



## **SUICIDE PREVENTION, INTERVENTION, AND POSTVENTION POLICY**

The Governing Board of KIPP LA Public Schools recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and must be taken seriously. In order to attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, KIPP LA Public Schools shall develop strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention with a special focus on high-risk students.

The Chief Academic Officer may involve school health professionals, school counselors, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies and professionals, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating KIPP LA's strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

Acknowledging that it is KIPP LA Public Schools' responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy's focus is to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including establishing the right supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss. The emotional wellness of students gently impacts school attendance and educational success. As a result, this policy will be used in conjunction with other policies that support the emotional and behavioral wellness of students.

### **Prevention and Instruction**

Suicide prevention strategies may include, but not be limited to, efforts to promote a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students.

KIPP LA Public Schools' comprehensive education program promotes the healthy mental, emotional, and social development of students including, but not limited to, the development of problem-solving skills, coping skills, and self-esteem. For upper middle school (grades 7 and 8), suicide prevention instruction shall be incorporated into appropriate lessons, and curriculum shall be aligned with state content standards and shall be designed to help students analyze signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, including potential suicide, and to identify suicide prevention strategies. Prevention can be in the form of class lessons on coping skills, warning/risk signs for suicide, and depression, school-wide suicide prevention initiatives that raise awareness, student projects and presentations, and/or school and community resources/posters that can help youth in crisis, etc.

At appropriate secondary grade levels, KIPP LA's suicide prevention instruction shall be designed to help students:

1. Identify and analyze the warning signs and risk factors for depression and self-destructive behaviors and understand how feelings of depression, loss, isolation, inadequacy, and anxiety can lead to thoughts of suicide;

\*\*\*The KIPP LA Public Schools Suicide Prevention Policy to be adopted by KIPP LA's governing board on June 21, 2017 is for schools on private sites with grades 7-8, which currently all grades 7-8 are only on KIPP LA private sites. If any schools with grades 7-8 operate under the various agreements between LAUSD and KIPP LA on District property in the future, the LAUSD Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention will be adopted for the schools on those sites.\*\*\*

2. Identify alternatives to suicide and develop coping, problem-solving, conflict resolution, and resiliency skills;
3. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings, and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent;
4. Identify trusted adults, school resources, and/or community crisis intervention resources where youth can get help and recognize that there is no stigma associated with seeking mental health, substance abuse, and/or suicide prevention services.

### **Team Member Development and Training**

Suicide prevention training for staff shall be designed to help team and family members identify and respond to students at risk of suicide. All staff will annually participate in training regarding the awareness and prevention of suicide through Safeschools.

Additional training may be provided by KIPP LA school counselors under the direction of the Associate Director of Mental Health for staff at schools and may include information on:

1. Research identifying risk factors, such as previous suicide attempt(s), history of depression or mental illness, substance use problems, family history of suicide or violence, feelings of isolation, interpersonal conflicts, a recent severe stressor or loss, family instability, and other factors
2. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions, including changes in students' appearance, personality, or behavior;
3. School and community resources and services;
4. KIPP LA regional procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to commit suicide;
5. Postvention and re-entry procedures and supports for when a student returns from hospitalization.

### **Intervention**

Whenever a team member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the Admin Designee and the School Counselor. The School Counselor will conduct a Risk Assessment to determine the level of risk for self-harm and/or suicidal ideation. The School Counselor will determine if the student is at a low, medium, or high risk, consult with their supervisor (Mental Health Program or Associate Director of Mental Health) and their Admin Designee, to determine next steps. If a student is assessed to be a medium or high risk, the School Counselor or Admin Designee will call the ACCESS hotline for support with an emergency psychiatric assessment. The School Counselor or Admin Designee shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible about the risk assessment, results, and possible outcomes.

Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, school leader, school counselor, or another adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's

suicidal intentions.

Each school site shall adapt the KIPP LA crisis procedures and work in partnership with their School Counselor, Chief Academic Officer and Associate Director of Mental Health to ensure student safety and appropriate communications in the event that a suicide occurs or an attempt is made on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

When a suicidal ideation, threat, and/or attempt is reported, the school leader/admin designee and/or school counselor shall:

1. Reference KIPP LA crisis response procedures for step-by-step guidance
2. Ensure the student's physical safety by one of the following, as appropriate:
  - a. Securing immediate medical treatment if a suicide attempt has occurred
  - b. Securing law enforcement and/or other emergency assistance if a suicidal act is being actively threatened
  - c. Keeping the student under continuous adult supervision until the parent/guardian and/or appropriate support agent or agency can be contacted and has the opportunity to intervene.
3. Designate specific individuals to be promptly contacted, including the school counselor, school leader or admin designee, and/or the student's parent/guardian, and, as necessary, local law enforcement or mental health agencies
4. School Counselor will document the incident using the KIPP LA Risk Assessment Documentation Form
5. Teachers, admin, and other staff will document a suicide threat, ideation, or attempt using the KIPP LA Incident Report Form.
6. Follow up with the parent/guardian and student in a timely manner to provide referrals to appropriate services as needed
7. Provide access to counselors or school leadership team to listen to and support students and staff who are directly or indirectly involved with the incident at the school
8. Provide an opportunity for all who respond to the incident to debrief, evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used, and make recommendations for future actions (postvention)

