

Students

**Suicide Prevention**

Staff Development

Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, counselors, and other district employees who interact with students. The training shall be offered under the direction of a district counselor/psychologist and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies or district approved training module through risk management.

Materials for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services at the school site and within the community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services . Materials also may include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials. (Education Code 215)

Staff development shall include research and information related to the following topics:

1. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups, 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.
2. Individual risk factors such as previous suicide attempt(s) or self-harm, history of depression or mental illness, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors (Keenan)

(cf. 5131.6 - Alcohol and Other Drugs)

3. Warning signs that may indicate depression, emotional distress, or suicidal intentions, such as changes in students' personality or behavior and verbalizations of hopelessness or suicidal intent
4. Protective factors that may help to decrease a person's suicide risk, such as resiliency, problem-solving ability, access to mental health care, and positive connections to family, peers, school, and community.
5. Instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health.

6. School and community resources and services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups.

7. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide.

### Instruction

The district's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students and shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum at appropriate secondary grades and shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide
2. Develop coping and resiliency skills and self-esteem
3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent.
4. Identify trusted adults, school resources, and/or community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking services for mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention.

### Intervention

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, school psychologist, counselor, nurse or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm, he/she shall promptly notify the principal school psychologist, nurse or school counselor.

Although any personal information that a student discloses to a school counselor, school nurse, school psychologist shall generally not be revealed, released, referenced, or discussed with third parties, the counselor may report to the principal or student's parents/guardians when he/she has reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student. In addition, the school psychologist, nurse, or counselor may disclose information of a personal nature to psychotherapists, other health care providers, or the school nurse for the sole purpose of referring the student for treatment. (Education Code

49602)

A school employee shall act only within the authorization and scope of his/her credential or license. An employee is not authorized to diagnose or treat mental illness unless he/she is specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall receive training that includes identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall ensure student safety by taking the following actions:

1. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary.
2. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened.
3. 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.
4. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible.

The principal or designee shall document the incident in writing, including the steps that the school took in response to the suicide attempt or threat.

The Superintendent or designee shall follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed. If the parent/guardian does not access treatment for the student, the Superintendent or designee may meet with the parent/guardian to identify barriers to treatment and assist the family in providing follow-up care for the student. If follow-up care is still not provided, the Superintendent or designee shall consider whether he/she is required, pursuant to laws for mandated reporters of child neglect, to refer the matter to the local child protective services agency.

For any student returning to school after a mental health crisis, the principal or designee 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.

#### Postvention

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.

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. He/she 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 determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

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

After any suicide or attempted 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.

2/2018

**\*\*\*New\*\*\***

**BP 5141.52(a)**

### **Suicide Prevention**

#### **Students**

**The Board of Education 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. To attempt 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.**

**In developing measures and strategies for use by the district, the Superintendent or designee may consult with school health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations.**

**Such measures and strategies shall include, but are not limited to:**

- 1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students in the secondary grades**
- 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 recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others**
- 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**
- 4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis**
- 5. 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**
- 6. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts**
- 7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide**

**As appropriate, these measures and strategies 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)**

**Legal Reference:**

**EDUCATION CODE**

**215 Student suicide prevention policies**

**32280-32289 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**

**5850-5883 Mental Health Services Act**

**Adopted: 7-17**

**ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Orange, California**





05:27

This evidence-based program teaches students how to identify the signs of depression and suicide in themselves and their peers and encourages help-seeking behaviors through the ACT® technique (Acknowledge, Care, Tell). The program takes **one class period** to implement. It includes:

- A step-by-step implementation guide and comprehensive planning materials
- An educational video (DVD and streaming video) and discussion guide for students.
- Two tools to identify students in need: a validated adolescent depression screening tool and response cards that encourage help-seeking
- A training video (DVD and streaming video) for faculty, staff and parents
- Supporting materials: posters, newsletters, and wallet cards help spread awareness and reinforce the ACT message throughout your school and community
- A one-year license for the SOS online portal that allows implementers to stream video, download and reproduce materials and engage directly with parents. Parents can access the portal to learn about youth suicide prevention, sample SOS Program videos, and take an online mental health screening on behalf of their child. To view a sample of the SOS Program, please visit <https://sossignsofsuicide.org> (<https://sossignsofsuicide.org/>) (Username: sos-sample-imp / Password: sossample).

**Please Note:** Although they aren't required for program implementation, we offer [comprehensive trainings](https://mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/sos-signs-of-suicide/training) for program implementers and suicide prevention champions.

#### GET IN TOUCH

Call us (781) 239-0071

[smhinfo@riversidecc.org](mailto:smhinfo@riversidecc.org) (<mailto:smhinfo@riversidecc.org>).

#### FOLLOW US OUT THERE



#### E-NEWSLETTER

#### SUBSCRIBE

Screening for Mental Health, Inc. (<http://mentalhealthscreening.org>) (SMH) is a non-profit organization that provides educational screening programs for certain mental health conditions. This website does not provide medical advice and is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice, diagnosis, or treatment. For an accurate diagnosis of a mental health disorder, you should seek an evaluation from a qualified mental health professional. If you feel you're experiencing a potentially life-threatening problem, please call 911 or the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK(8255).