

# Emery County School District



## Policy: JLDDBA—Suicide Prevention

Date Adopted: 2 October 2013  
Current Review / Revision: 7 May 2014

The Emery County School District strives to insure the safety and wellbeing of all students. The Board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people ages 15-19 and that all steps need to be taken to prevent any student from attempting suicide. The Board also believes that the school should provide, along with parents and guardians, appropriate interventions for students to insure that they do not see suicide as a solution to their problems.

Schools should provide services related to suicide prevention. Every school should have a Crisis Intervention Team in place as part of their Emergency Management Plan. The Crisis Intervention Team should be aware of suicide prevention protocols and be prepared to take an active role in suicide prevention.

### **Suicide Prevention**

Employees of the Emery County School District, when encountering suicides or suicide threats, have a legal and moral duty to perform as would a “reasonably prudent person under similar circumstances”.

When a student threatens suicide, immediate action should be taken to intervene on behalf of the student. Schools are not equipped to do the necessary in-depth counseling, but schools have the duty to make appropriate referrals and to secure such assistance. Therefore, any school employee who may have knowledge of a suicide threat must take the proper steps to report this information to the school administration or school counselor, who must in turn notify the student’s parent or guardian. If the student is threatening immediate suicide, the employee should call 911 and then notify appropriate school authorities.

### **Considerations and Contingencies**

- a. School personnel should cooperate with other authorized public officials in suicide response and prevention efforts.
- b. With the exception of directory information, information in student record files may only be disclosed to those having both a right and a need to know, unless the minor student’s parent/guardian has given prior written consent. Representatives of other agencies may have limited access without consent while working with the school in pursuit of school objectives. However, if a release of information is necessary to positively impact a life-threatening event for a student, student safety is to be given first consideration.
- c. School personnel should not make decisions related to calling for emergency response units unless emergency medical care is needed to save a student’s life or prevent further serious injury. In all other cases, the decision to transport the student to the hospital must be the responsibility and decision of the parent or other government agency.
- d. If there is a known history of abuse, or if abuse is suspected, the school administrator should call the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Failure of parents to take appropriate action after notification of suicide threats would be viewed as neglect and should be reported.

## Suicide Prevention Procedures

### Regular School Hours

- a. Referral (To school personnel) - A student can be self-referred or referred by another person. The referral information should be carefully reviewed prior to interviewing the student. This review might include asking the referring person to explain the concerns about the student, what behavior changes have occurred and any other relevant information.
- b. Parent/Guardian Notification – the student’s parent or guardian should be notified of the referral and asked to come to school to meet with the student and a school administrator or school counselor.
- c. Crisis Interview – With the parent or guardian present, an administrator or school counselor should take the student out of class for the initial interview. If the school is unable to locate the parents, the school administrator or school counselor should proceed with the Crisis Interview. Two school employees should be present during the interview if the parent/guardian is absent. The crisis interview should be done on the same day that the referral is made.
- d. Mental Health Consult - If the threat is serious, and it is determined that immediate intervention is necessary, the parents should be referred to Four Corner’s Mental Health Center or to their own doctor for assistance. In the absence of a parent or guardian, and it is determined that the school must act immediately to protect the student against serious injury or death, the school administrator or counselor should contact Mental Health and request assistance. In other cases, the student should be monitored until the parent or guardian is located.
- e. Documentation - All steps in the process described above must be documented. The crisis interview with the student, consulting with other agencies, informing the parent of the threat and the plan of action.

Note: If a school employee believes that a student is at-risk of attempting suicide, physical self-harm, or harming others, the school employee may intervene and ask a student questions regarding the student’s thoughts, physically self harming behavior, or thoughts of harming others, for the purposes of referring the student to the appropriate prevention services and informing the student’s parent or legal-guardian.

In all cases the parent or guardian must be informed if a student threatens suicide. Notification of parent must be documented on the appropriate parental notification form (Board Policy - JLDBA-E3). If a personal contact is not possible, the parent may be contacted by phone or other appropriate methods.

When a parent is contacted concerning a child’s suicidal threat, the parents’ response should be noted. If it appears the parents’ response may be damaging to the child or likely to cause a suicide attempt, DCFS or local law enforcement should be notified.

If an interview is conducted in the absence of the parent, and school administration feels that the threat is not serious, the parent should be notified about the interview. The school should actively seek information from the parent about whether the child has threatened or attempted suicide earlier or whether there are other risk factors.

### Non-School Hours

If a student contacts a teacher at home during non-school hours threatening suicide, the teacher should obtain as much information as possible and immediately seek assistance as necessary.

If the student has a weapon, is taking pills, etc., the teacher should immediately call 911 and relay all available information: the nature of the threat, where the student is, who else is around (and could be helpful), address and phone numbers, etc.

Some situations are critical enough that the teacher should stay on the phone with the student to maintain contact. In that case, it is advisable for the teacher to remain on the phone with the student and write a note for another household member to take to a neighbor's house and call 911 from there. If the teacher is alone, he/she may need to hang up for a minute and call 911. And then return the call to the student.

## **Discipline**

When the student is threatening suicide and also needs disciplinary measures, safety must be considered. If there is no supervision at home (both parents/guardians work, no alternative adult available), in-school suspension rather than out-of-school suspension is better. If an out-of-school suspension is deemed necessary, certain procedures should be observed:

If the student is in therapy, the therapist should be contacted for recommendations or suggestions.

The parent should be requested to come to school to get the student, or, the student should be escorted home by at least two school personnel. In all cases, the student must be personally delivered to the parent or legal guardian. If the student is out of control at school, law enforcement may be called in to evaluate the situation.

Adequate supervision of the student should be personally discussed with the parent noting that the student has recently threatened suicide and is in need of close supervision.

When the student appears to be a serious suicide threat, and the parent does not seem able or willing to provide the necessary supervision, a report of neglect should be made by the school to DCFS. In no instance should the student be left unsupervised.

## **Suicide Attempt in School**

- a. Verify information and call 911
- b. Try to calm Suicidal person
- c. Try to isolate the suicidal person from other students and staff.
- d. Notify the school principal and/or counselor
- e. Principal or counselor notify the parent/guardian
- f. At least two school personnel should stay with the suicidal person until professional help arrives. Do not leave a suicidal person alone.

The Principal and the school Crisis Team should notify staff and students as appropriate. Staff debriefings should be held before and after school normal operating hours as needed. The School Crisis Team should be activated to implement post-crisis interventions and to determine the level of intervention necessary.

The privacy of the affected family should be protected.

## **Return to School**

The School Crisis Team should prepare a “School Suicide Prevention Protocol and Action Plan Form” (Policy JLDBA – E2) prior to the return to school of a student that has attempted suicide.

## **Suicide Death / Serious Injury in School**

- a. Verify Information and call 911
- b. Principal should notify the Superintendent
- c. Principal should notify the school staff before the next school day following the suicide or attempted suicide
- d. Activate the School Crisis Team
- e. Implement post-crisis interventions

## **Post-Crisis Intervention**

- a. Principal should contact Four Corner’s Mental Health to determine level of intervention for staff and students.
- b. Designate rooms as private counseling areas
- c. Escort siblings, friends, and other highly stressed students to counselors
- d. Resume normal routines as soon as possible
- e. Assess the stress level of staff and recommend counseling as necessary
- f. Follow up with students and staff who receive counseling
- g. Principal determine method of notifying students and parents
- h. Principal becomes spokesperson. Do not let the media interview students