

Book	Board Policies and Administrative Regulations
Section	5000 Students
Title	Suicide Prevention
Code	5141.52 BP
Status	Active
Adopted	October 10, 2010
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The Santa Clara County Board of Education recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death and injury among youth and that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize warning signs and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. In an effort to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools or designee shall incorporate measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in SCCOE schools and programs.

In developing policy and strategies for suicide prevention and intervention, consultation shall occur 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; suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations; law enforcement; and, in developing policy for grades K-6, the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

Measures and strategies for students in grades K-6 shall be age appropriate and shall be delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. (Education Code 215)

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the County Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. These strategies shall include professional development for all school personnel in all job categories who regularly interact with students or are in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, including substitute teachers, volunteers, expanded learning staff (afterschool) and other individuals in regular contact with students such as crossing guards, tutors, and coaches.

The County Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement preventive strategies and intervention procedures that include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development/training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral and postvention for teachers, school counselors, and other SCCOE employees who interact with students.

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

All suicide prevention trainings shall be offered under the direction of school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, or social workers) who have received advanced training specific to suicide and may benefit from collaboration with one or more county and/or community mental health agencies. Staff training can be adjusted year-to-year based on previous professional development activities and emerging best practices.

2. Age-appropriate instruction to students in mental health awareness, stigma reduction, and 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

(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. A safe and caring school climate includes feeling safe at school, feeling part of decision-making, and having a sense of school connectedness, which "is the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals"(CDC, 2009b, SAMHSA Toolkit, p. 12).

(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 provision of information to parents/guardians regarding mental health awareness and stigma reduction, risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the SCCOE'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 which include, but are not limited, to the following actions:

- 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

7. Post crisis intervention support: Re-Entry to School After a Suicide Attempt.

A student who threatened or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well-planned re-entry process ensures the safety and wellbeing of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention.

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

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; students who have experienced trauma, such as sexual assault or bullying; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. (Education Code 215)

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

Student identification cards for students in grades 7-12 shall include the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline telephone number and may also include the Crisis Text Line and/or a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number. (Education Code 215.5)

Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Any staff member who suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm is encouraged to promptly notify the principal or school counselor, who shall implement SCCOE intervention protocols as appropriate.

Consultation with the county mental health plan is required if a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grades K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. (Education Code 215)

School employees shall act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

The County Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. (Education Code 215)

This policy shall be posted in a prominent location on the SCCOE's web site in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardian and students. (Education Code 234.6)

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 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 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 Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2019

Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008

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, Mental Health Services: <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH>

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>

Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.sprc.org/about-suicide>

Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:  
<http://www.samhsa.gov>