

EPHRATA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: OPERATIONS

TITLE: SUICIDE AWARENESS,
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

ADOPTED: September 28, 2015

REVISED: February 26, 2018

<p>1. Purpose 24 P.S. 1526 Pol. 103, 103.1, 249, 806</p> <p>2. Authority 24 P.S. 1526 Pol. 103, 103.1, 249, 806</p> <p>24 P.S. 1526</p> <p>3. Definition</p> <p>4. Guidelines 24 P.S. 1526</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">819. SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</p> <p>The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports the provision of a comprehensive district program designed to promote behavioral health and prevent suicide.</p> <p>The Board directs the district to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; to establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide attempt or suicide death; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.</p> <p>The district shall notify employees, students, and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the district’s website.</p> <p>Behavioral health – the promotion of emotional health; the prevention of mental illnesses and substance use disorders; and treatment and services for substance abuse, addiction, substance use disorders, mental illness, and/or mental disorders.</p> <p>The district shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention, which integrates school and community-based supports.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION</p> <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Student Education</u></p> <p>Students shall receive age-appropriate education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors, and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others including how to engage school resources.</p> <p>Lessons shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral, and social skills development.
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<p>24 P.S. 1526 Pol. 333</p> <p>24 P.S. 1526</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Inform students about broader behavioral health issues such as depression and substance abuse, as well as specific risk factors, protective factors, and warning signs for suicide. 3. Encourage students to seek help for themselves or their peers, including when concerns arise via social media or other online forum, and to avoid making promises of confidence when they are concerned about the safety of a peer. 4. Adhere to safe and effective messaging guidelines, avoid graphic testimonials, and include reputable suicide prevention resources. 5. Promote a healthy school climate where students feel connected to and can identify trusted adults in the building. 6. Be conducted in the classroom. <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Employee Education</u></p> <p>All district employees, including but not limited to administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, coaches, bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers, shall receive information about risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide awareness and prevention.</p> <p>As part of the district’s professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in a minimum of four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.</p> <p>Additional professional development in suicide risk screening and/or assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to specialized staff and school behavioral health professionals such as school crisis response/intervention team members, designated administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses.</p> <p><u>Resources for Parents/Guardians</u></p> <p>The district may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs; and information about local behavioral health resources.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">METHODS OF PREVENTION</p> <p>The methods of prevention utilized by the district include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff, and</p>
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<p>22 PA Code 12.12 Pol 207, 216, 236</p>	<p>parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.</p> <p>In support of the district’s suicide prevention mission, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student’s parents/guardians, the building principal, or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare, or safety of the student or any other person is clearly in jeopardy.</p> <p><u>Suicide Prevention Coordinators</u></p> <p><i>District-Wide –</i></p> <p>A district-wide suicide prevention coordinator shall be designated by the Superintendent. This may be an existing district employee. The district suicide prevention coordinator shall be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of this policy.</p> <p><i>Building Level –</i></p> <p>Each building principal shall designate a school suicide prevention coordinator to act as a point of contact in each school for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation. This may be an existing district employee.</p> <p><u>Early Identification Procedures</u></p> <p>Early identification of individuals with suicide risk factors or warning signs is crucial to the district’s suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, district employees, students, and parents/guardians should be educated about suicide risk factors and warning signs.</p> <p>Suicide risk factors refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide.</p> <p>Warning signs are evidence-based indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future.</p> <p><u>Referral Procedures</u></p> <p>Any district employee who observes a student exhibiting a warning sign for suicide or has another indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for suicide risk screening and/or assessment and intervention in accordance with district procedures.</p> <p>In the absence of a warning sign for suicide, students demonstrating suicide risk factors that appear to be adversely impacting the student should be referred to the</p>
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<p>24 P.S. 1526</p>	<p>school counselor, district behavioral health professional, and/or the Student Assistance Program for support and follow-up.</p> <p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>The district shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and suicide risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">METHODS OF INTERVENTION</p> <p>The methods of intervention utilized by the district include, but are not limited to, responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school, and suicide death. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of a safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.</p>
<p>Pol. 806</p>	<p><u>Procedures for Students at Risk</u></p> <p>Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be notified by the school and informed of crisis and community resources. If the school suspects that the student’s risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services.</p> <p>The district shall identify behavioral health service providers to whom students can be referred for further suicide risk screening and/or assessment and assistance.</p> <p>Behavioral health service providers – may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community behavioral health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and primary care providers.</p> <p>If the student is identified as being at increased risk of suicide, the district shall create a new, or update a previous, safety plan to support the student and the student’s family. The safety plan should be developed collaboratively with input from the student and reviewed with the student’s family.</p>
<p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p>	<p><u>Students with Disabilities</u></p> <p>For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.</p>
<p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p>	<p>If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.</p>

