

# SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: OPERATIONS

TITLE: SUICIDE AWARENESS,  
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

ADOPTED: APRIL 19, 2016

REVISED:

<p>1. Purpose SC 1526 Pol. 103.1, 248, 249, 806</p> <p>2. Authority Title 22 Sec. 12.12 Pol. 207, 216, 236</p> <p>3. Guidelines</p> <p>4. Publication SC 1526</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>819. SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p>The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources. The Board and school district administration will work to educate school personnel and students on the actions and resources necessary to prevent suicide and promote mental well-being.</p> <p>In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the district’s suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student’s parents/guardians, the building principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk. This policy shall apply in any situation where a student is expressing suicidal thoughts or intentions of self-harm on school property, at any school sponsored activities, or on any public vehicle providing transportation to or from a school or school sponsored activity.</p> <p>The district shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.</p> <p>The district shall notify district employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the district’s website.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DEFINITIONS</b></p> <p><b>At-Risk for Suicide</b> shall mean any youth with risk factors or warning signs that increase the likelihood of suicidal behavior.</p> <p><b>Chief School Administrator</b> shall mean the superintendent of a school district or joint school district, the chief executive officer of a charter school, regional charter school or cyber charter school, and/or the executive director of an intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school.</p>
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**Crisis Response Team** shall include, but may not be limited to, the administrators, guidance counselors, the school nurse, social worker, and school resource officers, and/or other members of the Student Assistance Program (SAP), as designated, and may include other members as deemed appropriate by the chief school administrator/school entity. Community mental agency resources may be called for assistance to be a part of the team.

**Expressed Suicidal Thoughts or Intentions** shall mean a verbal or nonverbal communication that an individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die, but has not acted on the behavior.

**Prevention** refers to efforts that seek to reduce the factors that increase the risk for suicidal thoughts and behaviors and increase the factors that help strengthen, support, and protect individuals from suicide.

**Protective Factors** shall refer to characteristics (biological, psychological, and social) that reduce risk and the likelihood of the individual developing a mental illness.

**Resilience** shall refer to an individual's innate ability to persevere in the face of adversity and reduce the risk of unhealthy outcomes.

**Risk Factors** shall mean the personal or environmental characteristics associated with suicide. People affected by one or more of these risk factors have a greater probability of suicidal behavior.

**School Connectedness** shall mean the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.

**School Personnel** include, but may not be limited to, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, coaches, bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers.

**Suicide** shall refer to death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

**Suicidal Act** or **Suicide Attempt** shall mean a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person probably intended to kill him/herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

**Warning Signs** are evidence-based indicators that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the very near future.

<p>SC 1526</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION</b></p> <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Student Education</u></p> <p>Students shall receive age-appropriate education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.</p> <p>Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development. Lessons shall also include information on addressing problems that can lead to suicide, such as depression and other mental health issues, anger, and drug use. Lessons may be taught by health and PE teachers, community service providers, classroom teachers or student services staff.</p> <p><u>Protocols for Employee Education and Staff Development</u></p> <p>All district employees, including but not limited to secretaries, coaches, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers, shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention, and protocols for suicide awareness and prevention. All staff training will include information on strategies to enhance protective factors, resilience, and school connectedness.</p>
<p>SC 1526 Pol. 333</p>	<p>As part of the district's professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.</p> <p>Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention may be provided to guidance counselors, district mental health professionals and school nurses.</p> <p><u>Resources for Parents/Guardians</u></p> <p>The district may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs; and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.</p>

