

**SUICIDE PREVENTION**

The Board of Trustees recognizes that suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10 – 24. The Board finds it imperative that this tragic situation be openly addressed and that all staff, students and parents/guardians be made aware of warning signs and procedures by which they may help suicidal students at this especially vulnerable age.

The Board recognizes that all suicide threats must be taken seriously. In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The District's Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols shall provide the guide to identify and intervene when a suicide risk is suspected, and address school, staff, and community needs and appropriate responses during postvention.

The Board believes that school staff, students and parents/guardians can contribute toward the prevention of adolescent suicide. The District shall, therefore, provide suicide prevention training for each of these segments of the school community.

**Parent/Guardian Awareness**

The Board believes parents/guardians should be aware of the severity of the youth suicide problem. Before suicide prevention is taught in classrooms, parents/guardians may be invited to attend a meeting at which the school principal or designee shall present the curriculum goals and the District suicide prevention policy. The meeting shall also be designed to help parents/guardians recognize warning signs of suicide, learn basic steps for helping suicidal youths and identify community resources that can help teenagers in crisis.

**Staff Awareness**

The Board recognizes having at least one supportive adult can reduce the risk of youth suicide. The Superintendent or Designee will provide teachers with the knowledge, tools, and resources to respond when a young person comes to a teacher for help. In order that school site staff may learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide, understand how to help suicidal youths and identify helpful community resources, the Superintendent or designee shall arrange suicide prevention training for appropriate certificated and classified school site staff members with an emphasis for teachers in grades 7 – 12 inclusive.

The district suicide prevention policy and procedures shall be thoroughly reviewed at this time. Staff shall be expected to learn to identify students at risk for suicide and refer students to the appropriate resources. Assigned staff will assess the degree of risk. The professional learning shall include:

1. 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.
2. Guidelines to ensure that a school employee acts only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license.

## Students

BP 5173(b)

3. Address the needs of high risk students including, but not limited to all of the following:
  - a. Youth bereaved by suicide
  - b. Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders
  - c. Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care
  - d. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.

Professional learning shall be offered under the direction of a trained District counselor/psychologist or in cooperation with one or more community mental health agencies able to assist with District staff professional learning.

## Student Awareness

The Board finds it appropriate that suicide prevention instruction be incorporated into the seventh, ninth and tenth grade curriculum. The Board approved curriculum used shall help students:

1. Understand how feelings of depression and despair can lead to suicidal thoughts.
2. Provide strategies to increase and reinforce resiliency factors.
3. Recognize the warning signs or suicidal intentions in their friends.
4. Learn to listen, be honest, share feelings and get help when communicating with friends who show signs of suicidal intent.

Policy

**CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

adopted: August 18, 1997  
revised: August 23, 2017

San Juan Capistrano, California