

**FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION****Students  
SUICIDE PREVENTION**

The County Superintendent and County Board recognize that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth, prevention is a collective effort that requires stakeholder engagement, 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. In an effort to reduce suicidal behavior, its impact on students and families, and other trauma associated with suicide, the County Superintendent or designee shall develop and incorporate measures, strategies, practices, and supports developed by the County Superintendent for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in schools under the jurisdiction of the County Superintendent and County Board.

Policies and procedures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall include consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, suicide prevention experts, and, for the policy for students in grades K-6, coordination with the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

Consultation with school and community stakeholders may include County Superintendent and school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school nurses, other staff, parents/guardians and caregivers, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, community organizations, law enforcement, legal counsel, and/or the County Superintendent's risk manager or insurance carrier. Collaboration may also occur with county and/or city governments in an effort to align County Superintendent policy with any existing county, city, and/or statewide suicide prevention plans.

Such measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention may include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, interns, school counselors, and other County Superintendent employees who interact with students, including, as appropriate, substitute teachers, expanded day learning staff, tutors, and volunteers.
2. Age and developmentally appropriate instruction in problem-solving, coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being; help-seeking strategies and resources; and recognition of and appropriate response 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 review of materials and resources used in awareness efforts and communications to ensure they align with best practices for safe and effective messaging about suicide.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

5. The provision of information to parents/guardians and caregivers regarding risk and protective factors, warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, the County Superintendent's suicide prevention curriculum, the County Superintendent's suicide prevention policy and procedures, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, the importance of communicating with appropriate staff if suicide risk is present or suspected, access to suicide prevention training, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.
6. 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.
7. 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 and providing comfort to the student 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.
8. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide or suicide attempt.
9. Establishment by the County Superintendent of County Superintendent and/or school-site crisis intervention team(s) to ensure the proper implementation and review of this policy and other County Superintendent practices related to the emotional and behavioral wellness of students, including, but not limited to, the oversight of mental health and suicide prevention training, collaboration with community mental health organizations, identification of resources and organizations that provide evidence-based treatment, collaboration to build community response, and compliance with Education Code 215.

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. (Education Code 215)

The measures and strategies may also address the needs of students with 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 or traumatic stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors.

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

Student identification cards for students in grades 7-12, when issued by the County Superintendent, 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)

The name, title, and contact information of the members of County Superintendent and/or school site crisis intervention team(s) shall be provided to students, staff, parents/guardians, and caregivers and on school and County Superintendent web sites. Such notifications shall identify the mental health professional who serves as the crisis intervention team's designated reporter to receive and act upon reports of a student's suicidal intention.

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, designated reporter, 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. It is the responsibility of the County Superintendent to ensure that 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, school counselor, or designated reporter, who shall implement County Superintendent intervention protocols as appropriate.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the County Superintendent shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan. (Education Code 215)

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging employees to act outside of the authorization or scope of his/her credential or license. No County Superintendent employee is authorized to diagnose or treat mental illness unless he/she is 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. The County Board may, at its discretion, review the policy more frequently. (Education Code 215)

County Superintendent data pertaining to school climate and reports of suicidal ideation, attempts, or death shall be periodically reviewed to identify patterns or trends and make recommendations regarding program development.

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

Adopted: 08/17/2017

Amended: 04/20/2023

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Legal References**

Education Code

215 Student suicide prevention policies  
215.5 Student identification cards, inclusion of safety hotlines  
216 Suicide prevention online training programs  
234.6 Bullying and harassment prevention information  
32280-32289.5 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  
5850-5886 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 Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008  
Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2019

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

Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012  
National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, rev. 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>

FRESNO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
FRESNO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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, Suicide Prevention Program:  
<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx>  
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>  
Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>