

KEYSTONE OAKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Policy Guide



Policy No. 819

Section OPERATIONS

Title SUICIDE AWARENESS  
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Adopted NOVEMBER 17, 2015

Last Revised SEPTEMBER 15, 2020

<b>POLICY NO. 819 SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b>		
<b>Section 1</b>	<p><b><u>Purpose</u></b></p> <p>The Board is committed to maintaining a safe school environment; to protect the health, safety and welfare of its students; to promote healthy development; and to safeguard against the threat or attempt of suicide among school-aged youth. This policy supports the provision of a comprehensive district program designed to promote behavioral health and prevent suicide.</p>	SC 1526 Pol. 103, 103.1, 256, 806
<b>Section 2</b>	<p><b><u>Authority</u></b></p> <p>The Board directs the District to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; to establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide attempt or suicide death; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.</p> <p>The District shall notify employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the District’s website.</p>	SC 1526 Pol. 103,103.1, 806  SC 1526
<b>Section 3</b>	<p><b><u>Definition</u></b></p> <p><b>Behavioral health</b> – the promotion of emotional health; the prevention of mental illnesses and substance use disorders; and treatment and services for substance abuse, addiction, substance use disorders, mental illnesses and/or mental disorders.</p>	

<p><b>Section 4</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 819</b> <b>SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p><b><u>Guidelines</u></b></p> <p>The District shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.</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.</p> <p>Lessons shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development.</li> <li>2. Inform students about broader behavioral health issues such as depression and substance abuse, as well as specific risk factors, protective factors and warning signs for suicide.</li> <li>3. Encourage students to seek help for themselves or their peers, including when concerns arise via social media or other online forum, and to avoid making promises of confidence when they are concerned about the safety of a peer.</li> <li>4. Adhere to safe and effective messaging guidelines and include reputable suicide prevention resources.</li> <li>5. Promote a healthy school climate where students feel connected to and can identify trusted adults in the building.</li> </ol>	<p>SC 1526</p>
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6. These lessons may be taught by health and physical education teachers, community service providers, classroom teachers or student services staff. Students who are in need of intervention shall be referred in accordance with the District’s referral procedures for screening and recommendations.

Protocols for Administration of Employee Education

All District employees shall receive information about risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide awareness and prevention.

As part of the District’s professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in a minimum of four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training at least every five (5) years. Professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades kindergarten through five (5) shall participate in two (2) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training at least every (5) years.

Additional professional development in suicide risk screening and/or assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to specialized staff and school behavioral health professionals such as school crisis response/intervention team members, designated administrators, school counselors, District mental health professionals, social workers, school nurses and school psychologists.

Resources for Parents/Guardians

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 health resources.

**METHODS OF PREVENTION**

The methods of prevention utilized by the District include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 819</b> <b>SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p>risk; education for students, staff and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.</p> <p>In support of the District’s suicide prevention mission, 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 clearly in jeopardy.</p> <p><u>Suicide Prevention Coordinators</u></p> <p><i>District-wide:</i></p> <p>A District-wide suicide prevention coordinator shall be designated by the Superintendent. This may be an existing District employee. The District Suicide Prevention Coordinator shall be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of this policy. The District Suicide Prevention Coordinator shall investigate on cases involving peer-to-peer harassment, as required under federal law and Board Policy. The designee will help identify overlapping risk factors, including hostile environments created by persistent or severe harassment on the basis of gender, race, disability, or other protected classes.</p> <p><i>Building Level:</i></p> <p>Any school personnel who are made aware of any threat or witnesses any attempt towards self-harm that is written, drawn, spoken, or threatened shall immediately notify the building principal or the District-wide Suicide Prevention Coordinator.</p> <p>Any threat in any form shall be treated as real and dealt with immediately. No student should be left alone, nor confidentiality promised. In cases of life-threatening situations, a student’s confidentiality will be waived. The school entity’s crisis response procedures shall be implemented.</p>	<p>22 PA Code 12.12 Pol. 207, 216</p>
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Early Identification Procedures

Early identification of individuals with suicide risk factors or warning signs is crucial to the District’s suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, district employees, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicide risk factors and warning signs.

