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WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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This table of contents provides an organized overview of the sections contained within the West Contra Costa Unified School District's K-12 Suicide Prevention Plan.



West Contra Costa Unified School District Suicide Prevention Policy for K-12

California Suicide Prevention Introduction:

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) is committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment for all students, staff, and families. Recognizing the importance of mental health and well-being, the district prioritizes comprehensive suicide prevention strategies to address the needs of K-12 students and Staff. This policy is designed to establish comprehensive suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies aligned with California Education Code (EC) Section 215. It aims to create a safe and supportive environment for students, staff, and families, integrating evidence-based approaches to mitigate the risk of suicidal behaviors.

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines, procedures, and resources for the prevention, intervention, and postvention of suicide within the WCCUSD. This policy aims to promote awareness, provide support, and facilitate appropriate responses to



The West Contra Costa Unified School District Suicide Prevention Plan defines the following definitions as followed:

Suicide Prevention:

Measures and strategies aimed at identifying risk factors, intervening appropriately, and fostering a supportive environment to prevent suicides among students.

Intervention:

Prompt actions taken to assist students at risk of suicide or those who have attempted suicide.

Postvention:

Coordinated responses and support services provided following a suicide in the school community to prevent further crises and support affected individuals.

Prevention:

Training for Staff:

Implement comprehensive training programs: for all educational staff to identify signs of suicide risk among students.

Development of Comprehensive Policies:

Establishment of clear policies and procedures guiding suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention strategies within WCCUSD.

Intervention:

Parental Notification and Involvement:

Ensure open communication with parents/guardians regarding concerns for their child's mental health, seeking their involvement in intervention and support measures.

Re-Entry Procedure:

In-School Suicide Attempts:

Protocols to facilitate a student's smooth re-entry into the school environment following an in-school suicide attempt, including necessary support services.

Out-of-School Suicide Attempts:

Procedures for providing support and resources to students following out-of-school suicide attempts to facilitate their reintegration into the school community.



Self-Harm:

Deliberate self-directed behavior causing injury or potential injury to oneself, which can be non-suicidal or suicidal. Those engaging in self-harm should receive mental health care.

Suicide:

Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die.

Suicide Attempt:

Self-injurious behavior where evidence exists of at least some intent to die, irrespective of the outcome.

Suicidal Behavior:

Encompasses various actions or thoughts indicating an intent to end one's life, including suicide attempts, planning, gathering means, or related behaviors.

Suicidal Ideation:

Thinking about or planning self-injurious behavior that may result in death, regardless of whether there's a specific plan or intent.

Suicide Contagion:

The process by which suicidal behavior or a suicide completion influences an increase in suicide risk among others.

Postvention:

A crisis intervention strategy aimed at helping individuals cope with grief following a suicide loss, reducing the risk of suicide contagion, addressing stigma, and disseminating factual information to the community.

I. West Contra Costa Unified School District Suicide Prevention Policy Implementation.

Appointment of District Suicide Prevention Coordinator:

Within the West Contra Costa Unified School District, the Superintendent or their designee shall appoint a District Suicide Prevention Coordinator. This individual will bear the responsibility of overseeing and directing the implementation of suicide prevention strategies



disorders, homelessness, students in out-of-home settings such as foster care, LGBTQ+ students, and other marginalized populations.

The key points highlighted in this administrative regulation include:

Scope:

The measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention apply to various groups of at-risk students, such as those affected by mental illness, substance use disorders, homelessness, students in out-of-home settings, LGBTQ+ students, and more.

Staff Professional Development:

All staff members, including teachers and other employees in any school or school program, are required to undergo annual professional development on various aspects related to youth suicide prevention. This includes understanding risk factors, recognizing warning signs, knowing protective factors, response procedures, making referrals, implementing poEMC /Ps6.6 (l)14.7 (f/Ps



III. West Contra Costa Unified School District Policy on Youth Suicide Prevention Programming.

The West Contra Costa Unified School District, our dedication lies in implementing comprehensive measures for youth suicide prevention. This involves the seamless integration of developmentally appropriate and student-centered educational materials into the K-12 health curriculum and, where relevant, into various subject areas across our district. These materials will underscore the importance of informed decision-making, furnish coping strategies to nurture resilience, and educate students about identifying risk factors and warning signs linked to mental health conditions and suicidal inclinations, both within themselves and among their peers. Additionally, these resources will empower students with strategies for seeking help and guidance on efficiently utilizing school resources and referring friends for support. It is recommended that our suicide prevention programs prioritize smaller, more personalized group settings over larger auditorium-style presentations.

