

William S. Hart UHSD

Board Policy

Students

Suicide Prevention

BP 5141.52 (a)

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth 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 and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.***

The policy shall be written to ensure that a school employee acts only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license. Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging a school employee to diagnose or treat mental illness unless the employee is specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code 215 (a))

In developing measures and strategies for use by the District, the Superintendent or designee may consult with school health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, and/or community organizations.

(cf. 1220 – Citizen Advisory Committees)

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

Such measures and strategies shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other District employees who interact with students in the secondary grades

(cf. 4131 – Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 – Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 – Staff Development)

2. Instruction to students in problem-solving, coping skills, and school and community resources to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning sign 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

(cf. 5131 – Conduct)
(cf. 5131.2 – Bullying)
(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 risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, 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

7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student’s suicide

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 youth. (Education Code 215)

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

Prevention

~~Suicide prevention training shall be provided to teachers, counselors, and other District employees who interact with students at the secondary level. The training shall be offered under the direction of the Program Manager of the District’s counseling services.~~

~~Staff development shall include research and information related to the following topics:~~

- ~~1. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups, 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 youth~~
- ~~2. 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 stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity, and other factors~~

~~The District's comprehensive health education program shall promote the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students and shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework. Suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into the health education curriculum at appropriate grades.~~

Intervention

~~When a suicide attempt or threat is reported, the principal or designee shall ensure student safety by taking the following actions:~~

- ~~1. Immediately securing medical treatment and/or mental health services as necessary~~
- ~~2. Notifying law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened~~
- ~~3. 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~~
- ~~4. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible~~

~~Suicide Prevention~~

~~BP 5141.52 (b)~~

~~(cf. 0450 Comprehensive Safety Plan)
(cf. 5141 Health Care and Emergencies)~~

Postvention

~~In the event that a student dies by suicide, the Superintendent or designee shall communicate with the student's parents/guardians to offer condolences, assistance, and resources. In accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with the parents/guardians regarding facts that may be divulged to other students, parents/guardians, and staff.~~

Legal Reference: see next page

*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**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 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, 2003**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>*~~~~*American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>*~~~~*California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/eg/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>*~~

Date

WILLIAM S. HART UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

adopted: June 14, 2017

Santa Clarita, California

Revised: