

Regulation 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 07/01/2009 | **Last Revised Date:** 06/01/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 06/01/2021

Staff Development

Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, interns, counselors, and others who interact with students, including, as appropriate, substitute teachers, coaches, expanded day learning staff, crossing guards, tutors, and volunteers. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor, psychologist, and/or social worker who has received advanced training specific to suicide and who may collaborate with one or more county or community mental health agencies.

Materials for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services at the school site and within the community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Materials also may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials. (Education Code 215)

Additionally, staff development shall include research and information related to the following topics:

1. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups, including, but not limited to, students who are impacted 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
2. Individual risk factors such as previous suicide attempt(s) or self-harm, history of depression or mental illness, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe or traumatic stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors
3. Identification of students who may be at risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, warning signs that may indicate depression, emotional distress, or suicidal intentions, such as changes in students' personality or behavior and verbalizations of hopelessness or suicidal intent
4. Protective factors that may help to decrease a student's suicide risk, such as resiliency, problem-solving ability, access to mental health care, and positive connections to family, peers, school, and community
5. Instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum, promoting mental and emotional health, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, and using safe and effective messaging about suicide
6. The importance of early prevention and intervention in reducing the risk of suicide

7. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups
8. Appropriate ways to interact with a student who is demonstrating emotional distress or is suicidal and procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide, including, but not limited to, appropriate protocols for constant monitoring and supervision of the student, during the time the student is in the school's physical custody, while the immediate referral of the student to medical or mental health services is being processed
9. District procedures for responding after a suicide has occurred
10. Common misconceptions about suicide

The district may provide additional professional development in suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention to district mental health professionals, including, but not limited to, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses.

Instruction

The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students and shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum in an age and developmentally appropriate manner and shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze warning signs and risk factors associated with suicide, including, but not limited to, understanding how mental health challenges and emotional distress, such as feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety, can lead to thoughts of suicide
2. Develop coping and resiliency skills for dealing with stress and trauma, and building self-esteem
3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent
4. Identify trusted adults; school resources, including the district's suicide prevention, intervention, and referral procedures; and/or community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help
5. Develop help-seeking strategies and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking services for mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention
6. Recognize that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide

The Superintendent or designee may develop and implement school activities that raise awareness about mental health wellness and suicide prevention.

Student Identification Cards

Student identification cards for students in grades 7-12 shall include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number and may also include the Crisis Text Line and/or a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number. (Education Code 215.5)

Intervention

The Superintendent or designee shall provide the name, title, and contact information of the members of the district and/or school crisis intervention team(s) to students, staff, parents/guardians, and caregivers and on school and district web sites. Such notifications shall identify the mental health professional who serves as the crisis intervention team's designated reporter to receive and act upon reports of a student's suicidal intention.

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, designated reporter, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm, the staff member shall promptly notify the principal, school counselor, or designated reporter, who shall implement district intervention protocols as appropriate.

Although any personal information that a student discloses to a school counselor shall generally not be revealed, released, discussed, or referred to with third parties, the counselor may report to the principal or student's parents/guardians when there is reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student or others within the school community. In addition, the counselor may disclose information of a personal nature to psychotherapists, other health care providers, or the school nurse for the sole purpose of referring the student for treatment, or to report child abuse and neglect as required by Penal Code 11164-11174.3. (Education Code 49602)

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall receive training that includes identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall ensure student safety by taking the following actions:

1. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary
2. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened
3. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision and providing comfort to the student until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene

4. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible

The principal or designee shall document the incident in writing, including the steps that the school took in response to the suicide attempt or threat.

The Superintendent or designee shall follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed. If the parent/guardian does not access treatment for the student, the Superintendent or designee may meet with the parent/guardian to identify barriers to treatment and assist the family in providing follow-up care for the student. If follow-up care is still not provided, the Superintendent or designee shall consider whether it is necessary, pursuant to laws for mandated reporters of child neglect, to refer the matter to the local child protective services agency.

For any student returning to school after a mental health crisis, the principal or designee and/or school counselor may meet with the parents/guardians and, if appropriate, with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school and determine the need for ongoing support.

Postvention

In the event that a student dies by suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall communicate with the student's parents/guardians to offer condolences, assistance, and resources. In accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the parents/guardians regarding facts that may be divulged to other students, parents/guardians, and staff.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement procedures to address students' and staff's grief and to minimize the risk of imitative suicide or suicide contagion. The Superintendent or designee shall provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. Students significantly affected by suicide death and those at risk of imitative behavior should be identified and closely monitored. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how to best discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

Any response to media inquiries shall be handled by the district-designated spokesperson who shall not divulge confidential information. The district's response shall not sensationalize suicide and shall focus on the district's postvention plan and available resources.

