

## **STUDENTS**

**Policy 2785**  
**(Regulation 2785)**  
**(Form 2785)**

### **Student Welfare**

#### **Student Suicide Awareness**

This policy and the accompanying regulation reflects the District's commitment to maintaining a safe environment to protect the health, safety and welfare of students. The corresponding regulation for this policy outlines key protocol and procedures for this District in educating employees and students on the actions and resources necessary to prevent suicide and to promote student well-being. This policy is being adopted pursuant to Section 170.048, RSMo. This policy and corresponding regulation will go into effect no later than July 1, 2018.

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## **STUDENTS**

**Regulation 2785**

### **Student Welfare**

#### **Student Suicide Awareness**

**The district will address suicide awareness and prevention through the following policy components<sup>1</sup>:**

1. Crisis response team
2. Crisis response procedures
3. Procedures for parent involvement
4. Community resources available to students, parents, patrons and employees
5. Responding to suicidal behavior or death by suicide in the school community
6. Suicide prevention and response protocol education for staff
7. Suicide prevention education for students
8. Publication of policy

#### **1. Response Procedures**

Student suicidal behaviors are not confidential and may be revealed to the student's parents, guardians, school personnel or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student is at risk.

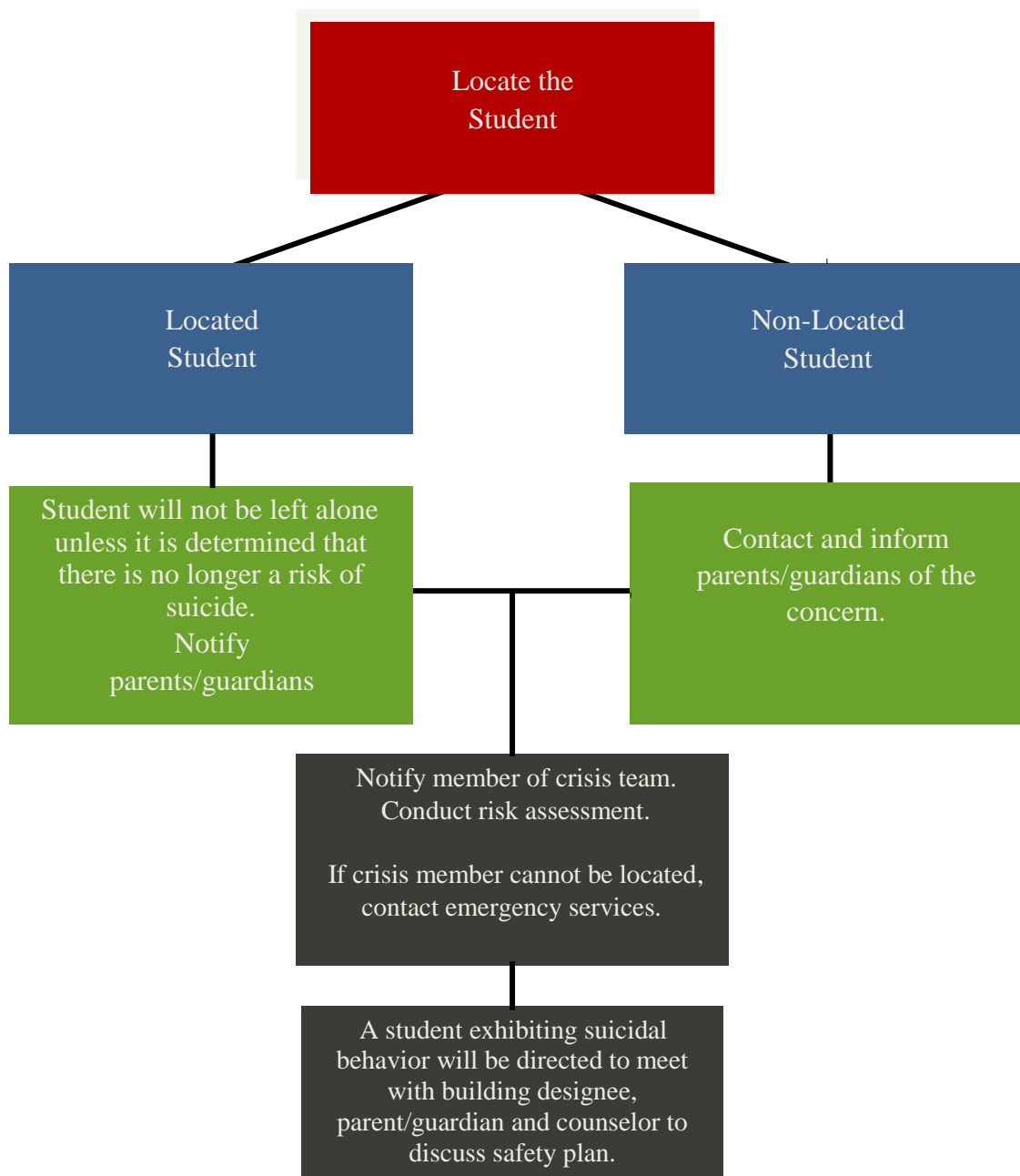
Any school employee who has a reasonable belief that a student may be at risk for suicide or witnesses any attempt towards self-injury will notify the Grade Level Counselor and/ or the building administrator or his/her designee.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Model Policy

If a student suicide behavior is made known to any school employee and a member of the crisis response team, the building administrator or his/her designee is not available, the employee will notify the student's parent/guardian, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) or local law enforcement in an emergency situation. As soon as practical, the employee will notify the building designee or principal.

