

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDERS

For your information and guidance, the following procedures have been established by the Division of Student Services, Crisis Management Team, in regard to the prevention of, and response to, potential suicidal and non-suicidal self-injurious behaviors of students attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

1. Notify Parents/Guardians Regarding Suicide Prevention and Intervention Program

Parents/guardians should be informed that Miami-Dade County Public Schools has established suicide prevention and intervention guidelines and that there are trained school-based Critical Incident Response Teams, and school-based mental health services providers (school counselor, TRUST specialist, school psychologist, school social worker, EBD clinician) who can assist their child in times of crisis. Additionally, parents/guardians should be made aware of the warning signs of suicide and of the need to notify the child's counselor if their child becomes depressed or suicidal at home. Every effort should be made to communicate with parents in their primary language or in the language in which they feel comfortable. The mode of transmission should also be adjusted, where necessary, to promote comprehension, acceptance, and trust.
(School Board Rule 6Gx13- 1B-1.011)

2. Review Student Early Warning System Profile

School counselors should review the Early Warning System Profiles every nine weeks. The students should be counseled and parents/guardians should also be notified of the change in their child's performance, attendance, and/or behavior.

3. Promote Awareness of the Warning Signs Associated With Suicidal Behavior

School counselors should review with the administration, faculty, and staff the following and other warning signs for a potential suicide:

- a. Changes in eating or sleeping habits;
- b. Increasing isolation from friends and family;
- c. Tendency to become more active and aggressive than usual;
- d. Lower academic achievement;
- e. Giving away a valued possession or increased interest in getting his/her "life in order;"
- f. Talking about or threatening suicide;
- g. Sudden and intense interest in religious beliefs and the afterlife;
- h. Recent loss, such as a divorce or death in the family, death of a role model or idol, a close friend dying or moving away, or a breakup of a romantic relationship.

For more information, review the 2016-2017 Suicide Fact Sheet attached to Briefing #19841.

4. Refer Students Experiencing Emotional Stress

Any person, including, but not limited to, an administrator, a teacher, or any other staff member, who has reason to believe that a student is experiencing emotional stress should refer the student to his/her counselor. The counselor shall implement the procedures listed below:

- a. Counsel with the student to identify the problem and, if possible, resolve the problem or reduce the level of stress experienced;
- b. Notify the parents, if the student is experiencing significant stress;
- c. Consult with additional Student Services professionals, when deemed appropriate;
- d. Meet with the student counselee on a regularly scheduled basis to provide active support through follow-up counseling;
- e. Provide group counseling to small groups of students who are experiencing stress;
- f. Provide the family with a selection of community agencies/providers if mental health services are needed.

5. Respond to Student's Suicidal Threat or Non-Suicidal Self-Injurious Behavior

When a student threatens to harm himself/herself, e.g., a suicide gesture, a suicide threat, suicidal ideation, and/or self-injures, the following actions should be taken:

- a. Meet with the student to assess his or her level of risk;
- b. Contact the Miami-Dade Schools Police at 305-995-2677, if the student presents an imminent risk for self-harm. If a school police officer interviews a student and decides to initiate a Baker Act, wait until the officer and student have left the school before contacting the parent/guardian;
- c. Contact the parent/guardian immediately after you complete your risk assessment, if a student does not present an imminent threat for self-harm. Request that they come to the school to meet with you. **EXCEPTION:** Do not contact the parent/guardian if you suspect child abuse has occurred. If this is the case, contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-96-ABUSE, Miami-Dade Schools Police at 305-995-2677, and notify your principal;
- d. Provide and maintain constant professional supervision of the student until supervision of the student is assumed by the parent/guardian, Miami-Dade Schools Police, or designated individual/agency;
- e. Provide the student and his/her parent/guardian with a list of community mental health agencies/providers, such as:
 - (1) Crisis Stabilization Centers
 - (2) Mental Health Clinics/Agencies
 - (3) Hospitals

- f. Request that the parent/guardian sign the Consent Form for Mutual Exchange of Information (FM-2128E Rev.11-03) with the outside provider agency or private therapist in order to collaborate in service of the student;
- g. Notify the Division of Student Services, Crisis Management Team of **all** suicidal and non-suicidal self-injurious behavior (Crisis Hot Line # 305-995-2273);
- i. Input the appropriate Student Services codes into ISIS (RS-Risk Assessment; RI- Risk Intervention; RP-Risk Postvention).

