

## STUDENTS

### Suicide Prevention

Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) is committed to an environment in which students are safe and in which responsible and healthy behaviors are encouraged. The purpose of this regulation is to provide guidelines to ensure the delivery of appropriate preventative and intervention services for students who may be at risk for suicide. In accordance with Virginia Code § 22.1-272.1, the practices are informed by legal requirements and ethical responsibilities. Areas of responsibility include: implementation of suicide prevention strategies, identification of potentially suicidal students, assessment of the suicide risks of students, notification of parents/guardians, working with parents/guardians to secure necessary services, and monitoring and providing ongoing assistance at school.

#### I. Prevention Procedures

- A. All new certified personnel are required to attend training which defines characteristics of a potentially suicidal student, provides the direction to notify appropriate qualified school personnel to conduct an initial risk assessment, and the overall requirement to notify parents/guardians.
- B. Secondary level students receive suicide prevention lessons dealing with the signs of suicide and resource information.

#### II. Reporting Concerns

- A. All licensed school professionals bear a responsibility to identify and report students at risk of suicide. Some school personnel, such as building administrators and teachers, do not by training and job responsibility possess the skills to professionally assess imminent danger with regard to suicidal ideation. The latter are expected to report any direct communication from a student that indicates a suicidal intent to licensed school professionals, who by training and job responsibility, possess the skills to professionally assess imminent danger.
- B. School personnel are responsible for providing adult supervision of the student until a suicide risk screening has been conducted. If the report is made near the end of the school day, the child may not be dismissed until a suicide risk screening has been conducted by a qualified, licensed, school professional and an appropriate plan has been established.
- C. All administrators who are notified that a student has attempted suicide while in the jurisdiction of the school will follow procedures in the PWCS Crisis Management Plan.

III. Conducting an Assessment

Qualified, licensed, school professionals who by training or job-related duties are responsible for assessing imminent risk of danger related to suicidal ideation, communications, or attempts include: school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and school nurses. These professionals shall follow the guidelines outlined in the PWCS Suicide Prevention Screening Guidelines.

IV. Contact the Parent/Guardian

- A. The qualified school professionals who are responsible for conducting this assessment are also responsible, subsequent to this assessment, for ensuring that contact is made to parents/guardians consistent with the PWCS Suicide Prevention Screening Guidelines.
- B. If the student is considered to be at imminent risk for suicide and the parent/guardian refuses to provide care necessary for the student's health, the parent will be informed of the legal requirement for the school to call Prince William County Department of Human Services, Child Protective Services (CPS).
- C. If the student indicates that parental abuse or neglect is the reason for contemplating suicide, parental contact should not be made. The licensed school professional should ensure that CPS is notified. The child will be kept safe and secure until the CPS worker, or other authorized individual accepts responsibility for the safety of the child.

V. Conferences with Parent/Guardian

- A. In situations in which the qualified school professional is recommending a suicide assessment by a licensed or certified mental health professional, the student must remain under adult supervision until a parent, guardian, or authorized individual (in the case of abuse) is contacted and a mutually agreed upon decision is made about whether the student should be dismissed early or stay in school.
- B. If the recommendation is for a suicide assessment and the child is not under the care of a licensed mental health provider, the parent/guardian will be provided with information about local mental health centers at which the student may be evaluated.

VI. Re-Entry Meeting

In a situation in which the qualified school professional recommends a suicide assessment by a licensed or certified mental health professional, a re-entry meeting will be held prior to the student's return to school. The re-entry meeting is intended to be a constructive, collaborative effort to ensure the student's smooth transition back to school. Parental involvement is important. The meeting will focus on determining needed interventions to help the student. Participants in the meeting will be the school administrator, teacher, licensed school mental health professional, and the student. The team may include parents/guardians, teacher, school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, or others deemed appropriate.

The Associate Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and any related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.