

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PLAN

Johnstonville Elementary School District

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PREVENTION

Johnstonville Elementary School recognizes that prevention of youth suicide, violence, and substance abuse and the early identification and treatment of mental health disorders are most effective when students, staff, parents, and community members have access to prevention information and resources.

Suicide prevention professional development for staff shall include the following:

1. Potential risk factors:
 - Previous suicide attempt(s)
 - History of depression or mental illness
 - Substance use problems
 - Family history of suicide or violence
 - Feelings of isolation
 - Interpersonal conflicts
 - Recent severe stressors or loss
 - Family instability
2. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions:
 - Talking about being a burden
 - Being isolated
 - Increased anxiety
 - Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
 - Increased substance use
 - Looking for a way to access lethal means
 - Increased anger or rage
 - Extreme mood swings
 - Expressing hopelessness
 - Sleeping too little or too much
 - Talking or posting about wanting to die
 - Making plans for suicide
 - Changing one's appearance, personality, or behavior
3. Groups particularly vulnerable to attempting or committing suicide:
 - Youth bereaved by suicide
 - Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse
 - Homeless youth
 - LGBTQ youth
 - Youth in the juvenile justice or welfare system
 - Native American youth
4. Research-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health
5. School and community resources and services
6. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to commit suicide

Training will be provided annually for all teachers and staff through online providers or in person by trained individuals and will comply with specific modules to support LGBTQ+ students, as required by Ed Code 218.3.

At this time, Johnstonville Elementary School District utilizes Keenan SafeSchools to comply with all suicide prevention professional development requirements, including those outlined in Ed Code 49602 and Ed Code 49428.2

More information on evidence-based programs and practices can be found in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

The Trevor Project can be found at: www.thetrevorproject.org

INTERVENTION

The following process should be followed when a staff member becomes aware that a student is experiencing a crisis that may involve risk of harm to self or others:

- When a staff member suspects, or has knowledge of, a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the Superintendent, Principal, or designee, who shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible. The student may be referred to mental health resources in the school or community.
- 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.

Imminent Risk Definition:

- There is immediate danger to the student's self or others (for example, the possible presence of a weapon or other means the student intends to use to harm self or others).
- There is a suicide attempt in progress (for example, the student has taken a drug or medication overdose).

Imminent Risk – Suicide Awareness and Prevention Plan

Step 1: Staff member suspects or has knowledge of imminent risk (e.g., presence of lethal means or suicide attempt in progress).

Step 2: Staff provides continuous supervision of the student, provide emotional support, ensures safety, and removes access to lethal means, if safe.

Step 3: Staff immediately notifies the Superintendent or designee.

Step 4: Superintendent, or designee, calls 911 or assigns someone to call.

Step 5: Activate the Emergency Plan and clear other students from the area if necessary.

Step 6: Administrator or designee notifies the student's guardian/emergency contact and documents the communication.

Step 7: Complete district incident report forms.

Staff member(s) are to act within the scope of their credential or license.

At Risk Definition:

- The student identifies thoughts of death but has no plan, intent to die, or suicidal behavior.
- The student identifies thoughts of death and may have a plan, intent to die, or suicidal behavior.
- The student is experiencing identified stressors.

Chart 2: At Risk – Suicide Awareness and Prevention Plan

Step 1: Administrator or designee is notified immediately.

Step 2: Staff provides continuous supervision of the student, provide emotional support, and ensures safety.

Step 3: Administrator, or designee, will contact support team members (school counselor, behavioral counselor, school psychologist, Lassen County Behavioral Health).

Step 4: Evaluate student; if further evaluation is needed, make appropriate arrangements and/or behavioral health referral if 7th or 8th grade student.

Step 5: Administrator or designee notifies the student's guardian/emergency contact and documents the communication.

Step 6: Complete district incident report forms.

Staff member(s) are to act within the scope of their credential or license.

Behavioral Health Referral Protocols for Grades 7–8

To comply with California Education Code 49428.2 and 49429, Johnstonville Elementary School District has established referral protocols for addressing behavioral health concerns in students in grades 7–8. These protocols ensure timely identification, appropriate intervention, and coordination with mental health professionals and services, including telehealth options where available.