6. Respond to Student's Suicide Attempt

When a student has made an attempt to take his/her life on campus, the following actions should be taken:

- a. Call 911, if emergency medical services are required;
- b. Contact the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department at 305-995-2677;
- c. Provide and maintain constant professional supervision of the student until supervision of the student is assumed by the parent/guardian, Miami-Dade Schools Police, or designated individual/agency;
- d. If a school police officer interviews a student and decides to initiate a Baker Act, wait until the officer and student have left the school before contacting the parent/guardian.
- e. If the student is not transported via the Baker Act, contact the parent and request that they come to the school to meet with you. **EXCEPTION:** Do not contact the parent/guardian if you suspect child abuse has occurred. If this is the case, contact the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-96-ABUSE, Miami-Dade Schools Police at 305-995-2677, and notify your principal.
- f. Provide the student and his/her parent/guardian with a list of community mental health agencies/providers, such as:
 - (1) Crisis Stabilization Centers
 - (2) Mental Health Clinics/Agencies
 - (3) Hospitals
- g. Request that the parent/guardian sign the Consent Form for Mutual Exchange of Information (FM-2128E Rev.11-03) with the outside provider agency or private therapist in order to collaborate in service of the student;
- h. Notify the Student Services Crisis Management Team at 305-995-2273;
- i. Provide counseling services for witnesses and other students/staff impacted by the event;
- j. Input the appropriate Student Services codes into ISIS (i.e., RS, RI, RP).

7. Return of Student to School Following Suicide Attempt

When the student returns to school following a suicide attempt, take the following actions:

- a. Meet with the student upon his or her return to school and offer support (if the student is returning from hospitalization, an SST meeting must be scheduled as soon as possible);
- b. Provide the student with direct access to an appropriate staff member; the

- most likely person is the counselor, but if the student indicates a preference for a different staff member, this request should be considered;
- c. Confer with only the staff members who will be responsible for the student during the school day to sensitize them to the student's need for support, and to familiarize them with appropriate ways to provide that support;
 - d. Ascertain if the student has been referred for outside counseling services through a community agency or private provider;
 - e. Consult with the student's current therapist for guidance, if written parental permission has been obtained to do so, to ensure the student's readjustment to the school environment;
 - f. Ensure that counseling services are available at school for the returning student;
 - g. Consult with other Student Services professionals to determine if additional psychological services should be provided.

8. **Respond to a Student Suicide**

In the event that the **suicide occurs on campus**, the response procedures are as follows:

- a. Call 911 and the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department: 305-995-2677;
- b. Maintain and model a sense of calm and control;
- c. Assess the need for intervention;
- d. School administrator should make notification of incident via DCIRT to Miami-Dade Schools Police and indicate if the services of the District's Crisis Team are being requested;
- e. Member of the District's Crisis Team will contact school administrator to coordinate response;
- f. Obtain all relevant information regarding the incident, including those involved;
- g. Provide an opportunity for students and staff to process their reactions regarding the suicide;
- h. Maintain ongoing contact with students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and staff, as necessary.

For a **suicide occurring off campus**, the response procedures are as follows:

- a. Confirm that the incident has occurred;
- b. Assess the need for intervention;
- c. School administrator should make notification of incident via DCIRT to Miami-Dade Schools Police and indicate if the services of the District's Crisis Team are being requested;
- d. Member of the District's Crisis Team will contact school administrator to coordinate response;
- e. Provide an opportunity for students and staff to process their reactions regarding the suicide;
- f. Maintain ongoing contact with students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and staff, as necessary.