



Approved by: Candice McQueen, Commissioner	Authority: Public Chapter 623
Signature: <i>Candice McQueen</i>	Effective/Revised Date: October 31, 2016
Application: Model Student Suicide Prevention Policy	

Public Chapter 623 provides that each local education agency shall adopt a policy on student suicide prevention. The law further directs the Tennessee Department of Education – in consultation with the departments of Health and Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services – to establish a model policy to assist districts and schools in meeting this obligation.

MODEL STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

(DISTRICT NAME) is committed to protecting the health and well-being of all students and understands that physical, behavioral, and emotional health are integral components of student achievement. Faculty and staff are expected to be proactive in maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment and to immediately report to the building principal any indications that a student may be in danger of harming self or others. Students are strongly encouraged to report if they, or another student, are feeling suicidal or in need of help. A summary of available resources shall be annually updated and posted for students.

PREVENTION

All district employees shall attend either the annual in-service training in suicide prevention or participate in other equivalent training approved by the director of schools. The training shall include, but not be limited to, identification of risk factors, warning signs, intervention and response procedures, referrals, and postvention strategies.

The director of schools shall identify a district suicide prevention coordinator responsible for planning, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy. Each school 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.

INTERVENTION

Any employee who has reason to believe that a student is at imminent risk of suicide shall report such belief to the principal or designee. Belief that a student is at imminent risk of suicide shall

include, but not be limited to, the student verbalizing the desire to commit suicide, evidence of a suicide attempt, an act of self-harm, or a student self-referral.

Upon notification, the principal or designee shall ensure the student is placed under continuous adult supervision. Emergency medical services shall be contacted immediately if an in-school suicide attempt occurs. The principal or designee shall contact the director of schools or designee as soon as practicable.

Prior to contacting the student's parent/guardian, the director of schools or designee shall determine if there could be further risk of harm resulting from parent/guardian notification. If parent/guardian notification could result in further risk of harm or endanger the health or well-being of the student, then local law enforcement and the Department of Children's Services shall be contacted.

If appropriate, the director of schools or designee shall contact the student's parent/guardian and provide the following information:

1. Inform the parent/guardian that there is reason to believe the student is at risk of suicide;
2. Inform the parent/guardian if emergency services were contacted;
3. Ask the parent/guardian whether he/she wishes to obtain or has obtained mental health counseling for the student;
4. Provide the names of community mental health counseling resources if appropriate.

The director of schools or designee will seek parental permission to communicate with outside mental health care providers regarding a student. If the student is under the age of 16 and the parent/guardian refuses to seek appropriate assistance, the director of schools or designee shall contact the Department of Children's Services.

The director of schools or designee shall document the incident, including contact with the parent/guardian, by recording:

1. The time, date and circumstances which resulted in the student coming to the attention of school officials;
2. A timeline of the specific actions taken by school officials;
3. The parent/guardian contacted, including attempts;
4. The parent/guardian's response; and
5. Time and date of release of student to authorized individual.
6. Anticipated follow-up and safety plan.

Prior to a student returning to school, the director of schools or designee and/or principal shall meet with the student and his/her parent or guardian in order to develop a safety plan. The safety plan shall identify actions the student's caregivers and school personnel will take to insure the safety of the student. The principal will identify an employee to periodically meet with the student to monitor his/her safety and address any problems or concerns with re-entry.

POSTVENTION

Immediately following a student suicide death, the school or district crisis team shall meet and develop a postvention plan. At a minimum, the postvention plan shall address the following:

1. Verification of death;
2. Preparation of school and/or district response, including support services;
3. Informing faculty and staff of a student death;
4. Informing students that a death has occurred;
5. Providing information on the resources available to students, faculty and staff.

The crisis team shall work with teachers to identify the students most likely to be impacted by the death in order to provide additional assistance and counseling if needed. Additionally, staff and faculty will immediately review suicide warning signs and reporting requirements. The director of schools or designee shall be responsible for all media inquiries.

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