



Responsible Office: Office of Student Services

BOARD POLICY 5650

STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees (“Board”) recognizes that District staff, and those in the schools in particular, are well-situated to identify the warning signs of suicide in students and make appropriate referrals for help. Any possibility of suicide or suicidal thoughts or ideation requires vigilant attention from staff, students and their families, and the community. This policy, and any associated documents, shall provide the framework within the Washoe County School District (“District”) for student suicide prevention.

DEFINITIONS

1. Risk Assessment is the process of gauging the likelihood for a student to attempt or die by suicide, engage in self-harm, or harm to others. The goal of a thorough risk assessment is to learn about the circumstances of the student with regard to suicide and self-harm, including warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors.

POLICY

1. District staff and volunteers shall report comments or knowledge of student expressions of suicidal thoughts to appropriate school staff such as a school counselor, nurse, administrator, police officer, or other District mental health professional such as a school psychologist or social worker. Staff shall collaborate and communicate with families related to potential suicide concerns and prevention efforts.
2. In creating this policy, the Board recognizes the risk of suicide or self-harm to all students regardless of age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, religion, or disability. Certain students and groups of students have been deemed to be of particularly high risk of suicide. Those students and student groups include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Students affected by a suicide;
 - b. Students with disabilities, mental illness or substance use disorders;
 - c. Students who reside in settings other than a traditional home, including, but not limited to, foster care and homelessness;
 - d. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning students;

- e. Children of veterans or service members; and
 - f. Any other group that scientific research indicates to be at a high risk of suicide.
3. Although the components of crisis management shall be contained within the District's confidential emergency plan, the District's suicide prevention strategies include, but are not limited to:
- a. Prevention education activities in schools and part of health and counseling standards
 - b. Intervention procedures and Risk Assessment;
 - c. Trainings to staff on warning signs and risk factors associated with depression, suicidal behavior, and self-injury;
 - d. Methods by which staff, students, and their families can report concerns to appropriate District staff, law enforcement, or outside resources;
 - e. Methods for staff response to a crisis situation where a student is in imminent danger to themselves or others;
 - f. Availability and distribution to parent/guardian of information related to community-based mental health resources; and
 - g. Follow-up support for the student.
4. District staff who have actual knowledge of a suicide threat or threat to others must take the proper steps to report the information to the building principal or designee who will, in turn, notify the appropriate school and district officials, contact the student's family, and appropriate resource services.
- a. The District shall implement a suicide screening and assessment process which includes, but is not limited to, the following steps:
 - i. A student is identified as at risk or possibly at risk for suicide;
 - ii. Qualified staff (school counselor, social worker, nurse, or psychologist) shall complete the District's suicide screening with student; and
 - iii. The parent/guardian shall be notified. Discussion with the parent/guardian may include safety planning such as reducing access to lethal means.
 - b. Based on the results of the screening and assessment process, a student may be deemed Low Risk, Moderate Risk, or High Risk.
 - i. Low Risk refers to a student who has no or passing suicidal ideation that does not interfere with activities of daily living; reports no desire to die (i.e. intent), has no specific plan, exhibits few risk factors, and has identifiable protective factors.

- ii. Moderate Risk refers to a student who reports frequent suicidal ideation with limited intensity and duration, and has some specific plans to die by suicide but no reported intent.
 - iii. High Risk refers to a student who reports frequent, intense, and enduring suicidal ideation. A High Risk student reports specific plans, including choice of lethal methods and availability / accessibility of the method, and presents with multiple risk factors and identifies few, if any, protective factors. If the student has written a suicide note, or other expression of intent to harm, the student shall be immediately considered as High Risk and emergency resources/ law enforcement involved.
- 5. While District staff may recognize potentially suicidal youth and may make an initial risk assessment, the District cannot provide in-depth mental health counseling. Designated District staff shall refer students who exhibit suicidal behaviors to an appropriate service for further assessment and counseling. Such District staff may include, but are not limited to, police officers, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses.
- 6. District staff shall partner with and provide outreach to persons and organizations in the community that may be able to assist with the prevention of suicide or intervention with a student who is at risk of suicide. This may include, but is not limited to, state and local health organizations, private practitioners and religious and other nonprofit organizations.
- 7. The Superintendent is delegated the authority to implement the provisions of this policy and the associated state law. This includes the development and adoption of administrative regulations and procedures intended to assist in the prevention of suicide and provide intervention for a student who is at risk of suicide. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Providing information and training to staff and students concerning the prevention of suicide. This may include, but is not limited to, instruction concerning the identification of:
 - i. Appropriate mental health services at the school and in the community including when and how to refer students and their families for such services; and
 - ii. Other persons and organizations in the community including, but not limited to, religious and other nonprofit organizations, that may be able to assist with the response to a suicide.
 - b. Review of appropriate materials concerning the prevention of suicide associated with bullying and cyber-bullying and appropriate methods to respond to such incidents.

- c. Methods for recognizing, screening, referring, and responding to students in emotional or behavioral distress, including those who exhibit indicators of substance abuse, violence, or suicide.
 - d. Protocols and methods of providing follow-up support for impacted students (postvention).
 - e. Training of school police officers in the prevention of suicide.
8. District procedures regarding confidentiality shall be observed throughout any intervention.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and aligns/complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 5100, Student Behavior
 - b. Board Policy 5200, Family Engagement
 - c. Board Policy 5700, Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
- 2. This policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to include:
 - a. Chapter 388, System of Public Instruction

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
10/15/2019	1.0	Adopted in compliance with Senate Bill 204 (2019)