<p>24 P.S. 1526</p>	<p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>The district shall document observations, recommendations, and actions conducted throughout the course of intervention, suicide risk screening and/or assessment, and follow-up, including verbal and/or written communications with students, parents/guardians, and behavioral health service providers.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.</p> <p>METHODS OF RESPONSE TO SUICIDE ATTEMPT OR SUICIDE DEATH</p> <p>The district shall maintain a trained school crisis response/crisis intervention team. Team members shall include, but not be limited to, designated administrators, school counselors, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, School Resource Officers, members of the Student Assistance Program Team, and others as designated by the district such as community behavioral health agency resources.</p> <p><u>Response to Suicide Attempt</u></p> <p>Methods of response to a suicide attempt utilized by the district include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member. 2. Notifying students, employees, and parents/guardians. 3. Working with families. 4. Responding appropriately to the media. 5. Collaborating with community providers. <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event.</p>
<p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 117, 204</p>	<p><u>Re-Entry Procedures</u></p> <p>A student’s excusal from school attendance after a behavioral health crisis and the student’s return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>Prior to a student returning to school after a behavioral health crisis, a district-employed behavioral health professional, the building administrator, or suicide</p>

<p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p> <p>24 P.S. 1526</p>	<p>prevention coordinator shall meet with the parents/guardians of the student and, if appropriate, meet with the student to ensure the student’s readiness to return to school.</p> <p>When authorized by the student’s parent/guardian, the designated district employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside behavioral health care providers, request written documentation from the treating facility, and encourage their involvement in the re-entry meeting.</p> <p>The designated district employee will periodically check in, as needed, with the student to monitor the student’s progress, facilitate the transition back into the school community, and address any concerns.</p> <p>Re-entry of a student with a disability requires coordination with the appropriate team to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.</p> <p><u>Response to Suicide (Postvention)</u></p> <p>Upon confirmation of a suicide death, the district shall immediately implement established postvention procedures, which shall include methods for informing the school community; identifying and monitoring at risk youth; and providing resources and supports for students, staff, and families. The district will review any requests for memorials in accordance with district procedures.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide death.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">REPORT PROCEDURES</p> <p>Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians, and behavioral health service providers.</p> <p>When a district employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.</p> <p>As stated in this policy, district employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention, and response.</p>
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<p>24 P.S. 1526</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION RESOURCES</p> <p>National:</p> <p>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or visit – http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/</p> <p>Crisis Text Line: TEXT 741-741 or visit – http://www.crisistextline.org/</p> <p>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools – https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-4669</p> <p>Pennsylvania:</p> <p>List of crisis intervention contact information by county.</p> <p>List of county CASSP and children’s behavioral health contact persons.</p> <p>County Task Force Resources: By county, available contact information is provided for crisis, the Suicide Prevention Task Force, local chapter of AFSP, and other local mental health/suicide prevention resources.</p> <p>National and State Organizations</p> <p>National:</p> <p>American Association of Suicidology (AAS): http://www.suicidology.org/</p> <p>American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): https://www.afsp.org/</p> <p>Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC): http://www.sprc.org/</p> <p>Pennsylvania:</p> <p>Prevent Suicide PA: http://www.preventsuicidepa.org/</p> <p>Jana Marie Foundation: http://www.janamariefoundation.org/</p>
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Aevidum:

<http://aevidum.com/cms/>

Services for Teens at Rick (STAR-Center):

<https://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/STAR-Center-Home/1/Default.aspx>

Pennsylvania Department of Education:

www.education.state.pa.us

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. 1526

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code 12.12

Board Policy – 103, 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114, 117, 146, 204, 207, 216, 236, 249, 333, 806