After any suicide or attempted suicide by a student, the Superintendent or designee shall provide an opportunity for all staff who responded to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:

These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State	Description
Ed. Code 215	Suicide prevention policies
Ed. Code 215.5	Student identification cards; inclusion of safety hotlines
Ed. Code 216	Suicide prevention online training programs
Ed. Code 234.6	Bullying and harassment prevention information
Ed. Code 32280-32289.5	School safety plans
Ed. Code 49060-49079	Student records
Ed. Code 49602	Counseling and confidentiality of student information
Ed. Code 49604	Suicide prevention training for school counselors
Gov. Code 810-996.6	Government Claims Act
Pen. Code 11164-11174.3	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act
W&I Code 5698	Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
W&I Code 5850-5886	Children's Mental Health Services Act

Management Resources

Management Resources	Description
California Department of Education Publication	Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, May 2019
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008
CALSCHLS Publication	California School Staff Survey (CSSS)
CALSCHLS Publication	California School Parent Survey (CSPS)
CALSCHLS Publication	California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)
CDC and Prevention Publication	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009
Court Decision	Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District) (2009) 567 F.3d 554
Each Mind Matters Publication	Making Headlines: Guide to Engaging the Media in Suicide Prevention in California, 2012
Heard Alliance Publication	K-12 Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention, 2017
Mental Health Svcs Oversight &	Striving for Zero: California's Strategic Plan for Suicide

Accountability Pub	Prevention 2020-2025
Nat'l Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication	Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015
Suicide Prevention Resource Center Publication	After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools, 2nd Edition, 2018
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Publication	Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012
U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Publication	National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, rev. 2012
Website	<u>CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services</u>
Website	<u>Suicide Prevention Messaging</u>
Website	<u>National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention</u>
Website	<u>Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission</u>
Website	<u>HEARD Alliance</u>
Website	<u>Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement</u>
Website	<u>Crisis Text Line</u>
Website	<u>CalSCHLS</u>
Website	<u>California Mental Health Services Authority</u>
Website	<u>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</u>
Website	<u>Suicide Prevention Resource Center</u>
Website	<u>National Child Traumatic Stress Network</u>
Website	<u>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration</u>
Website	<u>Trevor Project</u>
Website	<u>American Academy of Pediatrics</u>
Website	<u>American Association of Suicidology</u>
Website	<u>American Foundation for Suicide Prevention</u>
Website	<u>American Psychological Association</u>
Website	<u>California Department of Education, Mental Health</u>
Website	<u>California Department of Health Care Services, Mental</u>

	Health Services
Website	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health
Website	National Association of School Psychologists
Website	National Institute for Mental Health
Website	American School Counselor Association

Cross References

Code	Description
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
0450	Comprehensive Safety Plan
1112	Media Relations
1220	Citizen Advisory Committees
1220	Citizen Advisory Committees
1240	Volunteer Assistance
1240	Volunteer Assistance
1400	Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies And The Schools
3515	Campus Security
3515	Campus Security
4112.21	Interns
4112.21	Interns
4121	Temporary/Substitute Personnel
4121	Temporary/Substitute Personnel
4127	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4127	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4131	Staff Development
4227	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4227	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches
4231	Staff Development
4327	Temporary Athletic Team Coaches

4327	<u>Temporary Athletic Team Coaches</u>
4331	<u>Staff Development</u>
5125	<u>Student Records</u>
5125	<u>Student Records</u>
5131	<u>Conduct</u>
5131.2	<u>Bullying</u>
5131.2	<u>Bullying</u>
5131.6	<u>Alcohol And Other Drugs</u>
5131.6	<u>Alcohol And Other Drugs</u>
5131.8	<u>Mobile Communication Devices</u>
5137	<u>Positive School Climate</u>
5138	<u>Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation</u>
5141	<u>Health Care And Emergencies</u>
5141	<u>Health Care And Emergencies</u>
5141.22	<u>Infectious Diseases</u>
5141.22	<u>Infectious Diseases</u>
5141.4	<u>Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting</u>
5141.4	<u>Child Abuse Prevention And Reporting</u>
5141.5	<u>Mental Health</u>
5141.6	<u>School Health Services</u>
5141.6	<u>School Health Services</u>
5142	<u>Safety</u>
5142	<u>Safety</u>
5145.3	<u>Nondiscrimination/Harassment</u>
5145.3	<u>Nondiscrimination/Harassment</u>
5145.7	<u>Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment</u>
5145.7	<u>Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment</u>
5145.71	<u>Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment Complaint Procedures</u>
5145.71-E(1)	<u>Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sex-Based Harassment</u>

	<u>Complaint Procedures</u>
5145.9	<u>Hate-Motivated Behavior</u>
5148	<u>Child Care And Development</u>
5148	<u>Child Care And Development</u>
5148.2	<u>Before/After School Programs</u>
5148.2	<u>Before/After School Programs</u>
6142.8	<u>Comprehensive Health Education</u>
6142.8	<u>Comprehensive Health Education</u>
6145.2	<u>Athletic Competition</u>
6145.2	<u>Athletic Competition</u>
6145.8	<u>Assemblies And Special Events</u>
6164.2	<u>Guidance/Counseling Services</u>
6164.5	<u>Student Success Teams</u>
6164.5	<u>Student Success Teams</u>