



Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Policy

Effective Date: August 7, 2025

Policy Number: 8.25

Supersedes: Previous Suicide Prevention Policy

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

California Education Code Section 215, as added by Assembly Bill 2246 (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2016), mandates that the Governing Board of any local educational agency (LEA) that serves pupils in grades seven to twelve, inclusive, adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. This policy shall specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including suicide awareness and prevention training for teachers, and ensure that school employees act within the authorization and scope of their credentials or licenses.

The Governing Board of WISH Charter Schools recognizes that suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10-14 and the third leading cause of death for young people ages 15-24. The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. We are ethically and legally responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths.

This policy aims to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths, and other trauma associated with suicide, while ensuring adequate support for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

WISH Charter Schools is committed to providing safe, healthy, welcoming, and affirming learning environments. This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors.

This policy applies to all WISH Charter Schools, school-related activities, and all areas within our jurisdiction.

III. DEFINITIONS

Key Terms

Action Plan: A framework of interventions that the school has or will implement to mitigate suicide risk. The action plan should reflect the level of risk and include reasonable actions with designated responsible parties.

Baseline Behavior: Behavior that is typical for the person of concern. Significant changes may indicate an individual is at risk.

Person of Concern: The student expressing suicidal ideation/behaviors.

Risk Factors: Characteristics or conditions that may increase the chance that a person may try to take their life, including:

- Access to means (firearms, medications, etc.)
- Stressors (loss, peer relations, school issues, gender identity concerns)
- History of depression, mental illness, or substance abuse
- History of suicide in family or close friends
- History of mental illness in the family

Safety Plan: A set of personalized interventions and strategies to mitigate suicide risk and support student well-being, developed collaboratively with the student, parents/guardians, and school staff.

Suicide/Threat Prevention Liaison (STPL): Administrator/designee and/or behavioral health professionals designated as primary contacts for suicide prevention matters.

Warning Signs: Behaviors or statements indicating someone may be planning to harm themselves, including:

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and helplessness
- Significant changes in baseline behavior, appearance, thoughts, feelings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Suicide threats (direct and indirect)
- Self-injurious behavior
- Preoccupation with death
- Making final arrangements

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. All Employee Responsibilities

1. Complete annual suicide prevention and awareness training
2. Report concerns about students who might be suicidal immediately to an administrator/designee, a crisis team member, or STPL
3. Act within the scope of their credentials or license

B. Superintendent/Designee (Dr. Shawna Draxton) Responsibilities

1. Develop and implement comprehensive suicide prevention strategies
2. Ensure professional development for all school personnel
3. Designate Crisis Team Members/STPLs
4. Establish crisis intervention procedures
5. Coordinate with community mental health resources

C. School Site Administrator/Designee Responsibilities

1. Designate Crisis Team Members/STPLs
2. Ensure staff is aware of and following prevention strategies
3. Respond immediately to reports of students at risk
4. Implement intervention strategies for students with Crisis Team Members
5. Monitor and follow up to ensure risk mitigation
6. Document incidents appropriately
7. Provide staff follow-up and support

V. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

A. Staff Training and Education

All staff shall receive annual training on:

- Risk factors and warning signs of suicide
- How to talk with students about suicidal thoughts
- Appropriate response protocols
- Referral procedures
- Stigma reduction
- Supporting vulnerable populations

Additional specialized training for mental health professionals includes advanced suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention.

B. Student Education

Students shall receive developmentally appropriate education about:

- Coping strategies for stress and trauma
- Recognizing warning signs in themselves and others
- Help-seeking strategies and resources

- Reducing mental health stigma

C. Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Participation

- Policy shared prominently on website and in handbooks
- Access to suicide prevention training
- Input opportunities on policy development
- Resources and support materials provided

VI. INTERVENTION PROTOCOLS

Four-Stage Risk Assessment Process:

Stage I: Immediate Risk-Reducing Interventions

- 1. Respond Immediately**
 - Call 911 for life-threatening situations
 - Report to the administrator/designee, crisis team member, or STPL immediately
- 2. Secure Student Safety**
 - Ensure staff (not student) supervision at all times
 - Remove potentially harmful items from the environment
 - Use student restrooms with stalls (not lockable single rooms)
 - Authorized personnel only for student transport

Stage II: Assess for Suicide Risk

- 1. Gather Relevant Information**
 - Background information about the incident
 - Previous history and risk factors
 - Current circumstances
- 2. Conduct Risk Assessment**
 - Trained personnel meet with students confidentially
 - Collaborate with the crisis team to determine risk level
 - Consult with regional administrators as needed
 - Contact law enforcement or mental health services for high-risk cases

Stage III: Communicate with Parent/Guardian

- Share concerns and safety recommendations
- Provide "means restriction" guidance (securing firearms, medications, etc.)
- Offer school and community resources
- Plan for re-entry if hospitalization occurs
- Obtain necessary permissions for information sharing

Stage IV: Implementing Action Plan

1. Student Safety Planning

- Develop a collaborative safety plan
- Identify coping strategies and support systems
- Review with parents/guardians and trusted adults

2. Provide Resources and Support

- Connect with mental health services
- Mobilize school and community supports
- Monitor ongoing safety and well-being

VII. SUPPORTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Special consideration for students who may be at elevated risk:

- Those with adverse childhood experiences
- Students bereaved by suicide
- LGBTQ+ students
- Students with disabilities or mental illness
- Students experiencing homelessness or out-of-home placement
- Students with substance use disorders
- Newcomer or immigrant students
- Students experiencing discrimination or trauma

VIII. POSTVENTION: RESPONDING TO STUDENT DEATH BY SUICIDE

In the event of a student death by suicide:

1. Confirm death and cause
2. Contact family within 24 hours
3. Activate Crisis Response Plan
4. Notify all staff appropriately
5. Coordinate support services for affected students and staff
6. Manage media communications responsibly
7. Address memorial requests thoughtfully
8. Monitor for suicide contagion risk
9. Provide long-term support and follow-up

IX. CONFIDENTIALITY

All student matters are confidential and shared only with those who need to know to protect student health and safety. Information sharing follows established procedures and legal requirements.

X. DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

- Maintain confidential records separate from cumulative files
- Complete incident reports as required
- Track interventions and outcomes
- Report to appropriate agencies when mandated

XI. RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

WISH Charter Schools collaborates with:

- LAUSD School Mental Health Services
- Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services
- Local community mental health providers
- County behavioral health departments
- Law enforcement agencies

Key Resources:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988
- **Los Angeles County Mental Health ACCESS:** (800) 854-7771
- **Emergency Services:** 911

XII. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy shall be reviewed and updated annually in conjunction with community stakeholders, crisis team members, and school leadership to ensure continued effectiveness and compliance with current best practices.

XIII. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

All WISH Charter Schools personnel are required to comply with this policy. Failure to follow established protocols may result in disciplinary action and could compromise student safety.

Policy Contact: Dr. Shawna Draxton, Superintendent/Designee and Suicide Prevention Liaison

Approved by: WISH Charter Schools Governing Board

Date: (August 2025)

Next Review Date: (August 2026 + 1 Year)