

### **Suicide Awareness and Prevention**

Banks School District recognizes that suicide and other self-destructive behaviors vary in intensity from minor to life threatening. Therefore, staff members shall be made aware of their responsibilities in the event of a potential or imminent suicide incident. The Banks School District encourages staff members who receive or discover information about a potential suicide to be taken seriously, and err on the side of caution when responding. The district realizes those responses will also vary depending on the intensity of the behavior.

Three steps are vital in a suicide prevention program:

1. ensuring the short-term physical safety of the student;
2. communicating with appropriate school personnel, parent(s)/guardian(s) and local support personnel and establishing an interim plan of action; and
3. referring to appropriate professionals or agencies and implementing a long-term plan of action.

The following administrative rules are intended to serve these purposes:

A. A STUDENT HAS EXHIBITED SYMPTOMS WHICH MAY BE INTERPRETED AS SUICIDAL.

Response:

- 1) Staff member shall immediately notify an administrator or school counselor.
- 2) The administrator/ school counselor shall meet with the student in question to determine the best course of action. If the student is in serious and immediate risk for bodily harm, response will proceed to Level II, #3.

If the possibility is not imminent, the responsive person will notify the student's parent(s)/ guardian(s) of his/her/their concerns and educate family about community resources.

- 3) To best serve the needs of the student, attempts shall be made to maintain contact with the family and /or community resources if utilized.

*Documentation of all contacts will be placed in an appropriate file.*

B. SUICIDE THREAT BY A STUDENT OR ACTED IN A SELF DESTRUCTIVE MANNER (i.e. drug and alcohol abuse, self-mutilation, eating disorders, ...)

Response:

- 1) Staff member shall immediately notify an administrator or school counselor.
- 2) The administrator/ school counselor shall meet with the student in question to determine the best course of action. If the student is in the act of making an attempt or is armed with a deadly weapon, the response proceeds to Level III.
- 3) *Arrange to have the student remain with a responsible adult until the parent or other help arrives.*

- 4) Notify building administrator and school counselor who in turn will contact the parent(s)/guardians and
  - a. inform them of the situation
  - b. educate family on community resources
  - c. develop a plan of action to ensure the safety of the student

*Documentation of all contacts will be placed in an appropriate file.*

C. SUICIDE ATTEMPT BY A STUDENT (Note: also refer to the school's policy on students bringing weapons to school)

Response if attempt made at school/school function:

- 1) The staff member shall remove all students from potential risk. *Arrange to have the student remain with a responsible adult until the parent or other help arrives unless personal safety is at risk.*
- 2) Another staff member or if unavailable, a student, will notify a building administrator and/or counselor, who will then notify district personnel and response team.
- 3) Appropriate medical assistance will be obtained (i.e. 911, police, etc).
- 4) Contact parent(s)/guardian(s) and advise them of the situation and what actions are being taken.
- 5) To best serve the needs of the student, attempts shall be made to maintain contact with the family and/or community resources if utilized.
- 6) Develop a plan of action to ensure the safety of the student.

*Documentation of all contact will be placed in an appropriate file.*

Response if attempt made outside of school:

- 1) Refer to item 'B' listed above.

D. COMPLETED SUICIDE BY A STUDENT, YOUTH IN COMMUNITY, OR ADULT STAFF MEMBER.

Response:

- 1) The administration in conjunction with the response team will immediately obtain the facts.
- 2) If the completion is made at school or school function, the police must be contacted and the scene must be immediately secured.
- 3) The administration and/or response team will notify the staff and provide the facts along with plans for the day.
- 4) At the beginning of a designated class period, each teacher shall read a statement prepared by the administration and/or response team. Inform students about the situation in a way that does not glamorize the act of suicide.
- 5) The school shall provide all interested students and staff with immediate brief grief counseling individually or in small groups as needed and desired by the student. The school shall notify a student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of the need for additional support at the discretion of the designated staff members(s) or the principal. *School assemblies and large groups are not recommended.*
- 6) Suggest that the funeral occur off campus at a time that does not conflict with school times and/or events.

- 7) All staff should be observant in classrooms, hallways and cafeteria areas in the days and weeks immediately following the suicide.

*Documentation of all contact will be placed in an appropriate file.*

Materials Reference: Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program

