

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Duties of Teachers and Administrative Staff

Any person licensed as administrative or instructional personnel by the Board of Education and employed by the Westmoreland County School Board who, in the scope of his employment, has reason to believe, as a result of direct communication from a student, that such student is at imminent risk of suicide, shall, as soon as practicable, contact at least one of such student's parents to ask whether such parent is aware of the student's mental state and whether the parent wishes to obtain or has already obtained counseling for such student.

Contacting the Parent/Guardian

If the section below titled "Abuse or Neglect" does not apply, then the staff member shall call at least one of the student's parents/guardians. When contacting a parent/guardian, the staff member should:

1. Provide his/her name and position in the school;
2. Tell the parent/guardian that he has reason to believe, as a result of direct communication from the student, that the student is at imminent risk of suicide;
3. Assure the parent/guardian that the student is currently safe;
4. State the legal requirement for the call, citing Va. Code § 22.1-272.1;
5. Ask the parent/guardian whether he or she is aware of the student's mental state;
6. Ask the parent/guardian whether he or she wishes to obtain or has obtained mental counseling for the student;
7. Provide names of community counseling resources if appropriate and offer to facilitate the referral; and
8. Determine the parent's intent to seek appropriate services for the student.

Abuse or Neglect

If the student has indicated that the reason for being at imminent risk of suicide relates to parental abuse or neglect, contact shall not be made with the parent. Instead, the staff person shall, as soon as practicable, notify the local department of social services of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or the state Department of Social Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline as required by Policy JHG/GAE Child Abuse and Neglect

Reporting and Va. Code § 63.2-1509. When giving this notice to the local or state department, the person shall stress the need to take immediate action to protect the child from harm.

Inability to Reach Parent/Guardian

If the staff member is unable to make contact with the parent/guardian by the end of the school day, then he shall follow the school's crisis management plan.

Required Documentation

The staff member shall document the phone call to the parent/guardian by recording: (a) the time and date of the call; (b) the individual contacted; (c) the parent/guardian's response; and (d) anticipated follow-up.

Additional Concerns

If parental/guardian contact is made and, in the course of this contact, relevant issues of abuse or neglect are discovered (e.g., a parent acknowledges the child's suicidal intent but indicates no intent to act for the well-being of the child), the staff member shall report the abuse or neglect in accordance with policy JHG/GAE Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting.

Duty to Keep Student Safe and Secure

A student who is at imminent risk of suicide shall remain under adult supervision until a parent/guardian or other authorized individual accepts responsibility for the student's safety.

Adopted: September 11, 2000
Amended: June 14, 2004
Amended: November 2006
Amended: May 16, 2011
Amended: November 16, 2015

Legal Refs: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-272.1 and 63.2-1509.

Va. Board of Education "Suicide Prevention Guidelines," (Revised 2003).

Cross Refs: JHG/GAE Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting
 EB School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical
 Emergency Response Plan