

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: SUICIDE, PREVENTION, AND INTERVENTION

ADOPTED: June 18, 2003

REVISED: September 9, 2015

# UNION AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

	238. SUICIDE, PREVENTION, AND INTERVENTION
1. Purpose	<p>The Board recognizes the need for a program that intervenes on behalf of students at risk.</p> <p>The purpose of the program is to meet the immediate needs of a student at risk and to coordinate efforts of staff members, family, and community services in a response to a crisis situation. Services will be provided in an attempt to prevent harm to the student at risk and to develop within the student a feeling of self worth.</p>
2. Authority	<p>The Board recognizes that school personnel, students, parents, and guardians should be alerted to the warning signs of childhood and adolescent depression/suicide. It is the Board's belief that students at risk should receive the necessary help as quickly and professionally as possible. The Board authorizes school personnel to use the following procedures to provide necessary assistance to students at risk (depression/suicide).</p>
3. Definitions	<p><b>Student At Risk</b> – A student who has indicated by changed behavior, depression, verbal and/or written remarks that s/he may be contemplating a suicide attempt.</p> <p><b>Core Team</b> – A group of staff members trained to work with students at risk. Administrator(s), teachers(s), nurse, counselor(s), and ad hoc member(s) will form the team.</p> <p><b>Intervention</b> – The goal of intervention is to prevent an at risk student from engaging in self-destructive behavior. Intervention consists of procedures taken by Core Team members to assess the degree to which a problem exists and to act accordingly. Intervention procedures may include notification of school administrators, information collection, student interviews parent notification, and referral to community mental health services.</p> <p><b>Postvention</b> – Postvention consists of those activities that serve to reduce the effects of a traumatic event in the lives of survivors of suicide. The purpose of postvention is to help the survivors live a longer, more productive, and less stressful life than they are likely to do otherwise and to discourage "copy-cat" suicide attempts.</p>

<p>4. Guidelines</p>	<p><b>Risk Factors</b> – personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Behavioral Mental Health Issues/Disorders</li> <li>2. Characteristics of Personal Resiliency</li> <li>3. Adverse/Stressful Life Circumstances</li> <li>4. Adverse Family Characteristics</li> </ol> <p><b>Warning Signs</b> -- indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs will be provided to district staff, parents and students.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Suicide Awareness and Prevention Education</b></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 and refer friends for help.</p> <p>Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral, and social skills development.</p> <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Employee Education</u></p> <p>All district employees, including but not limited to secretaries, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, and instructional aides, shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.</p> <p>As part of the district's professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings service students in Kindergarten through twelve (12) shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.</p> <p>Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to guidance counselors, district mental health professionals and administrators.</p> <p><u>Resources for Parents/Guardians</u></p> <p>The district may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but no limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs;</p>
----------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.

### **Methods of Prevention**

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 parents/guardian; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.

#### **Suicide Prevention Coordinators**

##### ***District-Wide --***

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.

##### ***Building Level --***

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.

The following procedures are the preliminary responses to students at risk. It is the intent of the school district to provide each staff member with specific procedures to follow when s/he determines that a student or staff member is seriously planning suicide. The steps outlined should be followed in sequence:

1. The staff members should report any potential suicide to a member of the Core Team.
2. The Core Team member(s) should be responsible for determining, based on the seriousness of the behavior, if there is a need for other resources.
  - a. The procedures to determine the criticalness of the behavior:
    - 1) Question the person about any feelings of hopelessness and the length of time of such feelings.
    - 2) Question the person about any thoughts about killing himself/herself and how persistent and strong the thoughts are.
    - 3) Question the person whether any plans have been made, how detailed the plans are and whether any preliminary actions have been taken.