The following steps will be employed in response to any risk of student suicide:



## **2. Procedures for Parent Involvement**

A Grade level counselor will assess the risk and either request the person who heard the threat to call home or the counselor will do so. The designee shall reach out to the parents/guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide to consult with them about the risk assessment of their student, to make them aware of community resources, and to discuss how to best support the student's mental well-being and safety.

If the parent refuses to cooperate or if there is any doubt regarding the student's safety, local mental service providers and/or law enforcement may need to be engaged, and a report may need to be made to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

Contact with a parent concerning risk of suicide will be documented in writing.

## **3. School and Community Resources**

A student exhibiting suicidal behavior will be directed to meet with the building designee, their parent/guardian and counselor to discuss support and safety systems, available resources, coping skills and a safety plan as necessary.

The district will, in collaboration with local organizations and the Missouri Department of Mental Health, identify local, state and national resources and organizations that can provide information or support to students and families. A basic list of resources can be found on the Department of Mental Health website and the district will strive to develop its own list of local resources to be made readily available.

<http://dmh.mo.gov/mentalillness/suicide/prevention.html>

## **4. Responding to Suicidal Behavior or Death by Suicide in the School Community**

When the school community is impacted by suicidal behavior or a death by suicide, the district will confer with the counseling department and the administrators. Also, when appropriate, confer with local community resources and professionals to identify and make available supports that may help the school community understand and process the behavior and/or death.

The crisis response team, the building administrator or his/her designee will determine appropriate procedures for informing the school community of a death by suicide and the supports that will be offered. Staff and students who need immediate attention following a death by suicide will be provided support and resources as determined necessary.

## **5. Suicide Prevention and Response Protocol Education for Staff**

All district employees will receive information annually regarding this policy and the district's protocol for suicide awareness, prevention and response. The importance of suicide prevention, recognition of suicide protective and risk factors, strategies to strengthen school connectedness and building specific response procedures will be highlighted.

Such information shall include the following:

1. Current trends in youth mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention and awareness
2. Strategies to encourage students to seek help for themselves and other students
3. Warning signs that indicate a student may be at risk of suicide
4. The impact of mental health issues and substance abuse
5. Communication to students regarding concerns about safety and that asking for help can save a life
6. Understanding limitations and boundaries for giving help and techniques to practice self-care
7. Identification of key school personnel who are comfortable, confident and competent to help students at risk of escalated distress and suicide

All district staff will participate in professional development regarding suicide awareness and prevention.

## **6. Suicide Prevention Education for Students**

Starting no later than fifth grade, students will receive age appropriate information and instruction on suicide awareness and prevention. Information and instruction may be offered in health education, by the counseling staff or in other curricula as may be appropriate.

Student education will include the following:

1. Information about mental health, well-being and suicide prevention and awareness
2. Promotion of a climate that encourages peer referral and which emphasizes school connectedness
3. Recognition of the signs that they or peers are at risk for suicide
4. Identification of issues that may lead to suicide including depression, anxiety, anger, and drug/alcohol dependency
5. Directive to not make promises of confidence when they are concerned about peer suicide
6. Identification of a trusted adult on campus with whom students can discuss concerns about suicide

## **7. Publication of Policy**

The district will notify employees, students and parents of this policy by posting the policy and related procedures and documents on the district's website and discussing this policy during employee training as detailed herein.

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SUICIDE Procedure for PCS staff in the Crisis Manual:

1. If any employee believes that an individual at school intends to IMMEDIATELY harm him/herself, the following procedures should be followed:
  - a. Never leave the student alone.
  - b. Notify the office and/ or counselor and tell them to call 911
  - c. Remain calm and remove other students as appropriate to your buddy room.

*Reference: DESE Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Model Policy*

2. If a student or staff member commits suicide at school, the following steps are to be taken:
    - a. Secure the area where the suicide occurred.
    - b. Notify the office.
    - c. Be sure that all students who witnessed the suicide are removed from the immediate vicinity and placed under the supervision of a counselor or teacher. Keep a record of witnesses for the police.
    - d. The office will turn off the bell system and notify all teachers to keep their students until further notice.
    - e. The office will notify law enforcement.
    - f. Provide for the counseling needs of students. Do not allow students to leave school prior to normal dismissal without parent/guardian approval.
    - g. Contain the story and protect the privacy of the family.
  3. Premier Charter School employs Licensed Professional Counselors on site that will assess counseling needs of students, staff and families as needed. Follow up care will be given on campus or referred outside of school with case management and follow up with the Division of Family Services.
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## **STUDENTS**

**Form 2785**

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#### **Student Suicide Awareness**

### **GUIDELINES for training or professional development<sup>2</sup>**

#### **Protective Factors for Suicide**

Protective factors buffer individuals from suicidal thoughts and behavior. To date, protective factors have not been studied as extensively or rigorously as risk factors. Identifying and understanding protective factors are, however, equally as important as researching risk factors.

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical and substance abuse disorders
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for seeking help
- Family and community support (connectedness)
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution and nonviolent ways of handling disputes
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support instincts for self-preservation

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<sup>2</sup> Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Model Policy

*Reference: DESE Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Model Policy*

### **Risk Factors for Suicide**

A combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of suicide. Risk factors are those characteristics associated with suicide they might not be direct causes.

- Family history of suicide
- Family history of child maltreatment
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
- History of alcohol and substance abuse
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Cultural and religious beliefs (e.g., belief that suicide is a noble resolution of a personal dilemma)
- Local epidemics of suicide
- Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Loss (relational, social, work or financial)
- Physical illness
- Easy access to lethal methods
- Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or to suicidal thoughts

[Centers for Disease Control - Risk and Protective Factors](#)

### **Suicide Prevention Training (Department of Mental Health)**

<https://dmh.mo.gov/mentalillness/suicide/training.html>

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