

Fresno Unified Board Policy (BP) 5141.52 Suicide Prevention

The Governing Board knows that suicide is a tragedy that affects young people, families and communities. All adults can help stop suicide. Adults at the school who speak with students may be a big help to students when they are having thoughts about dying.

The district will talk with parents, experts, and read the county mental health plan to learn more about the type of help students need. If a K-6 student who has Medi-Cal benefits needs help, the district will work with the county mental health plan. The district will also make sure it knows what other people in the community are doing to help students.

Teachers and other adults at school will learn about suicide awareness and prevention.

The Superintendent or Designee has developed and implemented preventive strategies and intervention procedures that include the following:

Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention

The district will talk with parents, experts, and read the county mental health plan to learn more about what help students need. Science shows talking about the prevention of suicide works to prevent attempts.

A specific person at the district and each school will be in charge of making sure the plan is being implemented.

Prevention

A. Messaging about Suicide Prevention

Talking about suicide works to prevent the number of attempts. The district will check with experts to make sure they use the best information.

B. Training:

Teachers and other adults will learn about suicide awareness and prevention.

Training:

- Once a year adults will be taught how to notice if students are thinking about suicide.
- Adults at school will learn about
 - What to look for;
 - How to talk with students about suicide;
 - Who to call when someone is thinking about suicide;
 - Information about the feelings of students at school.
 - The plan to help students, staff, and others deal with their feelings when a suicide or suicide attempt occurs;
 - How to look for patterns in data from surveys and other places.
- The district will do its best to help students who are at higher risk of suicide.

Students who might be at higher risk are students who know someone who died by suicide; students with disabilities; students with mental illness; students who use drugs or alcohol; students who are homeless or who are in foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. The people who do the work will be experts.

People who work for the district will only do the jobs they are allowed to do. People who work for the district should not try to detect or treat mental illness unless they have been trained how. There will be some people specially trained to help students that are thinking about suicide.

D. Training for experts

The experts will have lessons on how to better help students who are thinking of suicide. The district will do its best to help students who are at higher risk of suicide. Students who might be at higher risk are students who know someone who died of suicide; students with disabilities; students with mental illness; students who use drugs or alcohol; students who are homeless or who are in foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.

E. Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Participation and Education

The district will give families information on the different reasons why students might think of suicide. The district will also give families ideas on ways to help students. The signs of suicide will also be shared with families. The district will make sure families know how concerning the problem of suicide is. The district will also tell families about what the district is doing to help. The district will remind families to talk to people at the school if they think they know a student who might be thinking of suicide. The district will share with them who else might be able to help.

F. Student Participation and Education

- The schools will use Social Emotional Learning curriculum/lessons to teach students about their feelings and how to ask for help when they need it.
- The schools will use Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) to create positive and welcoming schools and provide supports to all students (including activities and other ways to make students feel like a part of the school and know that teachers and others at school care for them and want them to do well.
- The school will teach students how to deal with upsetting situations. This will also include lessons on how to stay calm and manage big or overwhelming feelings even when things go wrong. Finally, students will be taught the warning signs of what to look for when others are considering suicide.
- The schools will use a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to find out which students need more support and give it to those students that need it.
- The schools encourage students to tell teachers and other adults when they are thinking of suicide or when they think another student might be thinking of suicide.
- The school will help students when they tell someone they are thinking of suicide or try to die by suicide.

Intervention, Assessment, Referral

A wellness provider or administrator will be called if any adult thinks a student might be thinking of suicide. They will help.

A. Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

Information for families will be shared so they know what to do and where to go for help.

B. Students

Students should tell teachers and other adults when they are thinking of suicide or when they think another student might be thinking of suicide

C. Parent Notification and Involvement

The school will check with families to make sure any student who was thinking of suicide is continuing to get help.

If families do not get help, then the school will call to see if they can do anything to help. If the families still do not get help for their student who is at risk for suicide, the Child Protective Services will be called.

