

CODIFICATION REFERENCE NUMBER: 5350

DATE: October 29, 2007

SUICIDE PREVENTION

RESPONSIBILITY:

In accordance with Board Policy, the Superintendent has established the following procedures for the instruction of pupils and staff in suicide prevention, and for identification and intervention with pupils at risk for suicide.

PROCEDURES:

A. Instruction

1. Teachers shall be guided by the Health curriculum approved by the Board of Education as a program of suicide prevention education.
2. Efforts through existing Intervention and Referral Services committees to determine and remediate the underlying causes of stress and depression in our students will continue to be made.
3. All public school teaching staff members must complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide prevention as part of the required 100 clock hours of professional development.

B. Identification

1. School personnel and students should be alert to the warning signs of suicide: depressed mood; changes in sleep and/or appetite patterns; decline in school performance; increased social withdrawal; loss of interest and pleasure in previously enjoyable activities; preoccupation with themes of death; increased irritability and behavior problems; verbal expressions about self-death; giving away important possessions; use of alcohol or drugs; history of physical, mental, emotional or sexual abuse; history of learning disabilities combined with sense of failure; frequent sleeping disorders or complaints; sudden interest in dangerous or uncharacteristic risk-taking activities; inattention to personal hygiene; rebelliousness, belligerence; depression or grief following loss of emotionally supportive "significant other" relationships; sudden lifting of severe depression; and recent withdrawal from therapy or psychological counseling.

C. Intervention

1. Potentially Suicidal Student

- a. Staff member must contact the building principal or designee immediately.
- b. To insure safety of the student, the building principal will stay with the student arrange for a designated staff member to assess the student and make recommendations.
- c. Designated staff members, including Student Assistance Counselors, certified school psychologists, certified social workers or guidance counselors (elementary school only) shall be responsible for contacting the identified student and interviewing the student to assess the situation.
- d. The designated staff member will make recommendations to the building principal.
- e. Following consultation with the building principal, the designated staff member will contact the parent/guardian to review all aspects of the incident and to arrange for the appropriate interventions (referral to community mental health center, consulting mental health professional, or crisis intervention service) or emergency hospitalization.
- f. The designated staff member will notify critical school staff.
- g. The building principal will notify the Superintendent of Schools and the Director of Special Services regarding this incident.
- h. The designated staff member shall prepare a written report, follow-up procedures and submit it to the principal, Director of Special Services and Superintendent of Schools.

2. Attempted suicide outside of school.

- a. When any staff member hears of an attempted suicide, they will notify the principal (or designee).
- b. The principal (or designee) will contact parent/guardian to review all aspects of the incident and to arrange for appropriate follow-up.
- c. The principal will notify the Director of Special Services, Superintendent, the Student Assistance Counselor, certified school psychologist, certified school social worker, or guidance counselor.
- d. The designated staff member will assist parent/guardian with appropriate referral and placement.

- e. The designated staff member will prepare and submit a written report to the principal, Director of Special Services and Superintendent of Schools.
- f. See procedures for students returning to school, page 5.

3. Attempted Suicide in School

- a. The school nurse will administer first aid and principal will be notified immediately and will call 911.
- b. The school nurse and a school administrator will accompany student to hospital via First Aid Squad, if necessary.
- c. The principal will contact parent/guardian immediately.
- d. The principal will notify the Director of Special Services, and the Superintendent of Schools.
- e. The designated staff member will offer appropriate follow-up and referral for the student and offer to serve as school liaison between parents, school and treating professionals.
- f. The designated staff member will prepare and submit a written report to the principal, Director of Special Services and Superintendent of Schools.
- g. The nurse will file an accident report.

4. Completed Suicide

- a. The building principal shall verify the information with the Bernards Township Police and notify the Superintendent of Schools and Director of Special Services immediately.
- b. Principal will meet as soon as possible with the Building Crisis Management Team, which will formulate a crisis management plan based on information available and the particular incident. Refer to Board policy 8468: Crisis Response for procedure. The Traumatic Loss Liaison at Richard Hall Mental Health Center, phone number 908-253-3103 (office), 908-309-9087 (pager # after hours and weekends) should be called immediately. The building Crisis Management Team will collaborate with the Traumatic Loss Coalition to develop and implement a building response including communication with and support to staff, communication with and support to parents, direct support to students, and identification and interaction with at risk students. Refer to Board policy 8468 and procedures and appendices.

- c. The principal will prepare and submit a written report and follow-up procedures and submit it to the Director of Special Services and Superintendent of Schools.
5. Procedures for students returning after a suicide attempt.
- a. The principal, nurse, Student Assistance Counselor, certified school psychologist, certified social worker, or guidance counselor should be apprised of the situation.
 - b. An information-sharing meeting including the principal, designated staff member, parents and the student will be held **prior** to the student's return to school. The student's teachers will be informed of the student's return and accommodations will be made to the academic program as needed.
 - b. The designated staff member shall monitor the student's overall adjustment and maintain parental contact.

APPENDIX I

SUICIDE INTERVENTION REPORT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Grade: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Parents/Guardian: _____

Details of Incident: _____

Interventions: _____

Follow Up: _____

REPORTS SENT TO: _____ SUPERINTENDENT
_____ DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES
_____ PRINCIPAL

SUBMITTED BY: _____ DATE: _____