

Note: Education Code [215](#) mandates that the Governing Board of any district serving students in grades 7-12 adopt a policy on student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (i.e., intervention conducted after a suicide) with specified components. AB 1767 (Ch. 694, Statutes of 2019) amended Education Code [215](#) to mandate policy on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention for students in grades K-6 beginning in the 2020-21 school year. The required components are addressed in the following policy and the accompanying administrative regulation. Also see the California Department of Education's (CDE) Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy developed pursuant to Education Code [215](#).

Note: The following policy and accompanying administrative regulation should be revised to reflect district practice and the grade levels offered by the district.

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. In an effort to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

Note: Pursuant to Education Code [215](#), as amended by AB 1767, the district's suicide prevention policy must be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, suicide prevention experts, and, for policy for grades K-6, the county mental health plan. According to CDE's Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy, school-employed mental health professionals may include school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses. CDE's model policy also includes consultation with administrators, other school staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies and professionals, law enforcement, and community organizations.

Note: It is recommended that districts also consult with legal counsel and the district's risk manager or insurance carrier, as appropriate.

In developing policy and strategies for suicide prevention and intervention, the Superintendent or designee shall consult with school and community stakeholders such as administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, and students; school-employed mental health professionals such as school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses; suicide prevention experts such as local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations; law enforcement; and, in developing policy for grades K-6, the county mental health plan. (Education Code [215](#))

(cf. [1220](#) - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. [1400](#) - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

Note: Education Code [215](#), as amended by AB 1767, requires that the district's policy for students in grades K-6 be age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. The following paragraph is for use by districts that serve K-6 students, and may be revised as appropriate for the student population served by the district.

The Board shall ensure that measures and strategies for students in grades K-6 are age appropriate and delivered and discussed in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of young students. (Education Code [215](#))

Measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention shall include, but are not limited to:

Note: Education Code [215](#), as amended by AB 1767, mandates that the district's policy address any training on suicide awareness and prevention to be provided to teachers of students in all grade levels served by the district. See the accompanying administrative regulation for additional language fulfilling this mandate. In addition, Education Code [49604](#) encourages each district to provide suicide prevention training at least once to each middle, junior high, and high school counselor. Item #1 may be revised to specify other categories of employees who will receive the training.

1. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students, as described in the accompanying administrative regulation

(cf. [4131](#) - Staff Development)

(cf. [4231](#) - Staff Development)

(cf. [4331](#) - Staff Development)

Note: Items #2-7 below reflect optional strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention and may be revised to reflect district practice.

2. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

(cf. [6142.8](#) - Comprehensive Health Education)

3. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhances students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that is characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students

(cf. [5131](#) - Conduct)

(cf. [5131.2](#) - Bullying)

(cf. [5137](#) - Positive School Climate)

(cf. [5145.3](#) - Nondiscrimination/Harassment)

(cf. [5145.7](#) - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. [5145.9](#) - Hate-Motivated Behavior)

4. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the suicide problem among youth, the district's suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
5. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
6. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
7. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

Note: Education Code [215](#) mandates that the district's policy specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including, but not limited to, those listed in the following paragraph. See the accompanying administrative regulation for additional language fulfilling this mandate.

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning. (Education Code [215](#))

Note: The following paragraph is for use by districts that serve students in grades K-6. Education Code [215](#), as amended by AB 1767, mandates that the district's policy for students in grades K-6 ensure proper coordination and consultation with the county mental health plan if a referral is made for mental health or related services on behalf of a student who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary.

If a referral is made for mental health or related services for a student in grade K-6 who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary, the Superintendent or designee shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan. (Education Code [215](#))

(cf. [5141.6](#) - School Health Services)

District employees shall act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging district employees to diagnose or treat mental illness unless they are specifically licensed and employed to do so. (Education Code [215](#))

The Board shall review, and update as necessary, this policy at least every five years. (Education Code [215](#))

Note: Education Code 234.6, as added by AB 34 (Ch. 282, Statutes of 2019), requires districts, beginning in the 2020-21 school year, to ensure that the district's suicide prevention policies for grades K-6 and 7-12 be readily accessible in a prominent location on the district's web site in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students.

The Superintendent or designee shall post this policy on the district's web site, in a prominent location and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents/guardians and students. (Education Code 234.6)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

[215](#) Student suicide prevention policies

215.5 Suicide prevention hotline contact information on student identification cards

[216](#) Suicide prevention online training programs

234.6 Posting suicide prevention policy on web site

[32280-32289.5](#) Comprehensive safety plan

[49060-49079](#) Student records

[49602](#) Confidentiality of student information

[49604](#) Suicide prevention training for school counselors

GOVERNMENT CODE

[810-996.6](#) Government Claims Act

PENAL CODE

[11164-11174.3](#) Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

[5698](#) Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

[5850-5886](#) Children's Mental Health Services Act

COURT DECISIONS

Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

Students  
**Suicide Prevention**

BP 5141.52

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008

1<sup>st</sup> Reading                      08/12/20

2<sup>nd</sup> Read/Adoption            09/09/20