SC 1526	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>METHODS OF INTERVENTION/PREVENTION</b></p> <p>The methods of intervention or prevention utilized by the district shall include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.</p> <p>In compliance with state regulations and in support of this policy, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the building principal or other administrator or appropriate authority, when the health, safety, or welfare of the student or others is at risk.</p> <p><i>District-Wide –</i></p> <p>The district shall establish a district-wide crisis response team which may include, but is not limited to the Director of Special Education, School Safety Coordinator, administrators, guidance counselors, school nurse(s), social worker(s), teachers, and/or representatives of the police.</p> <p><b><u>Early Identification Procedures</u></b></p> <p>Early identification of individuals with one (1) or more suicidal risk factors or of individuals exhibiting warning signs, is crucial to the district's suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, district employees, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicidal risk factors and warning signs.</p> <p><b>Risk factors</b> refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Behavioral Health Issues/Disorders:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Depression.</li><li>- Substance abuse or dependence.</li><li>- Previous suicide attempts.</li><li>- Self injury.</li></ul></li><li>• Personal Characteristics:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Hopelessness/Low self-esteem.</li><li>- Loneliness/Social alienation/isolation/lack of belonging.</li></ul></li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Poor problem-solving or coping skills.</li><li>- Impulsivity/Risk-taking/recklessness.</li><li>• Adverse/Stressful Life Circumstances:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Interpersonal difficulties or losses.</li><li>- Disciplinary or legal problems.</li><li>- Bullying (victim or perpetrator).</li><li>- School or work issues.</li><li>- Physical, sexual or psychological abuse.</li><li>- Exposure to peer suicide.</li></ul></li><li>• Family Characteristics:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior.</li><li>- Family mental health problems.</li><li>- Divorce/Death of parent/guardian.</li><li>- Parental-Child relationship.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Warning signs</b> are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expressions such as hopelessness, rage, anger, seeking revenge, feeling trapped, anxiety, agitation, no reason to live or sense of purpose.</li><li>• Recklessness or risky behavior.</li><li>• Increased alcohol or drug use.</li><li>• Withdrawal from friends, family, or society.</li><li>• Dramatic mood changes.</li></ul>
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<p>SC 1526</p>	<p><u>Referral Procedures</u></p> <p>Any district employee who has identified a student with one (1) or more risk factors or who has an indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for further assessment and intervention.</p> <p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>The district shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>METHODS OF INTERVENTION</b></p> <p>The methods of intervention utilized by the district include, but are not limited to, responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school, and completed suicide. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan to support the student and his/her family for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.</p>
<p>Pol. 806</p>	<p><u>Procedures for Students at Risk</u></p> <p>A district-approved suicide assessment instrument may be used by trained mental health staff such as counselors, psychologists, social workers.</p> <p>Any School personnel who are made aware of any threat or attempt towards self-harm by a student or by another student witness, shall immediately notify the principal or designee. Any threat in any form shall be treated as real and handled immediately. No student shall be left alone. Crisis response procedures shall be immediately implemented.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be immediately notified by the school and shall be involved in consequent actions/recommendations. If any individual suspects that the student's risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, that staff member shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services in compliance with the requirements of the Child Protective Services Law. If a parent or guardian refuses to cooperate regarding a concern to child safety, school personnel will pursue a 302 involuntary mental health assessment.</p> <p>The district shall help to identify mental health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance.</p>

	<p><b>Mental health service providers</b> – may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and primary care providers.</p> <p>The district shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student’s family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.</p> <p><u>Students With Disabilities</u></p> <p>For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p> <p>If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p> <p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>The district shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the intervention and assessment process including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.</p>
<p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p> <p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p> <p>SC 1526</p>	<p><b>METHODS OF RESPONSE TO SUICIDE OR SUICIDE ATTEMPT</b></p> <p>The methods of response to a suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by the district include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying and training the school crisis response/crisis intervention team.</li> <li>2. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.</li> <li>3. Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians.</li> <li>4. Working with families.</li> <li>5. Responding appropriately to the media.</li> </ol>





<p>SC 1526</p>	<p>regarding all reports and documentation about the at-risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to guidance counselors, district mental health professionals and school nurses.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION RESOURCES</b></p> <p>A listing of resources regarding suicide awareness and prevention shall be attached to this policy.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1526</p> <p>State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.12</p> <p>Board Policy – 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114, 117, 146, 204, 207, 216, 236, 248, 249, 333, 805, 806</p> <p><b>PSBA NEW: 4/15</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>© 2015 PSBA</b></span></p>
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