

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Gloucester County School Board is committed to protecting its students from the risk of suicide.

Any licensed instructional or administrative staff member who has reason to believe that a student is at risk of suicide, based on a direct communication from that student occurring within the staff member's scope of employment, shall promptly report this matter to a qualified professional identified below, while keeping the student safe

Qualified Professional

Licensed professionals designated to assess suicide risks in students under this policy shall include school psychologists, school counselors, school social workers, and/or school nurses/LPNs assigned to each respective school. The contact information for these individuals will be maintained in each respective school, as well as the Student Services Department.

Abuse and Neglect

If a student is determined to be at imminent risk of suicide and has indicated that the reason for this risk relates to parental abuse or neglect, the qualified professional shall not contact the parent/guardian. Instead, the qualified professional shall immediately report the alleged abuse in accordance with school board policy JHG. The qualified professional needs to emphasize that immediate action is necessary to protect the student from harm.

Contacting the Parent/Guardian

If a student is determined to be at imminent risk of suicide, and if the above section titled "Abuse and Neglect" does not apply, then the qualified professional shall immediately call at least one of the student's parents/guardians. When contacting a parent/guardian, the qualified professional should:

1. Provide his/her name and position in the school;
2. Tell the parent/guardian that they have reason to believe, as a result of direct communication from the student, that the student is at imminent risk of suicide;
3. Assure the parent/guardian that the student is currently safe;
4. State the legal requirement for the call, citing Va. Code § 22.1-272.1;
5. Ask the parent/guardian whether they are aware of the student's mental state;
6. Ask the parent/guardian whether they wish to obtain or has obtained mental counseling for the student;
7. Provide names of community counseling resources as appropriate and offer to facilitate the referral; and
8. Determine the parent's intent to seek appropriate services for the student.

Inability to Reach Parent/Guardian

If the qualified professional is unable to make contact with the parent/guardian by the end of the school day, then the professional shall seek treatment for a student without the parent's/guardian's authorization in accordance with local school board policy.

Additional Concerns

If parental/guardian contact is made and, in the course of this contact, relevant issues of abuse or neglect are discovered (e.g., a parent acknowledges the child's suicidal intent but indicates no intent to act for the well-being of the child), the qualified professional shall report the abuse or neglect in accordance with policy JHG.

Duty to Keep Student Safe and Secure

A student who is at imminent risk of suicide shall remain under qualified adult supervision until a parent/guardian or other authorized individual accepts responsibility for the student's safety.

Follow-up

After a student has been identified or determined to be at imminent risk of suicide, the qualified professional shall make appropriate follow-up contact to ascertain the current status of the student and facilitate any in-school support that may be required

Required Documentation

The staff member and qualified professional member shall document the phone call to the parent/guardian by recording the: (a) time and date of the call; (b) the individual contacted; (c) the parent's/guardian's response; and (d) anticipated follow-up.

ADOPTED: September 14, 1999

REVISED: November 14, 2006
February 12, 2019

LEGAL REFERENCES: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, sections 22.1-272.1 and 63.1
63.2-1509

Va. Board of Education "Suicide Prevention Guidelines," October 1999

CROSS REFERENCES: GEAB Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (Also JHG)
JHG Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting (Also GEAB)
EB School Crisis, Emergency Management, and Medical Emergency
Response Plan