



Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Policy

The Governing Board of KIPP SoCal Public Schools (“KIPP SoCal”) 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 SoCal shall develop strategies for grades K-8 in regards to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention with a special focus on high-risk students. The policy authorizes school employees to act only within the authorization and scope of the employee’s credential or license. Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging a school employee to diagnose or treat mental illness unless the employee is specifically licensed and employed to do so.

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

KIPP SoCal prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, and bullying on the basis of a student’s actual or perceived age, ancestry, ethnicity, parental status, pregnancy status, color, mental or physical disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, immigration status, marital status, medical information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or association with a person or a group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. Acknowledging that it is KIPP SoCal’s responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy’s focus is to safeguard students and team members against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including establishing the right supports for students, team members, 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 team members and harmonious interrelationships among students.

KIPP SoCal’s 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 grades 7-8, 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

******The KIPP SoCal Public Schools Suicide Prevention Policy approved by KIPP SoCal’s governing board on September 16, 2020 is for schools on all KIPP SoCal private sites with grades K-8. If any schools with grades K-8 operate under the various agreements between LAUSD and KIPP SoCal on District property, the LAUSD Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Policy will be adopted for the schools on those sites.******

help youth in crisis, etc.

At appropriate secondary grade levels, KIPP SoCal'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;
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 team members shall be designed to help team and family members identify and respond to students at risk of suicide. All team members will annually participate in training regarding the awareness and prevention of suicide through Safeschools.

Additional training may be provided by KIPP SoCal school counselors under the direction of the Director of Mental Health for team members 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 SoCal regional procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens, or discloses the desire to commit suicide;
5. Postvention and re-entry procedures and support for when a student returns from hospitalization;

Materials approved by KIPP SoCal Public Schools for training, which will be age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to needs of young students, shall include how to identify appropriate mental health services, both at the school site and within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Materials approved for training may also include programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials.

INTERVENTION

Whenever a team member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the Administrative 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 Manager or Director of Mental Health) and their Administrative Designee, to determine next steps. If a student is assessed to be a medium or high risk, the School Counselor or Administrative Designee will call the ACCESS hotline in Los Angeles or PERT for San Diego for support with an emergency psychiatric assessment. The School Counselor or Administrative 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 SoCal crisis procedures and work in partnership with their School Counselor, Chief Academic Officer and 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/Administrative designee and/or school counselor shall:

1. Reference KIPP SoCal 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 Administrative 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 SoCal Risk Assessment Documentation Form
5. Teachers, administrators, and other team members will document a suicide threat, ideation, or attempt using the KIPP SoCal 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 team members 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 SoCal 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 team members, administrative 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 (KIPP SoCal 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 youth bereaved by suicide, youth with disabilities, mental illness or substance use disorders, youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care 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:

1. Adding or revising a Behavior Support Plan
2. Review most recent School Psychology report
3. An Assessment Plan to add DIS Counseling OR
4. Revising goals for DIS Counseling and reviewing minutes
5. An Assessment Plan to assess for Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services, if DIS Counseling (ERICS) has not been effective
6. 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 SoCal 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 SoCal School Crisis Response Handbook.

After consultation with Chief Academic Officer and/or 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 Administrative Designee may provide students, parents/guardians, and team members with information, counseling, and/or referrals to community agencies as needed. School team members 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 Administrative 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 team member (e.g. administrator or school counselor) to be a point of contact for the 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 SoCal School Leader Manager
3. Mobilize School Crisis Response
 - a. Follow KIPP SoCal 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, team members, and families and assign roles and responsibilities.
 - d. Establish a plan to notify team members, 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 team members that may have difficulty coping with the death.
 - i. School Counselor will coordinate crisis counseling with the 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, and Registered In-House 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 the situation.