

PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

The Plainfield Board of Education recognizes that suicide is a complex issue and that, while the school may recognize potentially suicidal youth, it can neither make clinical assessments of such risk nor provide in-depth counseling. Instead, the Board directs school staff to refer students who may be at risk of attempting suicide to an appropriate service for assessment and counseling.

The Board of Education recognizes the need for youth suicide prevention procedures and will establish program(s) to identify risk factors for youth suicide, procedures to intervene with such youth, referral services and training for teachers, other school professionals and students to provide assistance in these programs.

Any school employee who may have knowledge of a suicide threat must take the proper steps to report this information to the building principal or his/her designee who will, in turn, notify the appropriate school officials, the student's family and appropriate resource services. Each school building has a Crisis Plan prepared to deal with this type of situation.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

A) Suicide threats

1. Any school personnel who suspect a student may be suicidal must immediately contact the school social worker, school psychologist, or guidance counselor ("Designated Support Staff") or go directly to the administrator in the absence of the Designated Support Staff member. The principal should be notified as soon as possible.
2. The Designated Support Staff member will immediately speak to the student to assess the student's emotional status. The student must be supervised the entire time.
3. Once the determination of safety is complete, the Designated Support Staff member will contact the student's parents.
 - a) If it is determined that the student does not have suicidal plan or intent to harm themselves or others, then parents will be contacted and Designated Support Staff member will develop a Safety Plan (if necessary) with student and/or family. Designated Support Staff may provide community resources for additional support.

- b) If it is determined that the student has suicidal intent or a plan for suicide, parents will be notified and requested to come to school immediately. The School Crisis Plan will be implemented, which may include an immediate referral to student's current outpatient therapist (if applicable), Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Services (EMPS), or 911 for transportation to a local hospital for medical or mental health assessment.
 - c) A request will be made for the student's legal guardian to sign a release of information form for communication between the school and the facility to which the student will be taken, the student's therapist, and other individuals as appropriate.
 - d) If the child is combative, the police will be telephoned for back-up and the ambulance will be called to transport the child to the hospital of the parent's choice.
4. When parents cannot be contacted, or if they refuse to come to the school and a medical emergency exists, normal procedures will be followed for such emergencies. If parents refuse to come to school, the Principal will explain that the school may be required to file a medical neglect report with the Department of Children and Families. In addition, the Principal may inform parents that the student will not be accepted back into school until a formal mental health evaluation has taken place.
5. If parents cannot be contacted, then the emergency person listed will be contacted.

B) Suicide attempts

1. Any school personnel having knowledge of a student who has made a suicide attempt either in school or out of school, must immediately contact the school nurse and Designated Support Staff member. The principal should then be notified as soon as possible.
2. The school nurse will determine the student's medical condition and the school social worker will determine the student's mental and emotional status.
3. If the student is medically in need of emergency treatment, the student's parents will be contacted by telephone to request that they:
 - transport the child to the hospital or
 - meet the ambulance at the hospital if appropriate

4. If the parents cannot be reached, the person listed on the emergency form will be contacted. If no one can be contacted, then an ambulance will be called to transport the student to DKH or Backus Hospital and the student will be escorted by the Designated Support Staff member, if appropriate.
5. The school nurse and/or Designated Support Staff member will telephone the hospital to inform them of the child's status.
6. The school nurse and/or school staff member will continue to try to reach the student's parent.
7. If at any time the student's parents refuse to have the student evaluated, then DCF referral will be initiated.

C) Actual Suicide

1. Any school personnel having knowledge of a student or faculty member who has committed suicide must inform the principal as soon as possible.
2. The principal will notify the Crisis Team immediately. If a crisis occurs after school hours, the Principal will utilize the notification system to inform staff of the crisis.
3. An emergency faculty meeting will be held as soon as possible to notify all faculty members and to inform staff how to proceed with students.
4. The Principal will refer to the Crisis Intervention Plan and Media guidelines to determine course of action for communicating crisis to students and families.
5. The Designated Support Staff members may refer students to community agencies for additional support.

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