	<p>NOTE: If suicidal behavior is suspected, do not mince words but directly question the person about his/her thought, intent and/or plan.</p> <p>b. If the seriousness of the behavior is judged to be life threatening, the student involved must understand that the issue of confidentiality shall no longer apply.</p> <p>3. The Core Team member(s) that determined the seriousness of the behavior shall specify if there is a high, medium, or low risk for a life threatening situation.</p> <p>a. The risk indications are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <u>High risk indicators</u> are feelings of hopelessness, a detailed suicide plan, written, or verbal statements, history of a previous attempt, chronically self-destructive lifestyle combined with severe loss or threat of loss, anniversary of a loss, inability to accept help, resources and/or methods of suicide available.</li> <li>2) <u>Medium risk indicators</u> are some threats of "ending it all" through explicit statements, no concrete plan, does not have a method of completing an attempt, probably lacking any support from a professional or significant others, and/or has not exhibited any radical changes.</li> <li>3) <u>Low risk indicators</u> are vague feelings of hopelessness, no suicidal plans, no explicit written or verbal threat, supportive help available, and resources and/or methods of suicide available.</li> </ol> <p>b. The procedures are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A <u>high risk</u> is indicated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Do not let the student out of your sight.</li> <li>(b) Immediately contact a member of the Core Team, parents and the principal who in turn will send the nearest Crisis Intervention Team to the school. Human Services – 658-3578 (9-5) 652-9000 (24 hours a day)</li> </ol> <p>The team will be responsible for the management of the case.</p> </li> <li>(c) The Crisis Intervention Team will specify the intervention process.</li> </ol>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>2) A <u>medium risk</u> is revealed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Immediately contact a member of the Core Team and the principal who in turn will send the Crisis Intervention Team to the school. The team will be responsible for the management of the case.</li> <li>(b) Parents will be contacted, and a conference scheduled immediately. Two (2) staff members will attend the conference, and parents will be asked to sign a "verification of emergency conference". (See Attachment A)</li> <li>(c) The student should remain in a supervised environment.</li> </ul> <p>3) A <u>low risk</u> is determined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Set up a contact with the student by which the student agrees not to do anything while the staff member is working with him/her.</li> <li>(b) The parent should be notified about danger signs and means of getting assistance must be given to the parent, if there is resistance from the student regarding parental notification, try to get the student to discuss the reason with the parent either verbally or in writing.</li> <li>(c) Notify "significant others" such as a teacher, nurse, school administrator and/or guidance counselor.</li> <li>(d) Provide supportive counseling and/or refer the student and parent to an outside source.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: Low risk students will benefit from supportive discussions, group support, teacher support - - try to help student develop relationships.</p> <p>4. A report of an identified suicide risk shall be completed by the Core Team member who identified the problem. The report is confidential information and shall be kept on file in the respective guidance office.</p> <p><u>After-School Report Procedures</u>  In the event that a student expresses a suicidal thought during an after-school or weekend program, the staff member will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact Crisis Intervention (652-9000) (24 hours a day) and explain the situation.</li> </ol>
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>2. Contact the student's parent/guardian and alert him/her of the statement that was made and that Crisis Intervention has been contact.</p> <p>3. Contact the building principal to alter him/her of the statement and that Crisis Intervention and the parent/guardian has been contacted.</p> <p>The staff member should not leave the student alone until a member of Crisis Intervention or the student's parent/guardian has been contacted.</p> <p><u>Re-Entry Procedures</u></p> <p>A student's excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student's return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>A district-employed mental health professional, the building principal, or suicide prevention coordinator shall meet with the parents/guardians of a student returning to school after a mental health crisis if informed, and, if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and applicable next steps 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 mental health care providers.</p> <p>The designated district employee will periodically check in, as needed, with the student to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.</p> <p><u>Suicide of Student, Faculty or Staff Member</u></p> <p>If a suicide by a student, faculty, or staff member occurs, the Superintendent shall be notified immediately.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Administrative staff will be assembled to plan and implement an Action Plan.</li> <li>b. All requests for information will be directed to the Superintendent's office.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Action Plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Assemble faculty prior to the opening of school to provide accurate information and plans for the school day.</li> <li>b. A crisis team of the Core Team members will be assigned to the building</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

238. SUICIDE, PREVENTION, AND INTERVENTION - Pg. 7

	<p>affected by the incident, in order to assist the staff in dealing with the general school situation and any individual problems which may arise.</p> <p>c. Teachers, including substitutes and significant others, are to be contacted and given needed support.</p> <p>3. Students</p> <p>a. Students in a small group (classroom) setting must be given a meaningful, calming report without describing unnecessary details.</p> <p>b. The students must be able to discuss their feelings of loss.</p> <p>c. The students must be able to discuss their good and bad memories of the person without penalty.</p> <p>d. Students who desire to discuss suicide, death, or depression clinically or in-depth should be given the opportunity to do so only with a mental health specialist.</p> <p>e. Students who were close to the victim should be identified and monitored.</p> <p>f. Other students previously at risk should be contacted and supported.</p> <p>g. There are to be no memorial gifts or services offered.</p> <p>h. Students should not be permitted to leave in mass and are to be released only to parents/guardians or to other support personnel.</p> <p><u>Death of Student, Faculty, or Staff Member</u></p> <p>The Core Team will assign CT members to the building affected by the incident, in order to assist the staff in dealing with the general school situation and any individual problems which may occur.</p> <p><u>Postvention Procedures</u></p> <p>Despite the best prevention and early identification methods utilized by the school district staff, a student may attempt to take his/her life. If a student suicide does occur, it is the intent of the district to provide support for the students, parents, and members of the school staff. Therefore the following procedures are established to help all affected individuals react in a positive manner and to serve as a deterrent to future suicides. These procedures are:</p> <p>1. Upon receipt of knowledge of a student death, the building principal shall</p>
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	<p>attempt to verify the death via telephone calls to police or coroner. A call to parents or relatives will be made to offer support.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The building principal shall then contact the Superintendent. All contacts with the media shall be coordinated by the Superintendent or the building principal.</li> <li>3. The building principal shall next convene the Core Team. The team shall initiate the crisis plan which provides that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Confidentiality of details will be respected. When dealing with students, the word suicide is to be avoided when referring to the death of the student. The word "suicide" implies a premeditation on the part of the victim, which is often impossible to infer from the circumstances of the act itself. This is especially true in the case of adolescents, who are often unaware of the lethality of the methods they may be experimenting with. The avoidance of the word suicide also discourages the "copy cat" pattern to emerge.</li> <li>b. Available classrooms, auditorium, and/or library shall be made available for <u>small</u> groups for counseling, venting of grief, etc.</li> <li>c. Contact with Lawrence County Human Service Center personnel be made to provide support.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">658-3578 (9-5) 652-9000 (24 hours a day)</p> <li>d. Support services, by means of a school skills group will be provided by a facilitator from the Core Team for those students or teachers in need.</li> <li>4. Professional staff shall observe peers of the deceased and offer support and concern. Staff shall refer "at-risk" students to the Core Team immediately via the guidance office. Personnel in the guidance office shall refer students to the established small group settings if deemed necessary.</li> <li>5. School personnel should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Emphasize to students that suicide does not solve problems. Emphasize that help is available and that people care.</li> <li>b. Emphasize that no one is to blame.</li> <li>c. Encourage individual counseling, if needed, and recommend group counseling when appropriate. All counseling should be under the supervision of a mental health specialist.</li> </ol> </li> </li></ol>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



238. SUICIDE, PREVENTION, AND INTERVENTION - Pg. 9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>d. Respect the students needs to follow a normal schedule.</li><li>e. Not encourage student attendance at the funeral if it is held during school hours.</li></ul>
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------