Publication and Distribution:

This policy will be annually distributed and incorporated into all student and teacher handbooks. Furthermore, it will be prominently displayed on the official West Contra Costa Unified School District website. It is crucial for all school staff to acquaint themselves with and adhere to the guidelines delineated in this policy concerning suicide prevention.

Intervention

Assessment and Referral:

Intervention strategies are crucial. If a student is identified as potentially suicidal reported by peers, educators, or other sources swift intervention is initiated by a school-employed mental health professional. These professionals, encompassing school psychologists, counselors, or social workers, conduct risk assessments and, when necessary, facilitate immediate referrals within the same school day. Educators are also trained to promptly address written expressions or threats related to suicide or death found in student assignments, ensuring these instances are promptly referred to the appropriate school-employed mental health professional. In cases where no mental health professional is available, designated staff members such as school nurses or administrators intervene following district protocol until a mental health professional can be consulted and engaged to address the situation.



IV. The West Contra Costa Unified School District outlines the following directives for dealing with At-Risk Youth and engaging law enforcement when necessary:

For At-Risk Youth:

Under the jurisdiction of the West Contra Costa Unified School District, continuous supervision by school staff is mandated to ensure the safety of the student until the assessment process concludes.

The principal and school suicide prevention coordinator within the West Contra Costa Unified School District must be promptly informed of the situation.

The responsibility of contacting the student's parent or guardian, following the guidelines outlined in the Parental Notification Involvement section and complying with existing state law/district policy (if applicable), lies with the school-employed mental health professional or principal. They are also accountable for assisting the family with urgent referral.

Urgent referral:

options encompass setting up outpatient mental health or primary care appointments in collaboration with the parent or guardian and conveying the reasons for referral to the healthcare provider.

In critical, life-threatening situations, the West Contra Costa Unified School District



as much detail about the situation as possible, including the student's name, any weapons in their possession, and their location. It may be beneficial for school staff within the West Contra Costa Unified School District to inform the dispatcher that the student is a suicidal emotionally disturbed person, or "suicidal EDP," to facilitate sending officers trained in crisis de-escalation and mental health issues.

V. The West Contra Costa Unified School District's Parental Notification and Involvement policy mandates that, upon identification of a student at any level of suicide risk or following a suicide attempt, the principal, their designate, or a school mental health professional shall promptly inform the student's parent or guardian on the same school day or as expeditiously as possible. This notification shall occur unless such action would immediately endanger the student's safety. Subsequent to parental notification and after an initial risk assessment, the principal, designate, or school mental health professional may propose recommendations based on the perceived needs of the student. These recommendations may encompass, among other actions, suggesting an additional evaluation by an external qualified health professional or emergency service provider.

Lethal means counseling should encompass discussions on the following:

Firearms:

Inquire with the parent or guardian regarding the presence or accessibility of firearms in the home.

Recommend that parents adhere to state laws by storing all firearms away from home during periods when the student is facing difficulties. Suggested storage options include with a



accommodations, academic considerations (such as missed work), and establish check-in procedures to ease the transition back to school.

Assessment of Readiness:

Although not mandatory for re-entry, the school may engage with hospitals and external mental health providers to evaluate the student's readiness to return to the school setting.

Ongoing Support and Monitoring:

A designated staff member will regularly check in with the student to aid their readjustment to the school community and address any lingering concerns, whether social or academic.

Sustained Support and Communication:

The school employed mental health professional will maintain periodic contact with the student and their parents or guardians, ensuring support for up to three months or as required. The frequency of check-ins will be adjusted based on the evolving needs of the student.

