

5350 STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Board of Education recognizes that depression and self-destruction are problems of increasing severity among students. Students under severe stress cannot benefit fully from the educational program and may pose a threat to themselves or others. **Reference district Policy 5351 Student Violence Prevention and Response.**

The Board directs all school district staff members to be alert to a student who exhibits warning signs of self-destruction or who threatens or attempts suicide. Any such warning signs or the report of such warning signs from another student or staff member shall be taken with the utmost seriousness and reported immediately to the Principal or designee.

The Principal or designee shall immediately contact the parent(s) of the student exhibiting warning signs of suicide to inform the parent(s) the student will be referred to the Child Study Team or a ~~Suicide Intervention~~ **School Crisis** Team appointed by the Superintendent or designee, for a preliminary assessment. Upon completion of the preliminary assessment, the Principal or designee shall meet with the parent(s) to review the assessment. Based on the preliminary assessment, the parent(s) may be required to obtain medical or psychiatric services for the student. In the event the parent objects to the recommendation or indicates an unwillingness to cooperate in the best interests of the student, the Principal or designee will contact the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency to request intervention on the student's behalf.

~~In the event the student is required to obtain medical or psychiatric services, the parent(s) will be required to submit to the Superintendent a written medical clearance from a licensed medical professional, selected by the parent(s) and approved by the Superintendent, indicating the student has received medical services, does not present a risk to themselves or others, and is cleared to return to school. The written medical clearance may be reviewed by a Board of Education healthcare professional before the student is permitted to return to school. The parent(s) shall be required to authorize their healthcare professional(s) to release relevant medical information to the school district's healthcare professional, if requested.~~

A. Evaluation/Action



If, following the interview of the student and consultation with the school psychologist or social worker, the Principal determines that further evaluation and intervention is warranted, the Principal shall:

1. Notify student's school counselor or Vice Principal.
 2. Notify the local police immediately of the incident and cooperate with their investigation.
 3. The student shall be excluded from school and school sponsored events pending the outcome of an assessment / evaluation.
 4. Contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to pick up the student immediately and seek an assessment for level of risk performed by a mental health professional or psychiatrist. If this is not the first time the student has been sent out for an assessment / evaluation, clearance by a psychiatrist will be required.
 5. Notify the Director of Special Services, Superintendent or his/her designee and the school level Crisis Response Team.
 6. Have the parent(s) or legal guardian(s), or in the case of an adult student, have the adult student sign a two way release of information to allow district staff to speak to the student's treating mental health care provider.
 7. Take any other reasonable actions warranted under the circumstances.
 8. Provide an option for home instruction if appropriate.
- B. Follow-up**
1. At the conclusion of the evaluation process, the appropriate school personnel and the district's designated mental health professional will hold a reentry meeting concerning the appropriateness of the student's return to school. They shall make a recommendation in that regard to the Principal. The Principal shall then determine whether the student may return to school. If the Principal determines not to allow the student to return to school, the student or the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may appeal that decision to the Superintendent. In



the event of an appeal, the Superintendent will make the final determination regarding the student's return to school.

- 2. When the student returns to school, the student's school counselor shall monitor the student's adjustment to school through meetings with the student and consultations with the classroom teachers. The school counselor shall report as needed to the Principal.**
- 3. District and State documentation shall be done by appropriate administration. Copies of district reports shall be kept in the school nurse's secured medical file, as well as in the student's file. When a student moves from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school, his/her report(s) shall be hand delivered to the nurse of the receiving school.**

Any school district staff member, volunteer, or intern with reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a student has attempted or completed suicide, shall immediately report the information to the Principal or designee or their immediate supervisor who will immediately report it to the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall promptly report it online to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, or as otherwise required by the Department of Children and Families in accordance with N.J.S.A. 30:9A-24. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 30:9A-24i, any person who reports an attempted or completed suicide shall have immunity from any civil or criminal liability on account of the report, unless the person has acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:6-111 and 18A:6-112, as part of the required professional development for teachers as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-3 et seq., every teaching staff member must complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide prevention, to be provided by a licensed health care professional with training and experience in mental health issues, in each professional development period. The instruction in suicide prevention shall include information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying and information on reducing the risk of suicide in students who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.

The Superintendent shall prepare and disseminate guidelines to assist school district staff members in recognizing the warning signs of a student who may be contemplating suicide, to respond to a threat or attempted suicide, and to prevent contagion when a student commits suicide.



POLICY

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-111; 18A:6-112
N.J.S.A. 30:9A-23; 30:9A-24
N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-3 et seq.

Adopted: 17 July 2012
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