

STUDENTS**Suicide Prevention**

The Superintendent 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. To attempt 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.

In developing measures and strategies for use by EDCOE, 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 community organizations.

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 EDCOE employees who interact with students in the secondary grades
2. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as 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 interrelationships among students
4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the EDCOE's suicide prevention curriculum, 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.

Legal References on Following Page

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

215 Student suicide prevention policies

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

STUDENTS

Suicide Prevention

Staff Development

El Dorado County Office of Education, hereafter referred to as EDCOE, shall provide suicide prevention training to teachers, counselors, and other EDCOE employees who interact with students inclusive in grades 7 to 12. The training shall be offered under the direction of EDCOE personnel and/or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies.

Materials for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services at the school site and within the community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Materials also may include programs that can be completed through self-review.

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

1. The higher risk of suicide among certain student populations, including, but not limited to students who are bereaved by suicide, living with mental illness, substance use disorders, engaged in self-harm or have attempted suicide; students who have chronic illness or disability; 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
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, intense unstable relationships, substance abuse, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, impulsivity and other factors.
3. Warning signs that may indicate depression, emotional distress, or suicidal intentions, such as, changes in students' personality or behavior and verbalizations of hopelessness or suicidal intent
4. Protective factors that may help to decrease a person's suicide risk, such as resiliency, problem-solving ability, access to mental health care, and positive connections to family, peers, school, and community
5. Instructional strategies for teaching suicide prevention and promoting mental and emotional health
6. School and community resources and mental health services, including resources and services that meet the specific needs of high-risk groups
7. Procedures for screening and intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to die by suicide

Instruction

The 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 secondary grades and shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide
2. Develop coping and resiliency skills and self-esteem
3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent
4. Identify trusted adults, school resources, and/or community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking services for mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention

Intervention

Intervention toward suicide prevention shall include, but not limited to:

1. Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.
2. 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
3. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the impact of the youth suicide problem, EDCOE's suicide prevention policy, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
4. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
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

Every statement regarding suicidal intent shall be taken seriously. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions based on the student's verbalizations or act of self-harm, he/she shall promptly notify the principal or school counselor.

Although any personal information that a student discloses to a school counselor shall generally not be revealed, released, referenced, or discussed with third parties, the counselor shall report to the principal and student's parents/guardians when he/she has reasonable cause to believe that disclosure is necessary to avert a clear and present danger to the health, safety, or welfare of the student. In addition, the counselor may disclose information of a personal nature to psychotherapists, other health care providers, or the school nurse for the sole purpose of referring the student for mental health services and/or treatment.

A school employee shall act only within the authorization and scope of his/her credential or license. An employee is not authorized to diagnose or treat mental illness unless he/she is specifically licensed and employed to diagnose or treat mental illness.

Whenever schools establish a peer counseling system to provide support for students, peer counselors shall receive training that includes identification of the warning signs of suicidal behavior and referral of a suicidal student to appropriate adults.

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 intervenes to take over physical care and supervision
4. Removing other students from the immediate area as soon as possible

The principal or designee shall document the incident in writing, including the steps that the school took in response to the suicide attempt or threat.

The Superintendent or designee shall follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed. If the parent/guardian does not access treatment for the student, the Superintendent or designee may meet with the parent/guardian to identify barriers to treatment and assist the family in providing follow-up care for the student. If follow-up care is still not provided, the Superintendent or designee shall consider whether he/she is required, pursuant to laws for mandated reporters of child neglect, to refer the matter to the local child protective services agency.

For any student returning to school after a mental health crisis, the principal or designee and/or school counselor may meet with the parents/guardians and, if appropriate, with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate next steps to safely ensure the student's readiness for return to school. EDCOE may require a physician's release to return to school.

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.

The Superintendent or designee shall implement procedures to address the grief of students and staff and to minimize the risk of imitative suicide or suicide contagion. He/she shall provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information on support services, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. School staff may receive assistance from school counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

Any response to media inquiries shall be handled by EDCOE designated spokesperson who shall not divulge confidential information. The EDCOE's response shall not sensationalize death by suicide and shall focus on EDCOE's postvention plan and available resources.

After any suicide or attempted suicide by a student, the Superintendent or designee shall provide an opportunity for all staff who responded to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions.

**El Dorado County Office of Education Superintendent Policy
Administrative Regulation**

AR 4157.1

ALL PERSONNEL

Work-Related Injuries

In order to provide medical benefits, temporary or permanent disability benefits, wage replacement, retraining or skill enhancement, and/or death benefits in the event that an employee becomes injured or ill in the course of employment, the El Dorado County Office of Education shall provide all employees with insurance and workers' compensation benefits in accordance with law. The Superintendent or designee shall develop an efficient claims handling process that reduces costs and facilitates employee recovery.

The Superintendent or designee shall notify every new employee, at the time of hire or by the end of the first pay period, of his/her right to receive workers' compensation benefits if injured at work.

In addition, a notice regarding workers' compensation benefits shall be posted in a conspicuous location frequented by employees, where the notice may be easily read during the workday.

In the event that an employee is injured or becomes ill in the course of employment, he/she shall report the work-related injury or illness to the Superintendent or designee as soon as practicable.

Within one working day of receiving notice or knowledge of any injury to an employee in the course of employment, the injured employee shall be provided a claim form and notice of potential eligibility for workers' compensation benefits or, in the case of the employee's death, to his/her dependents. The claim form and notice shall be provided in person, via email, or by first class mail.

The Superintendent or designee shall additionally ensure that any employee who is a victim of a crime that occurred at the place of employment is given written notice personally or by first class mail within one working day of the crime, or when the El Dorado County Office of Education reasonably should have known of the crime, that the employee is eligible for workers' compensation benefits for injuries, including psychiatric injuries, that may have resulted from the crime.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all employee notices described above are in the form prescribed by the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR), Division of Workers Compensation.

Upon learning of a work-related injury or illness, or injury or illness alleged to have arisen out of and in the course of employment, the Superintendent or designee shall report the incident to the El Dorado County Office of Education's insurance carrier within five days after obtaining knowledge of the injury or illness. If a subsequent death arises as a result of the reported injury or illness, an amended report indicating the death must be filed with the insurance carrier within five days after being notified of or learning about the death.

In addition, in every case involving death or serious injury or illness, the Superintendent or designee shall immediately make a report by telephone or email to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

44984 Industrial accident and illness leaves, certificated employees

45192 Industrial accident and illness leaves, classified employees

LABOR CODE

3200-4855 Workers' compensation, especially:

3550-3553 Employee notice

3600-3605 Conditions of liability

3760 Report of injury to insurer

4600 Provision of medical and hospital treatment by employer

4906 Disclosures and statements

5400-5413 Notice of injury or death

6409.1 Reports

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 8

15596 Notice of employee rights

New Policy A/R – August 2017