

FILE: JHH

MEDFORD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

DATE ADOPTED: May, 1986	FILE SECTOR: STUDENTS
DATE REVISED: March 19, 1990	POLICY TITLE: SUICIDE PREVENTION/ RESPONSE
DATE REVISED: December 19, 2002	
DATE REVISED: June 19, 2008	
DATE REVISED: June 18, 2015	
DATE REVISED: December 18, 2019	
DATE REVISED: May 24, 2021	
DATE REVISED: June 24, 2024	

Medford Area Public School District (MAPSD) Board of Education (BOE) recognizes that suicide and suicide tendencies among youth are continuing problems in the schools and communities across the nation. The BOE also recognizes that it is not a problem that it can deal with alone. Communication and cooperation within the school district and between the home, school and community is crucial.

The BOE establishes this policy in an effort to take positive steps toward preventing childhood/adolescent suicides and to outline procedures by which students can receive professional help and support in the following areas:

- Prevention: To develop within MAPSD a suicide prevention curriculum and to provide all staff members with basic information about, and a recognition of, the signs of suicidal behavior.
- Intervention: To take affirmative action when an immediate referral is warranted and to understand the emergency procedures when a referral is made.
- Postvention: To provide for the needs of students after an act of suicide has taken place.

CROSS REFERENCE: EBCA, JHG, JHH-R, JO, JOB, & Safety Response Plan
[Evidence-Based Risk Assessment](#)

LEGAL REFERENCE: Sections 118.01(2)(d)7, 118.126, & 118.295 Wis. Stats.

MEDFORD AREA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

DATE ADOPTED: May, 1986
DATE REVISED: March 19, 1990
DATE REVISED: December 19, 2002
DATE REVISED: June 19, 2008
DATE REVISED: June 18, 2015
DATE REVISED: December 18, 2019
DATE REVISED: May 24, 2021
DATE REVISED: June 24, 2024

FILE SECTOR: STUDENTS
POLICY TITLE: SUICIDE PREVENTION/
RESPONSE

Prevention

MAPSD, via Student Services Team (SS) (school social worker, school psychologists, school counselors, school nurses), will inform district staff on a regular basis concerning the warning symptoms of and the appropriate response to a suicidal threat or gesture. Information will be provided to parent(s)/ guardian(s) about the warning signals. The school district will include suicide prevention units at appropriate levels of the regular curriculum.

Intervention

When any staff member has identified a student at risk of suicidal thoughts or behavior - i.e., verbalization of thoughts about suicide, demonstrating suicide risk factors, occurrence of self-harm, or any other expression of behavior that indicates suicidal ideation - they will make an *immediate* referral to a member of the SS. The SS member taking the referral will follow the appropriate suicide risk assessment procedures.

In the event of elopement or an active threat of harm to themselves or others, law enforcement and/or emergency medical response should be contacted immediately.

In the event of a student making a suicide threat or displaying risk factors of suicide or self-harm, without an immediate safety need, the identified SS member will complete an evidence-based risk assessment with the student. This evidence-based risk assessment tool will determine if the student is high, moderate, or low risk. These assessments should be placed in the students' file regardless of risk level.

For a student at low risk the SS member will call home to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to notify of the assessment and provide appropriate information and resource connection. The building administrator shall also be notified of the assessment and outcomes.

For a student at moderate or high risk the SS team member will attempt to complete a safety plan with the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s). This safety plan will be shared with necessary adults and supports as well as placed in the students file with their risk assessment. Building administration will be notified of the assessment and outcomes.

If the SS member is unable to make a safety plan with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s), Taylor County Crisis will be called to complete an assessment and determine next steps. SS member should stay with the student until the crisis worker arrives and assist as necessary during

the county crisis assessment. The building administration should be notified that Taylor County Crisis will be completing an assessment.

In the days following a suicide risk assessment the affiliated SS member should ensure documentation has been appropriately filed, internal and external notifications have been made, referrals for services have been discussed with the student and family, and a follow up meeting with the student has been completed.

Postvention

The school district will handle the aftermath of a student's suicide in the following manner:

- A list of mental health personnel (crisis team) who can help students in their immediate reaction to the suicide will be developed and updated on a regular basis. Potential members of this group might include but are not limited to: SS members, human services staff members, clergy members, county nursing staff, morticians, physicians and nurses. These volunteers would be willing to come into the school on a crisis basis to work with individual students or in the classrooms following a suicide.
- These crisis team members, when needed, will be contacted as early as possible, and should meet before they make contact with students. If necessary, they will go into the first hour classes of the building where the suicidee has been a student. Assignments for the crisis team will be determined by the crisis team coordinator and/or the building administrator.
- The crisis team would meet with teachers briefly before school to review with them the facts surrounding the suicide and to answer questions about how to deal with students during the school day. Teachers will be informed of a resource room staffed with volunteer mental health personnel, which will be available to students/staff throughout the day. Teachers will make their students aware of this option. Any student who wishes to go to the resource room may go. However, teachers must notify the resource room of any students who are leaving to come to that room.
- Individual members of the crisis team may go into first hour classes. They would spend whatever portion of the first hour is necessary discussing the suicide with the students. They will also inform the students of the existence of a resource room available to the students throughout the day. A member of the crisis team may attend the suicidee's classes during the day to help the teachers if needed.
- The crisis team should reconvene after first hour to share their concerns. They will refer any individual students about whom they are concerned to the resource room.
- Some of the members of the crisis team may meet with the teachers over lunch for the purpose of answering their questions and for receiving referrals about individuals who are experiencing difficulty in handling the suicide. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of any student who is having difficulty with the suicide will be contacted.
- If there are sufficient numbers of crisis team volunteers available, they may visit the schools in the district that same day to discuss the suicide with staff and to go into classrooms where staff feels there is a need to deal with student's questions or reactions. The determination as to what needs to be done in other buildings of the district will be made by the crisis team coordinator and the building administrators.
- Available members of the crisis team will meet with teachers again at the end of the school day to address their own personal concerns and/or their concerns about individual students.
- Any contact with the media shall be made by the district administrator or their designee. An effort should be made to encourage the media to downplay the suicide.

- Within a reasonable amount of time the crisis team coordinator should consider arranging a meeting for parent(s)/guardian(s) to deal with questions about how to work with their children.
- In the event of a suicide attempt, SS will meet and confer about how to handle the student's reentry into school and ongoing intervention. A member of SS shall keep close contact with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the community agency treating the student to assure a coordinated approach in helping the student. Additionally, this staff person shall maintain records of all actions taken by the school, and perform a monitoring and follow-up function after the student returns to class. Teachers involved with the student should be given information to assist them in appropriately dealing with the student.
- When any outside agency is to be utilized, a release of information form should be signed by the parent/guardian and student to allow a two-way flow of information between the school and the community agency.
- Other crises involving the death of a student or staff member may be handled using the above procedures. The crisis team coordinator and/or the building administrator shall make this determination.