

SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND POSTVENTION POLICY

The Marathon City School District recognizes a need to provide suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and education as an integral part of a child's total educational program. School personnel cannot be expected to solve this serious problem alone, but the school can and should play a role in preventing these unnecessary deaths. The chances of a student attempting or completing a suicide are lessened if the early warning signals are recognized and the student receives the necessary professional assistance.

While it is understood that district employees do not have the expertise in the general area of mental health or the specific area of adolescent suicide, all school personnel, specifically school counselors and teachers shall receive training to assist them to recognize clues and students that may be at risk, respond to a suicide threat or attempt, and help the students and school move positively forward should a suicide occur. This three-legged approach to suicide includes prevention, intervention and postvention.

Prevention

Training in coping skills shall be provided in all schools through K-12 curricula to be provided primarily through developmental guidance lessons and health classes. However, all curricula need to be supportive of this training phase. The focus of this curriculum shall include:

- A. Decision making skills and
- B. Recognition of potential for life-threatening behaviors. Students shall be taught how to recognize symptoms of stress in self and others as well as how to contact resources for dealing with these in life stresses. These preventative requirements are consistent with Wisconsin State Statutes under 118.01 (2) (d) 7.

Staff will receive training on risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, intervention procedures, postvention, resources and self-care. This training will be in the form of in-service and access to a suicide prevention, intervention and postvention handbook.

Intervention

A teacher or other school personnel who recognizes any type of suicidal behavior, no matter how trivial it may seem, shall report it to a pupil services provider (school counselor, school psychologist, and/or school nurse). In addition to the pupil services provider, a building principal shall be made aware of the situation as soon as reasonably possible.

In the case of an actual suicide (one on the verge of self-destruction), the staff member involved must not leave the student alone. That staff member will personally escort the student to a pupil services provider or will send another person to a pupil services provider for help. If a pupil services provider is not available, it shall be reported to a building level administrator or, in his/her absence a district level administrator.

The building administrator or pupil services team member shall contact the student's parents/guardians/family and request that they meet with the school staff immediately. The parents shall be informed that their child has attempted or is planning to attempt suicide.

In an actual attempted suicide, the health and safety of the student is paramount. First aid will be rendered until professional medical treatment and/or transportation can be received. The principal and the student's parents will be contacted and informed immediately.

Teachers or other school personnel should be aware that in many cases where a student discusses suicide, the student may request confidentiality. If the subject matter deals with suicidal behavior, concern for

confidentiality must be secondary to concern for the student's life. Most important, action must not be delayed. This requirement is consistent with the FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA).

Postvention

When an outside agency has been used, a release of information form shall be signed which will allow a two-way flow of information between the school and the community agency.

After the immediate crisis has been resolved, the building administrator and the pupil services team shall meet to evaluate the situation and decide on an appropriate role for the school to take in assisting the student. The group should appoint a case manager to keep close contact with the student and the community agencies treating the student to ensure a coordinated school and agency approach.

All teachers involved with the student shall be invited to an informational staffing to assist them in appropriately dealing with the student.

The pupil services staff person assigned as case manager shall maintain a written record of all actions taken by the school in the case and shall perform a monitoring and follow-up functions to support and assist the teachers after the student returns to class. The case manager shall maintain weekly contact with the parents, after the referral, for up to 90 days.

The case manager shall make a report to the building administrator and pupil services team at the end of the 90 days to clarify the status of the student at that time. The building administrator and the pupil services team shall determine what, if any, further action shall be taken.

The case manager shall meet with the student's parents to inform them of the decisions of the school staff on district follow-up and to obtain their reaction.

A Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention handbook will be available as a resource and reference tool for faculty, staff and administration. The handbook outlines risk factors, warning signs, and procedures for addressing suicide, media, memorials, and student returning to school.

LEGAL REF: Section 118.1 (2) (d) 7 Wisconsin Statutes

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