Action Plan for In-School Suicide Attempts

If a suicide is tried at school here are things the adults will do:

- Stay with the student;
- Remain calm;
- Move all other students out of the area;
- Contact the principal or wellness provider;
- Call 911 and give them as much information as they you know;
- Do what you can to help the student;
- Call the family;
- Listen and talk with the student;
- Let them know there is help;
- Be ok if the student doesn't want to talk;
- Be patient with the student;
- Let the student know you will not tell everyone. Just the people who can help will be told;
- If appropriate, let the student go home with the parents or another person specially trained.

D. What will happen when a suicide attempt is made away from school

If a suicide is tried away from school, here are things the adults will do:

- Call the family;
- Talk to the family about how the school can help;
- Get permission from the family to share information with the people at school who can help;
- Pick an adult to be the one who talks to the adults outside of school who are helping
- Work with the family to make a plan to help the student with their problems;
- Work with family to bring the student back to school when it is appropriate.

E. Supporting Students after a Mental Health Crisis

After the crisis has happened adults will:

- Treat suicide seriously and stay calm;
- Listen to the student;
- Not argue with the student;
- Offer hope and let the student know they are safe, and help is coming;
- Get the student help;
- Keep talking to people who care for the student.

F. Coming back to School After a Suicide Attempt

When a kid comes back after they say they are going to try suicide the adults will:

- Get permission from family to share information with the people at school who can help;
- Ask the student and family if there is anything the school can do to make coming back to school easier;
- Let the teachers know if the student will miss any days;
- Let the student make up any schoolwork;
- Keep talking to the student to make sure they are feeling better;
- Work with the family and student to keep getting help.

G. Responding After a Suicide Death

If a student or adult dies by suicide, the adults at the school will:

- Make sure it is true and not a rumor before responding;
- Call the family;
- Have a meeting of the adults chosen to respond;
- Talk to all the people who work at the school;
- Talk to the students who knew the student or adult.
- Share things that will help students feel better.
- Make sure others get help if they are thinking of doing the same thing.

Starting July 1, 2019, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number (1-800-273-8255) will be printed on the student ID cards of all students in 7th-12th grades. The ID card may also include the Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741), and/or a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number. (Education Code Section 215.5(a)(1))

Starting October 1, 2020, students grades 7 to 12, the number for the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 will be printed on the student ID cards of all students in 7th-12th grades. (Education Code Section 215.5(a)(2))

The governing board who serves students in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, will review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. (Education Code 215(a)(6)(b-c))

The Superintendent or designee will post this policy on the district's web site, in a location that is easy for parents/guardians and students to find. (Education Code 234.6)

Resources:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. See the LivingWorks Web page at <https://www.livingworks.net/asist/>
- Signs of Suicide (SOS) is an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program that has demonstrated an improvement in students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression. SOS teaches students how to identify signs of depression and suicide in themselves and their peers, while providing materials that train school professionals, parents, and communities to recognize at-risk students and take appropriate action. <https://www.mindwise.org/sos-signs-of-suicide/>
- Universal, classroom-based, social-emotional learning curriculum for Kindergarten-8 that nurtures children's social-emotional competence and foundational learning skills The Second Step Program teaches skills for learning, self-regulation, empathy, emotion management, friendship, and interpersonal problem solving. <https://www.secondstep.org/elementary-school-curriculum>

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

215 Student suicide prevention policies
215.5 Suicide prevention hotline contact information on student identification cards
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 Confidentiality of student information
49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors

GOVERNMENT CODE

810-996.6 Government Claims Act

PENAL CODE

11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

5850-5886 Children's Mental Health Services Act

COURT DECISIONS

Corales 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

Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2019

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

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

Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012

WEB SITES

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

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

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

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

California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/lis/cg/mh>

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: <http://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>

Policy FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

adopted: May 31, 2017 Fresno, California

revised: March 6, 2019

revised: December 18, 2019

revised: June 17, 2020

revised: March 16, 2022

revised: June 15, 2022

revised: September 24, 2022

revised: February 21, 2024

Policy Section: 5000 Students