

**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, that 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 associated trauma, the County Superintendent or designee shall develop measures, strategies, practices, and supports for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention in schools under the jurisdiction of the County Superintendent and County Board.

In developing and updating policies and procedures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, the County Superintendent or designee shall consult with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts. If the policy will affect K-6 students the county mental health plan shall also be consulted. (Education Code 215)

School and community stakeholders and school mental health professionals with whom the County Superintendent or designee shall consult 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. The County Superintendent or designee may also collaborate with county and/or city governments in an effort to align County Superintendent policy with any existing community suicide prevention plans.

Measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall 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. Instruction to students in problem-solving, coping, and resiliency skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being; help-seeking strategies and resources; and 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 relationships 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.

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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 protocols 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.
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, ensuring the suicide prevention policy, protocols, and resources are posted on the County Superintendent and school websites, 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 exceptional needs, 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)

In order to address mental health disabilities, the County Superintendent or designee may, as appropriate and in accordance with law, develop trauma-informed crisis management procedures that include an individualized assessment of the student's circumstances; provide and facilitate access to mental health evaluations and services; reasonably modify policies, such as attendance

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policies, for individual students; and train staff to recognize and respond appropriately to signs of distress and suicidal ideation in students.

The County Superintendent or designee shall establish a process for school staff to maintain daily or regular contact with all students, including during distance learning and school closures, and for such staff to communicate any concerns about a student's emotional wellbeing and/or safety to the appropriate authorities.

Additionally, the County Superintendent or designee shall ensure that school-based mental health professionals maintain regular contact with high-risk students, students who are on their caseloads, and those who are identified by staff as demonstrating need.

The County Superintendent shall ensure that suicide prevention measures and strategies for students in grades K-6 are age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. (Education Code 215)

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

County Superintendent 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 County Superintendent employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215)

The County Superintendent and County Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. The County Superintendent and County Board may, at their discretion, review the policy more frequently. (Education Code 215)

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

The County Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the County Superintendent's website, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students. (Education Code 234.6)

Adopted: 08/17/2017

Amended: 04/20/2023, 11/20/2025

Legal ReferencesEducation Code

215 Student suicide prevention policies

215.5 Student identification cards, inclusion of safety hotlines

216 Suicide prevention online training programs

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218.3 Training curriculum to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning students
234.6 Bullying and harassment prevention information
32280-32289.5 Comprehensive safety plan
49060-49079 Student records
49428.15 Identification of evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health
49428.2 Referral protocols for addressing student behavioral health concerns in grades 7-12; certification of youth behavioral health training for employees
49428.5 Student mental health poster
49429 Telehealth technology in schools
49602 Counseling and 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>

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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>