

MONROE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
STUDENTS
BOARD POLICY PROCEDURE P5440

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Prevention

Suicide prevention, and the prevention of other risk behaviors, will include efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances student engagement and connection with the school community. Schools will provide for a range of activities and opportunities for students to interact in positive ways to increase commitment to school. The district will develop a comprehensive Prevention and Intervention Plan for responding to student emotional and behavioral trauma, to include crisis intervention in response to youth suicide, violence prevention, and substance abuse.

Student Health Education Program

The district's comprehensive health education program will promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, dealing with stress, conflict resolution and violence prevention.

Developmentally appropriate suicide prevention instruction will be incorporated into the health education curriculum and designed to help students:

- Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-harm behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide;
- Identify alternatives to suicide and develop coping and resiliency skills;
- Develop skills in listening to and seeking help for friends showing signs of suicidal intent; and
- Identify trusted adults, school resources, and/or community emotional and behavioral health resources where youth can get help, recognizing there is no stigma associated with seeking mental health, substance abuse and/or suicide prevention services.

Support Staff Training

Staff certified by the professional educator standards board as school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists, and school social workers, must complete a training program on youth suicide, screening, and referral as a condition of certification. Training standards will be established by the professional educator standards board.

Comprehensive Prevention and Intervention Plan

Components of the district's Prevention and Intervention Plan for student emotional and behavioral health will be reviewed annually with all employees. The Prevention and Intervention Plan and all applicable procedures and protocols will be published on the district intranet.

In addition to annual review of the comprehensive plan with all employees, the district will determine appropriate levels of training required of district positions. This additional training will address district standards pertaining to recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students, including but not limited to indicators of substance abuse, violence and youth suicide. The Prevention and Intervention Plan and staff training will enhance the district's ability to recognize, respond to, and refer vulnerable youth. Staff development will be provided by individuals trained in suicide prevention and intervention, and may include cooperation with one or more community mental health or public health agencies.

Prevention and Intervention Plan components will include the following:

1. Identification of training opportunities in recognition, screening, and referral that may be available to staff; including how to access the expertise of district staff trained in recognition, screening and referral;
2. Risk factors such as previous suicide attempts, history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, bullying and harassment, feelings of isolation, and interpersonal conflicts;
3. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions or threatening behavior, including changes in students' appearance, personality or behavior;
4. Response to suspicions, concerns or warning signs of emotional or behavioral distress;
5. Identification of and development of partnerships with community organizations and agencies for referral of students to health, mental health, substance abuse, and social support services; including at least one memorandum of understanding between the district and an organization or agency in the community or region;
6. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, discloses the desire to commit suicide, or displays other behavioral indicators of self-harm or aggression;
7. Protocols for communication with families;
8. Response to a crisis situation when a student is an imminent danger to himself or others;
9. Crisis response following emotional trauma, including incidents of youth suicide, or violence.

Student Self-Advocacy

The district will encourage students to inform a counselor, nurse, other support staff, or trusted adult when they are experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide, or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's depression and suicidal ideation.

Where appropriate, the district will employ peer mentoring practices to support student efforts to educate their peers to identify the warning signs of depression and suicidal behavior and to connect students to adult resources.

Crisis Intervention

School support staff trained in suicide prevention and intervention and emotional and behavioral distress, will be immediately contacted regarding a suicide threat or other indications of student self-harm or aggression. Law enforcement and mental health agencies may also be consulted as recommended by student intervention and safety teams. Student re-entry planning will include development of appropriate student safety plans.

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal ideation, the staff member will take appropriate steps to support the student, promptly notify the school administrator and school counselor, and request that identified school staff conduct an initial risk screening.

The administrator or counselor will then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible, unless notification of the parents will jeopardize the student's safety. The district will refer the student and family to mental health resources in the community.

The administrator or designee will ensure the student's physical safety by one of the following as appropriate:

- Secure immediate medical treatment if a suicide attempt has occurred;
- Secure emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened;
- Keep the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene;
- Document the incident and disposition in writing as soon as feasible;
- Communicate with the parent/guardian and student as soon as possible regarding concerns and resources;
- Provide access to counselors or other appropriate personnel to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident; or
- Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used and make recommendations for future actions.

Partnering with Families

If a student is determined to be at risk, the principal or designee will contact the parent/guardian and:

1. Ask the parent/guardian whether he or she is aware of the student's mental state;
2. Ask the parent/guardian how he/she will obtain mental counseling or appropriate support for the student;
3. Provide names of community counseling resources, if appropriate, and offer to facilitate the referral;
4. Determine the parent's/guardian's intent to seek appropriate services for the student; and
5. Discuss the student's reentry into school.

Post-Event

In the event that a suicide occurs or is attempted, the principal or designee will follow the crisis intervention procedures outlined in the Monroe Public Schools Prevention and Intervention Plan.

After consultation with the Superintendent or designee, and the student's parents/guardians, about facts that may be disclosed in accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the principal or designee may provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, postvention counseling, and communication about mental health resources.

School administrators will receive support from the district crisis team in postvention efforts. Mental health professional may assist in determining appropriate course of action in student discussions and communication with families.

Following a suicide, the district will also assess the impact across schools, and work with community partners to deliver postvention services to students and families.

Communications

The district Suicide Prevention Board Policy and Procedure, and the Prevention and Intervention Plan for student emotional and behavioral health, will be available on the district intranet and communicated to families.

Requests for information regarding an individual incident will be directed to the district communications director.

Review and Input

The superintendent will establish a Prevention and Intervention advisory group to address concerns relating to student emotional and behavioral health. Student data will be reviewed annually to inform program development and crisis response.