Teacher Notification and Support:

The administration will inform the student's teachers and relevant staff about the student's return following a medically-related absence. Specific details of mental health diagnoses will not be disclosed. Additionally, the school-employed mental health professional will be available to address any concerns teachers may have post-re-entry.

VII. In-School Suicide Attempts:

In cases of in-school suicide attempts, the safety and well-being of the student are of utmost importance. Our district ensures:

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Initiating support services and long-term counseling for affected students and staff, coordinating with community mental health providers for continuous care.

Developing memorial plans, focusing on prevention, and avoiding actions that may inadvertently sensationalize the death.

It is crucial to note that post-suicide death, schools may review and update existing policies to enhance prevention strategies.

X. External Communication Protocol:

The district-appointed spokesperson will handle all media inquiries, providing factual information while adhering to safe messaging guidelines to mitigate the risk of suicide contagion. Confidential information or speculative details will not be disclosed.

The West Contra Costa Unified School District is committed to a comprehensive and empathetic approach in dealing with mental health crises and suicide prevention within our school community. For more detailed guidance and resources, please refer to our tool kit on responding to suicide incidents and their aftermath.

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) policy on suicide prevention is influenced by various key organizations dedicated to mental health, suicide prevention, and the well-being of students. The contributing factors to this policy are informed by the principles, research, and advocacy efforts of the following organizations:

1.) American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP):

Mission and Vision: AFSP is dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide. AFSP is a national, nonprofit organization that works to prevent suicide, reduce the stigma of mental illness, and support people with mental health conditions.

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2.) American School Counselor Association (ASCA):

Professional Guidance and Support: ASCA promotes student success by enhancing the role of school counselors in the academic, career, and social/emotional development of students. This holistic approach ensures that students receive the comprehensive support they need.



5.) The combined efforts and insights of these organizations contribute significantly to the WCCUSD policy on suicide prevention, ensuring it is comprehensive, evidence-

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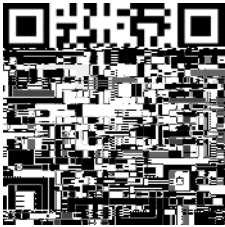
Suicide Prevention Resources for Students & Staff



Living Works
<https://livingworks.net/>



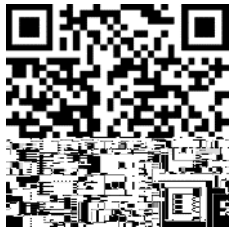
Living Works CA Student & Staff Training
<https://www.caschoolsstart.livingworks.net/access-training>



NAMI CONTRA COSTA COUNTY
<https://namica.org/locations/nami-contra-costa-county/>



Boston Children Hospital Break Free from Depression
<https://www.childrenshospital.org/programs/boston-childrens->



Sandy Hook Promise-Say Something
<https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/our-programs/say-something/>



DIDI HIRSCH
<https://didihirsch.org/>



Support/Crisis Line & Apps

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
<https://988lifeline.org/>

Crisis Text Line
<https://www.crisistextline.org/>

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PARENT EDUCATION/SUPPORT

1.) BeSMART for Kids

Each year in the US, almost 600 children aged 17 and under die by suicide with a gun. The BeSmart campaign focuses on education and awareness about secure gun storage and child safety. BeSMART for Kids offers a free 20-minute presentation by trained volunteers in English or Spanish to parent groups.

This program is for gun owners and non-gun owners and is non-political and non-partisan. Contact: besmartsd1@gmail.com to schedule your presentation.

2.) Youth Mental Health First Aid

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is an evidence-based, seven-hour training created upon the medical first aid model. It is designed to provide skills to help a youth who may be experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge or is in crisis.

YMHFA participants learn to recognize signs and symptoms of youth in emotional distress, initiate and offer help, and connect the youth to professional care through a five-step action plan. Participants who complete the course receive a manual and certification for three years.

The following organizations provide training at no cost, based on availability:

- California Department of Education - ymhfa@cde.ca.gov

3.) Suicide Prevention: A Resource for Parents This brochure created in English and Spanish by Each Mind Matters includes key questions parents/guardians can ask themselves to identify warning signs, know what to do, and find at: <https://emmresourcecenter.org/>