

Fresno Unified Board Policy (BP) 5141.52 Suicide Prevention

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and 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 an effort to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

The governing board which serves pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, shall, before the beginning of the 2017–18 school year, adopt, at a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on pupil suicide prevention in grades 7 to 12, inclusive. The policy shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, such as administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, and students; school-employed mental health professionals, such as school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses; and suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, community organizations and law enforcement; and shall, at a minimum, address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The superintendent or designee may also collaborate with county and/or city governments in an effort to align district policy with any existing community suicide prevention plans. (Education Code Section 215(a)(1))

The district’s policy on pupil suicide prevention in grades 7-12, inclusive, shall be readily accessible in a prominent location on the district’s existing internet website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and pupils. (Education Code Section 234.6(b)(1))

The governing board which serves pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall, before the beginning of the 2020-21 school year, adopt, at a regularly scheduled meeting, a policy on pupil suicide prevention in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6 inclusive. The policy shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, such as administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, and students; the county mental health plan, school-employed mental health professional, such as school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses; and suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, community organizations and law enforcement; and shall, at a minimum, address procedures for related to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. (Education Code Section 215(a)(2)(A))

(a) The policy for pupils in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall be written to ensure proper coordination and consultation with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a pupil who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. (Education Code Section 215(a)(2)(C))

The district’s policy on pupil suicide prevention in kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall be readily accessible in a prominent location on the district’s existing internet website in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and pupils and include a reference to the age appropriateness of the policy (Education Code Section 234.6(b)(2))

The policy shall also address any training to be provided to teachers of pupils in all of the grades served by the district:

(b) Materials approved by the district for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services, both at the school site and within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services.

(c) Materials approved for training may also include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials.

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)
(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

The policy for students in grades K-6, inclusive, shall be age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. (Education Code Section 215(a)(2)(B))

Measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall include, but are not limited to:

1. The policy shall address training provided to teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, site administrators, and other district employees who interact with students, shall include:
 - (a) how to identify appropriate mental health services both at the school site and within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services
 - (b) materials approved for training may also include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials. (Education Code Section 215(a)(4))

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

2. 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 identifying signs of depression and recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

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

(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)

4. The review of materials and resources used in awareness efforts and communication to ensure they align with best practices for safe and effective messaging for suicide.
5. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, the district'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
 - (a) Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary
 - (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 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
 - (e) Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed. If follow-up care is 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.

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

(cf. 0450-Comprehensive Safety Plan)

(cf. 5141-Health Care and Emergencies)

(cf. 5141.4-Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting)

8. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

(a) 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.

(b) 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. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determine how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

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

(d) After any 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.

(cf. 1112 – Media Relations)

9. Establishment of a district and/or school site suicide prevention and intervention team(s) to ensure the proper implementation and review of this policy and other district 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 health organizations, identification of resources and organizations that provide evidenced based treatment, collaboration to build community response, and compliance with education code 215.

The policy 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)

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 Superintendent or designee shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

(cf. 5141.6 - School Health Services)

Commencing July 1, 2019, students grades 7 to 12, shall have printed on an issued student identification card the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number (1-800-273-8255) and 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))

Commencing October 1, 2020, students grades 7 to 12, shall have printed on an issued student identification card the number for the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233. (Education Code Section 215.5(a)(2))

The policy shall be written to ensure that school employees act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging district employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code Section 215(a)(5))

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

The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the district's web site, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students. (Education Code 234.6)

Fresno Unified School District prohibits discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), intimidation, and bullying based on actual or perceived race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, ancestry, age (40 and above), religious creed, religion, political belief or affiliation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, mental or physical disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or parental status, childbirth, breastfeeding/lactation status, medical condition, military and veteran status, or association with a person or a group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or any other basis protected by law or regulation, in its educational program(s) or employment.

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/ls/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

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