

IEM School Suicide Prevention & Intervention Policy

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IEM Schools Suicide Prevention and Intervention Policy

Modeled from

[Trevor Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention](#)

Purpose

The purpose of the created policy will be to protect the health and wellbeing of all students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide.

The school recognizes that:

- (a) Physical, behavioral, and emotional health is an integral component of a student's educational outcomes
- (b) Suicide is a leading cause of death among young people
- (c) Our organization has an ethical responsibility to take a proactive approach in preventing deaths by suicide, and
- (d) The school's role in providing an environment which is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide and one which helps to foster positive youth development.

Toward this end, the policy is meant to be paired with other procedures support systems for the emotional and behavioral health of students more broadly. To ensure the safety of our students and be able to respond to a student in crisis, the school will appoint a **Mental Health Counselor**. (Job Description [Mental Health Counselor](#))

Scope and Distribution

The scope of this policy will include all classes taught by our school personnel, (in person or online), group Educational Activities, Learning Record meetings or any other interactions with students and our school staff.

The policy will be distributed annually to all school employees and the links to it will be included in the ES Manual, Parent Manual, High School Manual and on the school website. Each of these sources will include crisis numbers and steps to take if a student exhibiting signs of suicidality.

Implementation

An IEM **Mental Health Counselor** shall be designated by the Director of Guidance and Curriculum. This person shall be responsible for planning and overseeing this policy. The Director of Guidance and Curriculum will be responsible for designating a school specific **Mental Health Counselor** as point of contact to implement the plan at each of the IEM schools.

Prevention

1. Staff Professional Development

Policies and procedures will be written and provided to all staff by the first week of school and announced at the All Educational Specialist Training day. Staff will complete an online training module by November 1, 2017. This will be followed up with a professional development module at an Area Facilitator meeting in the first semester. Advisors will receive or have received additional

professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention by November 1, 2017. This training will include how to respond to crisis situations within the context of our school:

- Risk factors
- Warning signs
- Protective factors
- When to treat as a crisis and call 911 or ask parent to take to emergency room
- When to ask help from a Mental Health Professional
- Who to refer to
- How to document the process

Additional professional development will be provided to **Advisors** about risk assessment and crisis intervention.

2. Youth Suicide Prevention Education for Students and Parents

Student Education:

All IEM schools will provide grade appropriate mental health curriculum options for grades 7-12. Suicide prevention units will be created and made available to all middle and high school students that could be included in a variety of life skills and special interest courses.

- The importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies
- How to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others
- Help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.

Parents will be given a choice in the type of curriculum and the course for which it will be done. All parents will be informed of this curriculum and given the opportunity to participate if they so choose.

Parent Education

IEM schools will provide parent instruction on youth mental health. This will include webinars put on by the school staff Mental Health Professionals or other experts on youth mental health.

Each year families will receive a resource document on a listserv about assisting youth in becoming socio-emotionally healthy and resources for mental health and suicide prevention/intervention. This will also include a reminder of resources on the school website and in the parent and high school manuals.

3. Publication and Distribution

This policy will be distributed annually to parents and students in the Parent Manual and the High School Manual on the school website.

The school will provide links on the high school section of the website that will provide:

- 24 hour crisis hotlines
- Steps to take if student is exhibiting alarming warning signs of suicide (i.e. agitation, intoxication, suicide threat with a plan, access to means, etc.)
- Socioemotional resources listed by county

Assessment & Referral

Suicidality Without Parent Present:

When a student is identified by a staff person as potentially suicidal, (i.e., verbalizes suicidality, presents overt

warning signs, or a student self-refers) and no parent is present, the school **Mental Health Counselor** (credentialed school counselor) or Designee will assist the student and adult staff member who is with the student. The **Mental Health Counselor for the 2017-2018 school year is: Michelle Booth**. The steps delineated in the [Protocol for Responding to Students at Risk of Suicide](#) will be followed.

Suicidality With Parent Knowledge/Presence

If Parent or guardian is present or if parent expresses a suicide risk concern to a school employee about a potential suicide risk:

1. School staff will advise parent to continuously supervise the student & restrict access to lethal means to ensure their safety.
2. Parents will also be informed that the **Mental Health Counselor** will be calling them to help with resources and referrals.
3. **Mental Health Counselor** will be made aware of the situation as soon as reasonably possible. She call and email the family to provide the family with the following:
 - Crisis phone numbers
 - Appointment with IEM School Mental Health Professional for assistance with referrals
 - [Suicide Prevention IEM Schools Parent Packet](#) and mental health resources in the county in which the family resides
4. Upon parent request, the Mental Health Counselor can complete a Preliminary Suicide Risk Screening Tool and the Suicide Screening Checklist in order to best assist the family with a referral to community resources. When appropriate, referral may include: County Crisis Suicide Prevention Center, Mobile Crisis Team, Emergency Services or bringing the student to the local Emergency Department, but in most cases will involve setting up an outpatient mental health or primary care appointment and communicating the reason for referral to the healthcare provider. The Mental Health Counselor will assist with this decision.
6. Staff will follow up within 24 hours of talking to parent.
7. Staff will ask the student's parent or guardian for written permission to discuss the student's mental health with outside care, if appropriate.
8. Hard copies of signed documents will remain confidential.

For At Risk Students Not Demonstrating Signs of Current Suicidality:

If a student is showing signs of significant risk for suicide but not voicing suicidality, the family will be given the phone number of the Mental Health Counselor. The concern may come from actions or statements showing that they are at risk and/or from evidence in student work (essays/poems/art etc.) If the parent calls the Mental Health Counselor, the parent will be given a Parent Suicide Information Packet and will be made aware of mental health resources in the county in which the family resides.

In-School Suicide Attempts

If a suicide attempt is made at a field trip or other school function, the health and safety of the student is paramount.

In these situations:

1. If an attempt has been made or there is immediate danger to the student or others present, staff will call 911 immediately.
2. First aid will be rendered until professional medical treatment and/or transportation can be received.
3. School staff will supervise the student to ensure the safety of the student.
4. Staff will move all other students out of the immediate area as soon as possible.

5. Staff will immediately contact the **Mental Health Counselor**
6. **Mental Health Counselor** will inform the parent or guardian as described in [Protocol for Responding to Students at Risk of Suicide](#)
7. **Mental Health Counselor** will confer as necessary to another Mental Health Professional to assess whether additional steps should be taken to ensure student long-term safety and well-being.

If a staff member becomes aware of a suicide attempt by a student that is in progress but not associated with a school event, the staff member will:

- Call the police and/or emergency medical services, such as 911.
- Inform the student's parent or guardian.
- Inform the Advisor and **Mental Health Counselor**

If the student contacts the staff member and expresses suicidal ideation, the staff member should maintain in contact with the student (either in person, online, or on the phone). The staff member should then enlist the assistance of **Advisor** or **Mental Health Counselor** to contact parent and/or 911 while maintaining verbal engagement with the student.

Parental Notification and Involvement

When a student is identified by a staff person as potentially suicidal, i.e., verbalizes suicidality, presents overt warning signs, or a student self-refers, the school **Suicide Crisis Team** will assist the student and adult who is with the student. The parent will be immediately notified according to the steps delineated in the [Protocol for Responding to Students at Risk of Suicide](#).

The staff member will remain with the student or leave the student under the close supervision of the parent or guardian. Staff will also communicate with **The California Youth Crisis Line**: 1-800-843-5200 or other outside mental health care providers regarding their child. The school staff should remain with the student until parent, Emergency Services Professional, or Mental Health Professional arrives.

School Resumption Procedure

For students returning to school or enrolling in our school after a known mental health crisis (e.g., suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization), a school employed mental health professional or designee will meet with the student's parent or guardian, ES, and if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss enrollment or school resumption and appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness for return to school work.

1. The **Mental Health Counselor** or other designee will be identified to coordinate with the student, their parent or guardian, the ES, Advisor, Guidance Coordinator and any outside mental health care providers if applicable.
2. Parent will be advised to seek outside Mental Health assistance and will be given referral resources.

Postvention

Post Suicide Action Plan

Once the school receives word that a student has committed suicide there will be an immediate online/phone meeting with the person who heard of the suicide, the ES, the ES's advisor and a school mental health professional. At this meeting the following will be determined:

- How and when the ES will contact the parents (unless the way the school found out was a call from the parent to the ES). The ES and/or advisor will offer support to the family. The ES and/or advisor or Mental Health Counselor will also ask and ascertain how the school can best

assist the family.

The Mental Health Counselor and team will also determine:

- What staff needs to be contacted, who will contact them, and what information will be offered.
- Who will take questions from the press if we are called.
- How to handle calls from other families.
- Who will contact community mental health resources for referral for families and students
- How and if to offer grief support and suicide understanding to students/siblings and who to refer them to.