

Administrative Regulation

Suicide Prevention Programs

The Garden Grove Unified School District Suicide Prevention Program, as formalized in the [Suicide Prevention Guide \(Exhibit\)](#) will include preventive strategies, intervention procedures, and postvention supports.

Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention

The Superintendent or Designee shall involve school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses), administrators, other school staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local health agencies and professionals, law enforcement, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. To ensure the policies regarding suicide prevention are properly adopted, implemented, and updated, the district shall appoint an individual (or team) to serve as the suicide prevention point of contact for the district. This policy shall be reviewed and revised as indicated, at least every three years. Such review will include the input of the previously mentioned community stakeholders.

Prevention

A. Messaging about Suicide Prevention

Messaging about suicide has an effect on suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, Garden Grove Unified School District, along with its partners, will critically review and will continue to review all materials and resources used in awareness efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe messaging about suicide.

B. Suicide Prevention Training and Education

The Garden Grove Unified School District, along with its partners, will carefully review available staff training to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide. All district staff that have regular contact with students shall receive annual suicide prevention training.

Training:

At least annually and/or at the beginning of employment, district staff who have regular contact with students shall receive training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention. All suicide prevention trainings shall be offered under the direction of school employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, or social workers) who have received advanced training specific to suicide and may benefit from collaboration with one or more county and/or community mental health agencies. Staff training can be adjusted year-to-year based on previous professional development activities and emerging best practices.

The professional development also shall include additional information regarding groups of students judged by the school, and available research, to be at elevated risk for suicide. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Youth affected by suicide;
- Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts;
- Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth;
- Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care;
- Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences;

C. Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services

Employees of the Garden Grove Unified School District and their partners must act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. While it is expected that school professionals are able to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, and to prevent the immediate risk of a suicidal behavior, treatment of suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting. In addition, treatment of the mental health challenges often associated with suicidal thinking typically requires mental health resources beyond what schools are able to provide.

D. Specialized Staff Training (Assessment)

Additional professional development in suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to mental health professionals (school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses) employed by the Garden Grove Unified School District.

E. Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Participation and Education

To the extent possible, parents/guardians/caregivers will be included in all suicide prevention efforts. At a minimum, schools shall share with parents/guardians/caregivers the Garden Grove Unified School District suicide prevention policy and procedures.

This suicide prevention policy shall be prominently displayed on the Garden Grove Unified School District Web page and directions on how to navigate to the Suicide Prevention Guide may be included in the parent handbook.

All parents/guardians/caregivers will have access to suicide prevention training that addresses the following:

- Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors;
- How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide;
- How to respond appropriately to the student who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and referral for an immediate suicide risk assessment

F. Student Participation and Education

The Garden Grove Unified School District along with its partners will carefully review and continue to review available student curricula to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

- Under the supervision of school-employed mental health professionals, and following consultation with county and community mental health agencies, students shall: Receive developmentally appropriate, student-centered education about the warning signs of mental health challenges and emotional distress;
- Receive developmentally appropriate guidance regarding the district's suicide prevention, intervention, and referral procedures.

The content of the education shall include:

- Coping strategies for dealing with stress and trauma;
- How to recognize behaviors (warning signs) and life issues (risk factors) associated with suicide and mental health issues in oneself and others;
- Help-seeking strategies for oneself and others, including how to engage school-based and community resources and refer peers for help;
- Emphasis on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide.

Where possible and appropriate, student-focused suicide prevention education will be incorporated into classroom curricula (e.g., health classes, freshman orientation classes, science, and physical education).

The Garden Grove Unified School District will support the creation and implementation of programs and/or activities on campus that raise awareness about mental wellness and suicide prevention (e.g., Mental Health Awareness Weeks, Peer Counseling Programs, Freshman Success Programs, and National Alliance on Mental Illness on Campus High School Clubs).

Intervention**A. Staff**

Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify a member of the multi-disciplinary crisis team.

The member of the multi-disciplinary crisis team shall then notify, if appropriate and in the best interest of the student, the student's parents/guardians/caregivers as soon as possible and shall refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community. Determination of notification to parents/guardians/caregivers should follow a formal initial screening to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification.

If the student is in imminent danger (e.g. has access to a gun, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), a call shall be made to 911.

Students experiencing suicidal ideation shall not be left unsupervised. A referral process will be prominently disseminated to all staff members, so they are aware of how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the school and community-based resources.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications if a suicide occurs or an attempt is made by a student or adult on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

B. Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

A referral process should be prominently disseminated to all parents/guardians/caregivers, with information as to how to respond to a crisis and the available school and community-based resources.

C. Students

Students shall be encouraged to notify a staff member when they are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or attempt.

D. Parental Notification and Involvement

Each school within the Garden Grove Unified School District shall identify a process to ensure continuing care for the student identified to be at risk of suicide. This process will be led by the multi-disciplinary crisis team and align with the strategies and supports outlined in the Suicide Prevention Guide. It should include the following steps:

- After a referral is made for a student, school staff shall verify with the parent/guardian/caregiver that follow-up treatment has been accessed. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be required to provide appropriate assurance or documentation of care for the student.
- If parents/guardians/caregivers refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at-risk for suicide or in emotional distress, a member of the multi-disciplinary crisis team will meet with the parents/guardians/caregivers to identify barriers to treatment and work to rectify the situation and build understanding of the importance of care.

- If follow-up care for the student is still not provided, school staff may need to consider filing a report of suspected Child Abuse or Neglect, as mandated by law.

Post-vention**A. Re-Entry to School**

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 wellbeing 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. In welcoming students back to campus, a member of the multi-disciplinary crisis team will work collaboratively with the student and parents/guardians to develop a re-entry plan. Strategies, supports, and suggestions are included in the Suicide Prevention Guide.

B. 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 to be prepared ahead of time in the event of such a tragedy. The Garden Grove Unified School District shall ensure the Suicide Postvention Plan is included in the Suicide Prevention Guide and updated at the same interval.

Ref: EC Section 215

Adopted: September 5, 2017

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