

CSBA Sample Board Policy

Students

BP 5141.52(a)

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Note: The Government Claims Act (Government Code 810.996.6) provides that a district may be liable for injuries on school grounds or for an employee's failure to exercise supervisory responsibility to use reasonable care to prevent foreseeable injuries resulting from school activities. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that, before adopting the following optional policy and administrative regulation, districts carefully review all the elements, consider their staff capabilities and resources, and delete or modify them as necessary to ensure that all aspects will be adequately enforced. Districts should also consult with legal counsel and the district's risk manager or insurance carrier, as appropriate. Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the Governing Board of any district serving students in grades 7-12 adopt a policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (i.e., intervention conducted after a suicide) with specified components. Those components are addressed in the following policy and the accompanying administrative regulation. Also see the California Department of Education's model policy required by Education Code 215.

The following policy and accompanying administrative regulation should be revised to reflect district practice. Pursuant to Education Code 215, the policy must be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts. It is recommended that districts also consult with legal counsel and the district's risk manager or insurance carrier, as appropriate.

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a major leading cause of death among youth and should be taken seriously that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. In order to attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop preventive strategies and intervention procedures measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

In developing measures and strategies for use by the district, the Superintendent or designee may involve consult with school health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies, and mental health professionals, and community organizations. In planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

Prevention and Instruction

Note: The following optional section may be revised to reflect district practice. The California Department of Education's (CDE) Youth Suicide Prevention Guidelines for California Schools identifies factors that may

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SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

help build resiliency and protect against high risk behaviors, including, but not limited to, emotional wellness, school engagement, self perceived ability to cope with problems, and positive interpersonal relationships. For further information about strategies to protect students from bullying, cyberbullying, and other harassment, see BP 5131 - Conduct, BP 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment, and BP 5145.9 - Hate Motivated Behavior.

Such measures and Suicide prevention strategies may shall include, but are not be limited to,:

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy address any training to be provided to teachers of students in grades 7-12 on suicide awareness and prevention. See the accompanying administrative regulation for additional language fulfilling this mandate. In addition, Education Code 49604 encourages each district to provide suicide prevention training at least once to each middle, junior high, and high school counselor. Item #1 may be revised to specify other categories of employees who will receive the training.

1. The strategies and measures described in the San Mateo County Schools Suicide Prevention Toolkit.

Comment [mg1]: Language added per SMCOE and San Mateo County Counsel Recommendation

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2. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students in the secondary grades

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)
(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)
(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

Note: Items #2-7 below reflect optional strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention and may be revised to reflect district practice.

3. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

43. Efforts ~~Methods~~ **to promote for promoting** a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and ~~that~~ is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students

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(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

(cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)

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SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

Note: The state's Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools include voluntary content standards pertaining to mental, emotional, and social health at selected elementary and secondary grades and suicide prevention instruction at grade 7 or 8 and in high school. The district may revise the following optional paragraph to reflect grade levels offered by the district.

The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem solving skills, coping skills, and self esteem. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum in the secondary grades. Such instruction shall be aligned with state content standards and shall be designed to help students analyze signs of depression and self destructive behaviors, including potential suicide, and to identify suicide prevention strategies. [MOVED TO AR]

(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

54. The Superintendent or designee may offer parents/guardians education or provision of information to parents/guardians regarding which describes risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.
65. Students shall be encouraged Encouragement for students to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.
76. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
87. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

Note: Education Code 215, as added by AB 2246 (Ch. 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the district's policy specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including, but not limited to, those listed in the following paragraph. See the accompanying administrative regulation for additional language fulfilling this mandate.

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved 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 youth. (Education Code 215)

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SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

Staff Development [MOVED TO AR]

Note: The following ~~optional~~ section may be revised to reflect district practice. Education Code 49604 encourages each district to provide suicide prevention training to each middle, junior high, and high school counselor.

Staff development may include training about risk factors associated with suicide, as provided in item #1 below. Information about research on risk factors is available in the CDE's ~~Youth Suicide Prevention Guidelines for California Schools~~ as well as through the California Department of Mental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Association of Suicidology, and other health organizations.

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help staff identify and respond to students at risk of suicide. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor/psychologist and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies and may include information on:

1. Research identifying risk factors, such as previous suicide attempt(s), history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, and other factors

~~(cf. 5131.6 – Alcohol and Other Drugs)~~

2. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in students' appearance, personality, or behavior

3. Research based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health

4. School and community resources and services

(cf. 5141.6 – School Health Services)
(cf. 6164.2 – Guidance/Counseling Services)

5. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to commit suicide

(cf. 4131 – Staff Development)
(cf. 4231 – Staff Development)
(cf. 4331 – Staff Development)

Intervention

Note: The following **optional** section should be revised to reflect district practice. Education Code 49602,

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SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

which requires confidentiality of information disclosed to a school counselor by students 12 years of age or older, specifically allows a counselor to disclose such information to the principal or parents/guardians of the student when he/she has reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the student's health or safety. In addition, Education Code 49602 allows disclosure to psychotherapists, other health care providers, or the school nurse for the sole purpose of referring the student for treatment.

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the principal or school counselor. The principal or counselor shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible and may refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community.

(cf. 5141 – Health Care and Emergencies)

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

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall complete the suicide prevention curriculum, including identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.
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(cf. 5138 – Conflict Resolution/Peer Mediation)

Note: For sample procedures to be followed in the event of a suicide attempt on campus, see the accompanying administrative regulation.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications in the event that a suicide occurs or an attempt is made on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

215 Student suicide prevention policies

32280-32289 Comprehensive safety plan

49060-49079 Student records

49602 Confidentiality of student information

49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors

GOVERNMENT CODE

810-996.6 Government Claims Act

Legal Reference continued: (see next page)

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SUICIDE PREVENTION (continued)

Legal Reference: (continued)

PENAL CODE

11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

5850-5883 Mental Health Services Act

COURT DECISIONS

Coraes v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008

Youth Suicide Prevention Guidelines for California Schools, 2005

Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2003

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PUBLICATIONS

California Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention: Every Californian is Part of the Solution, 2008

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS

School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS PUBLICATIONS

Preventing Suicide, Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS

Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, 2001rev. 2012

WEB SITES

American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <https://afsp.org>

American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>

American School Counselor Association: <https://www.schoolcounselor.org>

California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh>
California Department of Mental Health, Children and Youth Programs:
http://www.dmh.ca.gov/Services_and_Programs/Children_and_Youth
California Department of Health Care Services, Suicide Prevention Program:
<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth>
National Association of School Psychologists: <https://www.nasponline.org>
National Institute for Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>

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Policy Reference UPDATE Service

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