

INSTRUCTION

Suicide Prevention

The Port Townsend School District Board of Directors recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that suicidal indicators such as substance abuse and violence are complex issues that should be taken seriously. While district staff may recognize potentially suicidal youth and the district can make an initial risk assessment, the district cannot provide in-depth mental health counseling. Instead, the board directs district staff to refer students who exhibit suicidal behaviors to an appropriate service for further assessment and counseling.

District staff who have knowledge of a suicide threat must take the proper steps to support the student and to report this information to the building principal or designee who will, in turn, notify the appropriate school officials, the student's family, and appropriate resource services.

The board also recognizes the need for youth suicide prevention procedures. The district will adopt and, at the beginning of each school year, provide to all district staff, including substitute and regular bus drivers, a plan for recognizing, screening, referring, and responding to students in emotional or behavioral distress. At a minimum, the plan will:

- Identify training opportunities for staff on recognizing, screening and referral of students in emotional or behavioral distress, including those who exhibit indicators of substance abuse, violence or suicide;
- Describe how to utilize the expertise of district staff trained in recognition, screening, and referral;
- Provide guidelines, based on staff expertise, for responding to suspicions, concerns or warning signs of emotional or behavioral distress;
- Address development of partnerships with community organizations and agencies for referral of students to support services, to include development of at least one memorandum of understanding between the district and one such entity;
- Contain procedures for communication with parents and guardians, including notification requirements in accordance with RCW 28A.320.160;
- Describe how staff should respond to a crisis situation where a student is in imminent danger to themselves or others;
- Describe how the district will provide support to students and staff after an incident of violence, student suicide, or allegations of sexual abuse of a student;
- Describe how staff should respond when allegations of sexual contact or abuse are made against a staff member, volunteer, parent, guardian or family member of the student, including how staff should interact with parents, law enforcement and child protective services;
- Describe how the district will provide to certificated and classified staff the training on the obligation to report physical abuse or sexual misconduct required under RCW 28A.400.317.

The superintendent will develop and implement the plan and a staff training schedule to achieve the board's goals and objectives.

Cross References:	Policy 3207 Policy 2140 Policy 3211	Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying Guidance and Counseling Gender-Inclusive Schools
Legal References	RCW 28A.410.043 RCW 28A.320.127 RCW 28A.410.226 RCW 28A.320.1271	School Counselor Certification Plan for recognition, screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students Washington professional educator standards board – Training program on youth suicide screening – Certificates for school nurses, social workers, psychologists and counselors – Adoption of standards Model school district plan of recognition, initial screening, and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students
Management Resources:	Policy News, April 2011 Policy News, December 2014 2016 – July Issue	Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Plans

Date: 8/8/11, 2/23/15; 4/15/21.