Referral Protocol Includes:

- School staff shall notify the site administrator, school counselor, or designated mental health coordinator when behavioral health concerns are observed in a student.
- A preliminary screening will be conducted by qualified staff to determine the level of need and appropriate next steps.

- Referrals may be made to school-based mental health providers, community-based providers, or telehealth service partners, depending on the nature and severity of the concern.
- Parents/guardians shall be informed of the referral and given information on available mental health resources, including options for telehealth counseling or therapy services.
- Follow-up procedures will be implemented to monitor student progress and ensure engagement with referred services.

The district shall ensure that school personnel involved in the referral process are trained and certified in youth behavioral health protocols, and that telehealth services meet all confidentiality and data protection standards as outlined in FERPA and HIPAA.

Confidentiality in Mental Health Services

In accordance with California Education Code 49602, Johnstonville Elementary School District recognizes the importance of maintaining student confidentiality in counseling settings. All counseling services, whether provided by school staff or external mental health professionals, shall be conducted in a manner that respects the privacy and dignity of the student.

Confidentiality Protocol:

- Students and families shall be informed that personal information disclosed during counseling sessions will remain confidential, except under circumstances where disclosure is required by law. This includes situations involving:
 - Risk of harm to self or others
 - Suspected child abuse or neglect
 - A valid court order requiring disclosure
- At the outset of services, counselors or designated staff shall provide written and verbal information to both students and parents/guardians outlining the limits of confidentiality.
- Any disclosures made beyond the exceptions listed above will require the student's written consent (or parent/guardian consent, as applicable by age and situation) prior to release of information.
- Documentation of counseling sessions shall be maintained securely and separately from academic records, and access shall be limited to authorized personnel only.

The District is committed to ensuring students feel safe and supported when seeking mental health or emotional support and will uphold the confidentiality rights afforded to them by law.

POSTVENTION

Johnstonville Elementary School recognizes that the death of a student, whether by suicide or other means, is a crisis that affects the entire school and community. In the event of a student's death, the school's response must be swift, consistent, and intended to protect the student body and community. In the case of a death by suicide, other concerns such as the prevention of suicide contagion will be taken into account.

CONFIRMING THE NEWS AND CONVENING THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM

Upon receiving news of a student's death, including an unconfirmed rumor, a staff member must immediately contact the Superintendent, Principal, and/or designee. Contact must be made whether this is during or outside school hours.

- The Superintendent, Principal, or designee will contact:
 - Lassen County Office of Education (LCOE) County Superintendent of Schools
- The LCOE County Superintendent of Schools will convene the educational support team which may include:
 - Administrators
 - Behavioral Counselors
 - School Psychologists

Re-Entry to School After a Suicide Attempt

A student who threatened or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well-planned re-entry process ensures the safety and well-being of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention. Involving students in planning for their return to school provides them with a sense of control, personal responsibility, and empowerment.

The following steps are part of the re-integration process:

- Obtain a written release of information signed by parents/guardians and providers;
- Confer with student and parents/guardians about any specific requests on how to handle the situation;
- Inform the student's teachers about possible days of absences;
- Allow accommodations for student to make up work (be understanding that missed assignments may add stress to student);
- Mental health professionals or trusted staff members should maintain ongoing contact to monitor student's actions and mood;
- Work with parents/guardians to involve the student in a reintegration plan.

Responding After a Suicide Death

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on students and staff. Therefore, it is vital that we are prepared ahead of time in the event of such a tragedy. The Johnstonville Elementary School District, along with its county and community mental health agency partners, will develop a Suicide Postvention Response Plan. The components of the plan will include both immediate and long-term steps and objectives. The Suicide Postvention Response Plan will become activated when it is determined by a staff member that a student or staff member has died by suicide;

The Suicide Postvention Response Plan will:

