

Suicide Prevention and Response

A. Purpose and Intent

Student suicide along with suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are some of the most challenging mental health issues facing any community. The School Board recognizes that the school district is a part of the larger community and as such, directs the Superintendent to organizing opportunities to educate employees and students on suicide awareness and prevention; establish processes for prevention, intervention and response to suicide, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts; and promote access to suicide awareness prevention and post-intervention resources.

At the same time, the School Board will strongly encourage the involvement of parents, community members, and area agencies to develop partnerships with the school district as well as to engage in open community dialogue, participate in awareness trainings, etc. that the school district makes available to the community. Student suicide is an issue that extends far beyond the walls of the schools, though the school district has a role in the entire community's response to preventing student suicide.

B. District Suicide Prevention Plan

The Superintendent or designee will oversee the creation and implementation of a coordinated, written District Suicide Prevention Plan (DSPP). The DSPP will include guidelines, protocols and procedures with the objectives of suicide prevention, risk assessment, intervention and response to student suicide, suicide ideation or suicide attempts.

The DSPP will be a part of the District's Behavior Health and Critical Incident Response Plan which outlines the processes and procedures for how the school district will manage the response to any critical incident.

The DSPP will include the following elements:

1. Two Hours of Staff Training. This training will include the following topics:

- Youth suicide risk factors
- Warning signs
- Protective factors
- Response procedures
- Referrals
- Post-intervention
- Resources available in school and community

2. Student Education. The schools will implement age appropriate strategies and educational programs that will assist students with:

- Making safe and healthy choices
- Developing and implementing coping strategies
- Recognizing risk factors of mental disorders and suicide
- Help-seeking strategies, including how and who to ask for help

3. Collaborative Community Outreach. Description of the efforts that will be cultivated with the following stakeholders:

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- School district
- Parents
- Students
- Community members
- Mental health agencies
- Medical providers

4. Identification of the person(s) within each school who will service as the **Point of Contact** when a student has an elevated risk.

5. Processes for Intervention. The DSPP will include the following information:

- How individuals can make a referral when a student has an elevated risk of suicide.
- How the designated Points of Contact in each school processes the referral, including when a student is referred to an outside agency for psychological evaluation and/or risk assessment.
- *School Re-entry. Outline of the process and expectation of parents/care givers when the student has been referred for outside services/assessments.*

6. Response Protocols for in-or-out-of-school student suicides or suicide attempts. This information will be incorporated into the School District's *Crisis Response Plan*.

7. DSPP Dissemination. The locations will be identified where the DSPP, the list of the Points of Contact for each school, and the related resources are available. This information will be available, but not limited to student handbooks and the school district's website.

C. District Suicide Prevention Plan (DSPP) Review

The Superintendent or designee will conduct a review of the DSPP elements once every two years. The review will include any suggested amendments based on current best practices in suicide awareness and prevention. Any suggested amendments will be reviewed by the School Board.

D. Annual Staff Training

As outlined in the Section B (1) above, school staff will receive at least two hours of training annually on suicide awareness and prevention.

E. Immunity

In accordance with RSA 193-J:3, nothing in this Policy shall create a private right of action against SAU 56, the Somersworth School District, any of either's employees, or agents thereof. SAU 56, the Somersworth School District, and any of either's employees shall be immune from civil liability for conduct arising from or related to the implementation of, or failure to adequately implement this Policy or any of the provisions of RSA 193-J.

Legal References

RSA 193-J: Suicide Prevention Education

Somersworth

Category: Priority/Required by Law

JLDBB

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Policy History

New NHSBA Policy,	November, 2019
Reviewed:	May 11, 2020
First Reading:	May 26, 2020
Second Reading:	June 9, 2020
Adopted:	June 9, 2020