

# Fontana USD

## Board Policy

### Suicide Prevention

BP 5141.52

#### Students

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. As such, District staff are ethically responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths. This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention, with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors.

To protect the health, safety, and welfare of students, as well as support the staff, families, and community members connected to the District, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, postvention, and the identification of mental health challenges, and internalized behaviors, frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. As the creation of relationship centered schools is essential to supporting safety and emotional wellness of students, the Superintendent or designee shall also develop measures and strategies for fostering positive relationships between District staff, students, families, and the community.

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 community organizations.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)

(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, school social workers, school psychologists, other behavioral and mental health related staff, and other district employees who regularly interact with students or in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide in students, staff, parents, or community members.

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

2. Age appropriate social-emotional instruction to students in:

- A. Problem-solving, mindfulness, and coping skills for dealing with stress and trauma, so as to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being.
- B. Recognizing behaviors (warning signs) and life issues (risk factors) associated with suicidal intent and mental health issues in oneself and others.
- C. Help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school-based and community resources and resources and refer peers for help.
- D. Emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.

(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, staff, parents, and the community.

(cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(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 youth suicide problem, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis.

5. Encouragement and strategies 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 the 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 setting such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. (Education Code 215)

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, authorized, and employed to do so (Education Code 215).

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

COURT DECISIONS

Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy, rev. 2017

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, 2001

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/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>  
HEARD Alliance: <http://www.heardalliance.org/>  
National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention:  
<http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>  
National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org>  
National Institute for Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>  
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE):  
<https://www.save.org/product/parents-as-partners/>  
Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services  
Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>

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