- Identify a staff member to contact the deceased's family (preferably within 24 hours);
- Enact the Suicide Postvention Response Plan, including an initial meeting (in person or over the phone) of the district's Suicide Postvention Response Team;
- Notify all staff members (ideally in-person or via phone, not via e-mail or mass notification);
- Coordinate an all-staff meeting, to include:
 - Notification (if not already conducted) to staff about suicide death;
 - Emotional support and resources available to staff;
 - Notification to students about suicide death;
 - Information that is relevant and that which you have permission to disclose;
- Coordination of support services from partnering county and community agencies for both students and staff;
Prepare staff to respond to the needs of students regarding the following:
 - Review of protocols for referring students for support/assessment;
 - Talking points for staff to notify students;
 - Resources available to students and staff (both on and off campus);
- Identify students significantly affected by suicide death and other students at risk of imitating behavior;
- Identify students affected by suicide death but not at risk of imitating behavior;
- Communicate with the larger school community about the suicide death;
- Consider funeral arrangements for family and school community;
- The district's Superintendent, or designee, will respond to social media outlets:
 - Identify what platforms students are using to respond to suicide death
 - Identify/train staff and students to monitor social media outlets
- Include long-term suicide postvention responses:
 - Respectfully decline long-term memorials due to the impact on emotionally vulnerable students and at-risk of suicide
 - Consider important dates (i.e., the anniversary of the death, the deceased's birthday, graduation, or other significant events) and how these will be addressed
 - Support siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of the deceased.

Media Communication Protocols Following a Suicide Death

In the event of a suicide death involving a student or staff member, Johnstonville Elementary School District shall follow evidence-based media communication guidelines to ensure the safety, privacy, and emotional well-being of the school community. These protocols are informed by guidance from Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Media Engagement Protocols Include:

- The Superintendent, or designee, will be the only individual authorized to communicate with media outlets.
- Communications to the public and media shall:
 - Avoid sensationalizing or romanticizing the death.
 - Use non-stigmatizing language (e.g., avoid terms like “committed suicide” in favor of “died by suicide”).
 - Protect the privacy of the deceased and their family by disclosing only information that is authorized and appropriate.
 - Emphasize messages of hope, resilience, and the availability of support resources.
- Media statements will include:
 - A reminder that suicide is preventable.
 - Contact information for crisis support services (e.g., 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Crisis Text Line).
 - Resources available for students and staff experiencing distress.
- Staff will receive guidance on how to refer any media inquiries to the designated spokesperson and will be discouraged from speaking independently to the press.
- Social media communications will be monitored and, where appropriate, used to direct students and families to accurate, supportive, and health-promoting information.

By adhering to these practices, the District seeks to reduce the risk of suicide contagion, support grieving students and staff, and promote a safe, compassionate, and informed school climate.

INTEGRATED COMPLIANCE ADDENDUM

To ensure full compliance with California Education Code and state guidance, the following provisions have been integrated into this Suicide Awareness and Prevention Plan:

1. Student Identification Cards (Ed Code 215.5):

All student identification cards issued to students in grades 7–8 shall include the following information: the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255 or 988), the Crisis Text Line (text HOME to 741741), and contact information for a local suicide prevention hotline or county mental health agency.

2. Student Mental Health Posters (Ed Code 49428.5):

Mental health posters that include local, state, and national mental health resources, crisis services, and suicide prevention hotline information shall be prominently displayed in key areas on campus, such as the main office, counseling center, and health office.

3. LGBTQ+ Student Support Training (Ed Code 218.3):

All suicide prevention training shall include a curriculum component focused on strategies to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) students. This training will ensure staff are equipped to identify risk factors and provide culturally competent support.

4. Evidence-Based Programs (Ed Code 49428.15):

The district shall identify and utilize evidence-based or evidence-informed programs in its prevention and intervention efforts. Approved programs may include but are not limited to: 'Signs of Suicide,' 'Sources of Strength,' and 'Youth Mental Health First Aid.'

5. Referral Protocols for Behavioral Health (Ed Code 49428.2):

For students in grades 7–8, school personnel shall follow a defined referral protocol for students demonstrating behavioral health concerns. Staff shall be trained and certified in youth behavioral health identification and referral procedures. A designated mental health coordinator shall ensure appropriate follow-up and coordination with community-based providers.

6. Telehealth Services (Ed Code 49429):

Where appropriate and feasible, the district will facilitate access to behavioral health services through telehealth platforms in coordination with county mental health services or other certified providers. Telehealth services will comply with all FERPA and HIPAA requirements.