator, Psychologist, Social Worker, Nurse, School Counselor and CST. The building principal or designee will lead this team and ensure each member is apprised of their duties and responsibilities.

The Board directs each school to integrate developmentally appropriate, student-centered education materials into the curriculum of all K-12 health classes and other classes as appropriate.

The Board directs all school personnel (including employees, volunteers and interns) to be alert to the pupil-student who exhibits behavioral warning signs of potential self-destruction or who threatens or attempts suicide. Any such signs or the report of any such signs received from any source should be taken with the utmost seriousness and reported immediately to the building principal or designee, who shall notify the pupil's-student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and other professional staff members in accordance with administrative regulations.

A potentially suicidal pupil-student shall be interviewed by a designated Crisis Team Member, such as, **but not limited to the Student Assistance Coordinator**, the Psychologist and/or Social Worker for appropriate evaluation and/or recommendation for independent medical or psychiatric services, in accordance with law. A list of designated psychologists and social workers will be developed in consultation with the Director of Special Services at the beginning of each school year and will be maintained in each school building. **Upon completion of the appropriate evaluation and/or recommendation for independent medical or psychiatric services, the parent/guardian and student will meet with the designated Crisis Team Members to develop a plan for supporting the student in school.** In the event that the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) objects to the recommended evaluation or indicates an unwillingness to cooperate in the best interests of the pupil-student, the principal or designee may contact the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child

Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), to request the agency's intervention on the pupil's student's behalf.

A re-entry plan shall be developed and implemented by the Crisis Team, student, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and other professional personnel in accordance with administrative regulations.

The Board directs each school to develop a plan for Postvention. The Crisis Response Team, led by the School Principal or designee, shall develop a crisis response plan to guide school response following a death by suicide. A meeting of the crisis team to implement the plan shall take place immediately following word of the suicide death.

Any school personnel with reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a student has attempted or ~~completed~~ died by suicide must report the information to the Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addition Services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 30:9A-24.a. School personnel must also report the information to the school principal or other designee. The school principal or designee will meet with the Crisis Team to develop a plan to support the students, staff, family and school community.

In accordance with the provision of N.J.S.A 18A:6-111 and 18A:6-112, as part of the required professional development for teachers as outlined in the N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15.1 et seq., every teaching staff member must complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide prevention, to be provided by a licensed health care professional with experience in mental health issues, in each professional development period. Training will include but not be limited to: warning signs and referral procedures for students who display signs of suicidal thinking and behavior, prevention measures, confidentiality, bullying and other suicide-related behaviors. Training will emphasize the importance of providing a safe, positive and caring school environment that ensures students develop trusting relationships with staff.

This policy will be distributed annually in all student and teacher handbooks and on the school website. Students, parents and staff will have access to resources for additional support.

~~The instruction in suicide prevention shall include information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying and information on reducing the risk of suicide in pupils who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.~~

The Superintendent shall prepare and disseminate regulations for the guidance of staff members in recognizing the pupil-student who contemplates suicide, in responding to threatened or attempted suicide, and in preventing contagion when a pupil-student or other community member dies by ~~commits~~ suicide.

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-111; 18A:6-112; 18A:6-113;

N.J.S.A. 30:9A-24a.

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1(b)

N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-3, et. seq.

Initial Adoption: April 2, 2001

Previous Adoptions: August 23, 2011, ~~&~~ February 24, 2014 & February 20, 2018

First Reading: ~~February 20, 2018~~ July 19, 2021

Second Reading: ~~March 10, 2018~~

Latest Adoption: ~~March 10, 2018~~