### **Re-Entry**

1. A student returning to school following hospitalization due to suicide risk assessment/evaluation, suicidal ideation, attempt or self-harm, must have written permission to return to school from a medical provider. This can be in the form of a signed letter from the medical provider, the KIPP LA Medical Clearance form or hospital discharge papers that clearly state the student is cleared and safe to return to school.

2. Once the student returns, the parent/guardian should escort the student on the first day.
3. The School Counselor should consider holding a re-entry meeting with key support staff, admin designee, parents/guardians, and student to facilitate a successful transition.
4. During this meeting be sure to address any incidences of alleged bullying, identify a plan for the student to make-up or catch-up on missed work, identify supports within the school setting and at home, obtain consent for counseling services and to communicate with outside providers (KLA Release of Information form), and identify a plan to check-in and monitor student progress.

## **High-Risk Students**

When designing prevention efforts and providing intervention to students that are exhibiting risk factors of suicide or self-harm, it is important to consider the additional supports and documentation that may need to occur for high-risk populations. High-risk populations are groups of students that are more vulnerable to the risk of suicide due to their membership in a particular group. These include students with disabilities and LGBTQ youth.

For students with disabilities, consider the frequency, intensity and duration of the suicidal ideation, risk assessments, any hospitalizations and how those emotions and behaviors are impacting their ability to access and progress within the general education curriculum. Any member of the IEP team can request an amendment IEP to review supports that are in place and potential next steps to further support the student. Based on the current IEP, consider discussing the topics below:

- Adding or revising a Behavior Support Plan
- Review most recent School Psychology report
- An Assessment Plan to add DIS Counseling OR
- Revising goals for DIS Counseling and reviewing minutes
- An Assessment Plan to assess for Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services, if DIS Counseling (ERICS) has not been effective
- Consider other assessments to determine possible changes to a student's Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) offer

LGBTQ youth are especially vulnerable to bullying and isolation which is a risk factor for suicidal ideation. Schools should follow KIPP LA Nondiscrimination policy to ensure that all students feel welcome and included in all activities and aspects of the school. When contacting parents/guardians or personnel regarding risk assessment outcomes, do not "out" students to anyone. Disclosing this information may put a student at further risk of harm.

## **Postvention**

In the event that a suicide occurs or is attempted on campus, the School Leader or designee shall follow the crisis intervention procedures contained in the KIPP LA School Crisis Response Handbook.

After consultation with Chief Academic Officer and/or Associate Director of Mental Health, School Leader, and the student's parents/guardians about facts that may be divulged in accordance with the laws governing confidentiality of student record information, the School Leader or Admin Designee may provide students, parents/guardians, and staff with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community

agencies as needed. School staff may receive assistance from School Counselors or other mental health professionals in determining how best to discuss the suicide or attempted suicide with students.

School Leader or Admin Designee shall do the following:

1. Gather all relevant information about the suicide.
  - a. Confirm that cause of death was by suicide.
  - b. Identify a staff member (e.g. admin or school counselor) to be a point of contact for deceased student's family (within 24 hours).
    - i. Discuss confidential information sharing with family and that cause of death will not be disclosed to school community without family's permission.
2. Notify KIPP LA School Leader Manager
3. Mobilize School Crisis Response
  - a. Follow KIPP LA School Crisis Response Handbook
  - b. Assess the impact and degree of psychological trauma to the school community.
  - c. Develop a plan of action for responding to students, staff, and families and assign roles and responsibilities.
  - d. Establish a plan to notify staff, students, and families taking into consideration confidentiality and the wishes and rights of the family of the deceased.
  - e. Identify a plan to identify and provide crisis counseling to students and staff that may have difficulty coping with the death.
    - i. School Counselor will coordinate crisis counseling with Associate Director of Mental Health.
4. Refer students to community mental health services or higher level of care if deemed necessary based on assessment, previous history, etc.
5. Work with School Counselor, School Leader Manager, General Counsel to identify other healthy ways for the school community to process the loss. Being sure to avoid activities that may glamorize or romanticize suicide.
  - a. Memorials
    - i. Should not disrupt normal school routine.
    - ii. Memorials should be time-limited.
    - iii. Monitor the memorials for content from other students that may be of concern.
  - b. Suicide Awareness Events
6. Document all interventions and communication.
7. Continue to monitor and manage situation.