

County Board Policy 5141.52: Suicide Prevention

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 10/07/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 10/07/2021

The County Board of Education recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth, prevention is a collective effort that requires stakeholder engagement, and 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 an effort to reduce suicidal behavior, its impact on students and families, and other trauma associated with suicide, the County Board shall incorporate any measures, strategies, practices, and supports developed by the County Superintendent of Schools for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in county office of education (COE) schools.

Policies and procedures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall include consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, suicide prevention experts, and, for the policy for students in grades K-6, coordination with the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

Consultation with school and community stakeholders may include COE and school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, other staff, parents/guardians and caregivers, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, community organizations, law enforcement, legal counsel, and/or the COE's risk manager or insurance carrier. Collaboration may also occur with county and/or city governments in an effort to align COE policy with any existing county, city, and/or statewide suicide prevention plans.

COE measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, as prepared by the County Superintendent, may include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention offered by the County Superintendent for teachers, interns, school counselors, and others who interact with students, including, as appropriate, substitute teachers, expanded day learning staff, tutors, and volunteers
2. Age and developmentally appropriate instruction in problem-solving, coping skills, and resiliency to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being; help-seeking strategies and resources; and recognition of and appropriate response to warning signs of suicidal intent in others
3. Methods 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
4. The review of materials and resources used in awareness efforts and communications to ensure they align with best practices for safe and effective messaging about suicide
5. The provision of information to parents/guardians and caregivers regarding risk and **protective factors**, warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, the COE's suicide prevention curriculum, the COE's suicide prevention policy and procedures, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, the importance of communicating with appropriate staff if suicide risk is present or suspected, access to suicide prevention training, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
6. Encouragement for students to notify 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
7. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts which include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
 - a. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary, including referral where appropriate for an immediate suicide risk assessment
 - b. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened

- c. 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
 - d. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible
8. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide
 9. Establishment by the County Superintendent of COE and/or school-site crisis intervention team(s) to ensure the proper implementation and review of this policy and other COE practices related to the emotional and behavioral wellness of students, including, but not limited to, the oversight of mental health and suicide prevention training, collaboration with community mental health organizations, identification of resources and organizations that provide evidence-based treatment, collaboration to build community response, and compliance with Education Code 215

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. (Education Code 215)

The measures and strategies may also address the needs of students with 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.

Measures and strategies for students in grades K-6 shall be age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. (Education Code 215)

Student identification cards for students in grades 7-12, when issued by the County Superintendent, 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)

The name, title, and contact information of the members of COE and/or school site crisis intervention team(s) shall be provided to students, staff, parents/guardians, and caregivers and on school and COE 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. It is the responsibility of the County Superintendent to ensure that any staff member who suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm is encouraged to promptly notify the principal, school counselor, or designated reporter, who shall implement COE intervention protocols as appropriate.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the COE shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging employees to act outside of the authorization or scope of their credential or to diagnose or treat mental illness unless specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

The County Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. The County Board may, at its discretion, review the policy more frequently. (Education Code 215)

COE data pertaining to school climate and reports of suicidal ideation, attempts, or death shall be periodically reviewed to identify patterns or trends and make recommendations regarding program development.

This policy shall be posted in a prominent location on the COE's web site in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardian and students. (Education Code 234.6)

Federal References

	Description
11164-11174.3	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act
215	Suicide prevention policy
215.5	Student identification cards, inclusion of safety hotlines
216	Suicide prevention online training programs
234.6	Posting suicide prevention policy on web site
32280-32289.5	Comprehensive safety plan
49060-49079	Student records
49602	Counseling; confidentiality of student information
49604	Suicide prevention training for school counselors
5698	Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
5850-5886	Children's Mental Health Services Act
810-996.6	Government Claims Act

Management Resources References

	Description
California Department of Education Publication	Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2019
California Department of Education Publication	Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Publica	School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009
Court Decision	Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554
Nat'l Assoc. of School Psychologists Publication	Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015
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.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/fqslshmylnfegyQnF2VZzOI5g==
Website	Trevor Project - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/YGdplusizjTY5ffqCzyaC432A==
Website	Suicide Prevention Resource Center - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/2cfjFY4ju3lrj8NMBvPa0g==
Website	Suicide Prevention Lifeline - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/afV0kpluspY6dedsmutWePi1w==
Website	National Institute for Mental Health - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/IYEsleokeWiWcCFo92HqaA==
Website	National Association of School Psychologists - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/2Pbs2elshfyVi8hrLAnClshQ==
Website	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/zljgm8LIDIJLplusGWxslshSbPEQ==
Website	California Department of Health Care Services, Mental Health Services - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/lhJ9IBnSx33gyv3jSdm7LQ==

Website	California Department of Education, Mental Health - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/U8yblhoblslshezvvd8YxPBKw==
Website	American School Counselor Association - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/R1ggYp24tGNHpluszwmaMrEvg==
Website	American Psychological Association - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/whnZxkEv3ftXlzAgq4Eknw==
Website	American Foundation for Suicide Prevention - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/FEUu0bQA19UxSaw3Wtfi0A==
Website	American Association of Suicidology - https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/2epimFF2un2Frplus9gZent5w==

State References

Ed. Code 215
 Ed. Code 215.5
 Ed. Code 216
 Ed. Code 234.6
 Ed. Code 32280-32289.5
 Ed. Code 49060-49079
 Ed. Code 49602
 Ed. Code 49604
 Gov. Code 810-996.6
 Pen. Code 11164-11174.3
 W&I Code 5698
 W&I Code 5850-5886

Description

Student suicide prevention policies
 Student identification cards, inclusion of safety hotlines
 Suicide prevention online training programs
 Bullying and harassment prevention information
 Comprehensive safety plan
 Student records
 Confidentiality of student information
 Suicide prevention training for school counselors
 Government Claims Act
 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act
 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
 Children's Mental Health Services Act

Cross References

5131.2

Description

Bullying -
<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/NtiwNuQPHV0tmeh0rGfNVw==>