**Suicide risk factors** refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide.

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

Referral Procedures

Any District employee who observes a student exhibiting a warning sign for suicide or has another indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for suicide risk screening and/or assessment and intervention in accordance with district procedures.

In the absence of a warning sign for suicide, students demonstrating suicide risk factors that appear to be adversely impacting the student should be referred to the Student Assistance Program for support and follow-up.

Documentation

The District shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and suicide risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.

**METHODS OF INTERVENTION**

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 suicide death. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of a safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 819</b> <b>SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p><u>Procedures for Students at Risk</u></p> <p>A district-approved suicide risk screening or assessment tool may be used by trained behavioral health staff such as school counselors, school psychologists, or social workers.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk shall be notified by the school and informed of crisis and community resources. If the school suspects that the student’s risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services.</p> <p>If the parent or guardian refuses to cooperate and there is any doubt regarding the child’s safety, the school personnel will refer to internal procedures, which may include pursuing a 302 involuntary mental assessment.</p> <p>The District shall identify behavioral health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance.</p> <p><b>Behavioral health service providers</b> may include, but are not limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community behavioral health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and primary care providers.</p> <p>If the student is identified as being at increased risk of suicide, the District shall create a new, or update a previous, safety plan to support the student and the student’s family. The safety plan should be developed collaboratively with input from the student and reviewed with the student’s family.</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 Supervisor of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student’s needs in</p>	<p>Pol. 806</p> <p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p> <p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 819</b> <b>SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p>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, suicide risk screening and/or assessment and follow-up, including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians and behavioral health service providers.</p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>METHODS OF RESPONSE TO SUICIDE ATTEMPT OR SUICIDE DEATH</b></p> <p>The District shall maintain a trained school crisis response/crisis intervention team. Team members shall include, but not be limited to, designated administrators, school counselors, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, School Resource Officers, members of the Student Assistance Program Team, and others as designated by the district such as community behavioral health agency resources.</p> <p>Response to Suicide Attempt</p> <p><b>Methods</b> of response to a suicide attempt utilized by the District include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.</li> <li>2. Notifying students, employees and parent/guardians.</li> <li>3. Working with families.</li> <li>4. Responding appropriately to the media.</li> <li>5. Collaborating with community providers.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">SC 1526</p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 819</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p>The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event.</p> <p><u>Re-Entry Procedures</u></p> <p>A student’s excusal from school attendance after a behavioral health crisis and the student’s return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>Prior to a student returning to school after a behavioral health crisis, a District-employed behavioral health professional, the building principal, or suicide prevention coordinator shall meet with the parents/guardians of the student and, if appropriate, meet with the student to ensure the student’s readiness to return to school and to create an individual re-entry plan.</p> <p>When authorized by the student’s parent/guardian, the designated District employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside behavioral health care providers, request written documentation from the treating facility and encourage their involvement in the re-entry meeting.</p> <p>The designated District employee will periodically check-in, as needed, with the student to monitor the student’s progress, facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.</p> <p>Re-entry of a student with a disability requires coordination with the appropriate team to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>REPORT PROCEDURES</b></p> <p>Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.</p> <p>When a District employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.</p>	<p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 117, 204</p> <p>Pol. 103.1, 113, 113.2, 113.3, 114</p>
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As stated in this policy, District employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response.

The District Suicide Prevention Coordinator shall provide the Superintendent or designee with a copy of all reports and documentation regarding the at-risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to school counselors, District mental health professionals and school nurses.

**SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION  
RESOURCES**

A listing of resources regarding suicide awareness and prevention shall be attached to this policy.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1526

State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.12

2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action

Board Policies –103, 103.1, 113, 113.1, 113.2, 113.3, 114, 117, 146, 204, 207, 216, 249, 256, 333, 806