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Suicide Prevention and Response

The board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that suicidal indicators such as substance abuse and violence are complex issues that should be taken seriously. While district staff may recognize potentially suicidal youth and the district can make an initial risk assessment, the district cannot provide in-depth mental health counseling. Instead, the board directs district staff to refer students who exhibit suicidal behaviors to an appropriate service for further assessment and counseling.

The board also recognizes the need for youth suicide prevention procedures. The district will adopt and, at the beginning of each school year, provide to all district staff, a plan for recognizing, screening, referring and responding to students in emotional or behavioral distress. At a minimum, the plan will:

• Identify training opportunities for staff on recognizing, screening and referral of students in emotional or behavioral distress, including those who exhibit indicators of substance or sexual abuse, violence or suicide;
• Describe how to utilize the expertise of district staff trained in recognition, screening and referral;
• Provide guidelines, based on staff expertise, for responding to suspicions, concerns or warning signs of emotional or behavioral distress;
• Address development of partnerships with community organizations and agencies for referral of students to support services, to include development of at least one memorandum of understanding between the district and one such entity;
• Contain procedures for communication with parents and guardians.
• Describe how staff should respond to a crisis situation where a student is in imminent danger to himself or herself or others;
• Describe how the district will provide support to students and staff after an incident of violence or student suicide.

District staff who have knowledge of a suicide threat must take the proper steps to support the student and to report this information to the building principal or designee who will, in turn, notify the appropriate school officials, the student’s family and appropriate resource services. In cases of potential alleged child abuse, neglect or exploitation, school staff are required to contact law enforcement.

The board directs the superintendent to work with staff, community and appropriate agencies to develop, implement, and regularly evaluate the suicide prevention and response program.
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Suicide Prevention and Response (continued)

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1Cross reference: Policy 2167 Substance Abuse Program  
3421 Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Prevention  
4100 Confidential Communications

Legal reference: RCW 9A.36.060 Promoting a Suicide Attempt  
28A.410.226 Washington professional educator standards board –  
Training program on youth suicide screening –  
Certificates for school nurses, social workers,  
psychologists, and counselors – Adoption of standards.  
28A.410.043 School Counselor Certification  
28A.320.1271 Model school district plan for recognition, initial screening,  
and response to emotional or behavioral distress in students.

Adopted  
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