

Suicide Prevention Policy Barrington Public Schools

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and well-being of all students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene, and respond to suicide. The policy recognizes:

- Physical and mental health as integral components of student outcomes, both educationally and throughout the lifespan;
- Suicide as a leading cause of death among young people locally, nationally, and globally;
- School's role in providing an environment that is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide and helps to foster positive youth development and resilience;
- Comprehensive suicide prevention policies include prevention, intervention, and postvention components; and
- Alignment with other policies, programs and practices that support the overall social, emotional and behavioral health of students (American Foundation of Suicide Prevention, 2022).

Scope:

Curricula and Training

Per the statute, suicide prevention curricula for grades 6-12 and staff professional development for all staff in PK-12 schools and administration will be selected from the RIDE approved list. The content of the curricula must include:

- How to identify appropriate mental health services both within the school and the larger community; and,
- When and how to refer students and their families to those services.
- Additional content could include:
 - Focusing on safe and healthy choices and coping strategies focused on resilience building;
 - Recognizing risk factors and warning signs of mental health conditions and suicide in oneself and others; and,
 - Identifying help seeking strategies for oneself and others (American Foundation for Suicide Prevention).

Per the statute, Nathan Bruno Jason Flatt Act (RIGL § 16-21.7), anyone working in a PK-12 school or administration must receive training every year on suicide prevention. Staff approved training materials and instruction shall include training on how to identify appropriate mental health services both within the school and the larger community, and when and how to refer

youth and their families to those services. These materials and instruction are to be given by qualified suicide prevention instructors as determined by the entities and groups. School based mental health professionals will play an integral role in the selection of training and curriculum.

Districts could include the configuration of trainings/curricula offered. This would also be a place to include how the training will roll out, inclusion in contracts with vendors who provide school based services and new hire requirements as applicable.

Provisions

Suicide Intervention

This work will be connected to School Safety Plans, School Emergency Response Plans and School Crisis Response Plans, along with like efforts as appropriate. Districts are encouraged to modify the flow chart to meet local needs and add specifics that will facilitate the process in district/schools. All protocols must emphasize the safety of the youth as well as other youth in schools.

In every case, parents must be notified to ensure that the youth receive the necessary care. Schools may require a re-entry letter from a student's mental health provider prior to allowing a student to return to school. This may be determined on a case by case basis given the details of each situation. The school's role of "*en loco parentis*" requires that the health and safety of each youth is given consideration.

Suicide Postvention

Postvention is an organized response in the aftermath of a suicide to accomplish any one or more of the following:

- To facilitate the healing of individuals from the grief and distress of suicide loss
- To mitigate other negative effects of exposure to suicide
- To prevent suicide among people who are at high risk after exposure to suicide (Survivors of Suicide Taskforce)

Postvention includes counseling or other care given to students or staff after another student's or staff's suicide or attempted suicide. It may include counseling to students and staff that have made a suicide attempt or have reported ideation. This counseling shall consist of regular check ins, as determined by a mental health professional. Schools may delineate the roles and responsibilities of people on the school crisis team for postvention. Strategies will also be offered and provided for volunteers.

Legal References:

Nathan Bruno Jason Flatt Act (RIGL § 16-21.7)

Rhode Island Safe Schools Act, (RIGL § 16-21-34)

Threat Assessment Teams and Oversight Committees (RIGL §16-21-23.2)

Requirements of school safety plans, school emergency response plans, and school crisis response plans (RIGL §16-21-24)

Basic Education Plan Section G-14-2.1

Instruction in health and physical education (RIGL § 16-22-4)

Suicide Prevention and Awareness (RIGL §16-22-14)

Right to a safe school (RIGL §16-2-17)

First Read: July 14, 2022

Second Read/Adopted: July 28, 2022

Revised: First Read March 16, 2023

Amended and Approved April 20, 2023

Archived: