

SECTION: PUPILS

TITLE: SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

ADOPTED: August 12, 1991

REVISED:

# Farrell Area School District

## 236. SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

### 1. Purpose

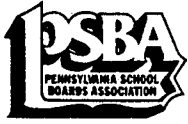
Farrell Area School District recognizes an alarming number of young people commit suicide each year throughout the United States. The district accepts a shared role with students' families, community agencies, religious organizations, and concerned citizens in responding to this social problem. The district's response shall include both prevention and intervention strategies keeping in mind the best interest of the child.

### 2. Prevention

Since suicide may result from low self-esteem, the enhancement of self-esteem through classroom activities, pupil support services, and extracurricular activities is vital. All attempts must be made to prevent individuals from becoming suicidal. Some prevention activities and procedures include:

1. Educating the staff on warning signs and procedures.
2. Implementing up-to-date curriculum at all grade levels that deals with self-esteem and suicide prevention.
3. Providing individual and group counseling.
4. Organizing and supervising student support groups.
5. Utilizing the Pupil Support Team (PST\*).
6. Educating and counseling parents.
7. Utilizing Parent-Educators Group, related agencies and community organizations.

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8. Recognizing student achievements and accomplishments to boost self-esteem.

In spite of every effort to prevent such occurrences, there may be students who threaten or attempt suicide. The district's strategies for intervention are spelled out in the administrative guidelines.

School staff shall not permit the issue of confidentiality to interfere with necessary action in the case of a life-threatening situation. The seriousness of the situation is often difficult to assess; therefore, staff members must explain to students their obligation to communicate pertinent information to the PST.

The dissemination of all external information will be the responsibility of the Superintendent.

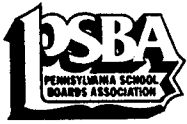
\*PST members include the guidance staff, school psychologist, school nurse, health instructor, building principal, and any other appropriate individuals.

The following administrative guidelines are arranged in the chronological order that actions should normally take place. The persons responsible for carrying out the actions are listed.

A. Suicide Threats

This is when a student threatens suicide explicitly or through implication.

1. Any suicide threat shall be immediately reported to the guidance counselor or school psychologist. If such information is received by way of a third party, it shall also be reported. If neither the guidance counselor or school psychologist are available the staff member shall contact a delegate and explain the situation. This can be done by calling Community Mental Health and Counseling Center at 981-7141 and asking for a delegate.
2. The guidance counselor, school psychologist and/or delegate will talk with the student, evaluate the level of lethality and accompany the student until the situation is defused or resolved. The building principal will be informed at this time.



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3. Once the level of lethality is determined the counselor or psychologist will immediately contact the parents or guardian. He/She will explain the situation, the procedures the school will follow, and the actions they may take.
4. The counselor or psychologist will then contact any appropriate agencies as necessary.
5. At the weekly PST meeting or sooner if necessary, the PST member(s) involved will inform the team of the actions taken and to be carried out.
6. The PST will monitor the student and make appropriate recommendations.
7. Written confidential documentation of the situation will be filed by the PST and will be kept in the PST files.

B. Suicide Attempts During School

1. A staff member who first encounters a student attempting suicide will attempt to ensure the safety of all personnel in the immediate area. This could include evacuating the room, moving desks, and keeping an open exit available.
2. The staff member will attend to the student, keeping safety in mind, and send for help. The school nurse and the building principal should be notified immediately.
3. The school nurse or designee shall request rescue squad services, if needed. If the student is taken to the emergency room, the school nurse or designated staff member will accompany the student.
4. The building principal will notify the guidance counselor, school psychologist and Superintendent. The principal will notify the police at his/her discretion. This would occur if the student was in possession of a dangerous weapon or illegal drugs, or became uncontrollable or violent.



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5. A PST member will immediately report the incident to the parent(s)/guardian(s). In most cases, this would be done by the school nurse, guidance counselor or school psychologist.
6. After consulting with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the PST member will contact the appropriate mental health agent or agency.
7. At the weekly PST meeting or sooner, if necessary, the PST member(s) involved will inform the team of the actions taken and to be carried out. These actions may include but are not limited to informing and/or counseling significant others.
8. The PST will monitor the student and make appropriate recommendations to all responsible personnel including parents, students, faculty, agencies, etc.
9. Written confidential documentation of the situation will be filed by the PST and will be kept in the PST files.

C. Suicide Attempts Not During School

1. The staff member who learns of a student attempting suicide not during school hours shall inform the guidance counselor or school psychologist.
2. The guidance counselor or school psychologist will confirm the occurrence with the student's parent(s), guardian(s), or witnesses before notifying other team members.
3. The PST will determine what actions need to occur depending on the situation. This could involve:
  - a) informing the Superintendent or other school officials
  - b) informing significant others
  - c) counseling the student
  - d) referring the student and family to appropriate agencies



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- e) conferring with friends of the student
- f) referring the student for a psychological evaluation
- g) monitoring the student's progress
- h) contacting and informing the police

4. Written confidential documentation of the situation will be filed by the PST and will be kept in the PST files.

D. Suicide Completion

Should a student commit suicide, the school Superintendent or designee shall immediately convene with all appropriate school officials to develop an action plan which would address the following issues:

1. Accurate gathering, documenting and disseminating of information.
2. Additional support services for significant personnel, as needed.
3. Review of prevention and intervention strategies to determine if improvements can be made.