

SUICIDE PREVENTION, RESPONSE & RECOVERY POLICY

<p>General Belief</p>	<p>The Providence Public School District is committed to building safe and secure schools for our students and staff in accordance with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework. A critical component of safe and effective organization is recognizing the importance of preventing, preparing for, and responding to potential crisis situations, as well as supporting recovery following traumatic events. This policy is intended to guide school communities through tiered evidence-based strategies to prevent, avert, or lessen the impact of a crisis related to individuals who may be at risk for suicide (Prevention), to respond to potential crisis and emergency situations in the most appropriate, effective and efficient way (Response), and to support meaningful Recovery for the members of the school community following a crisis/emergency situation.</p>
<p>Purpose and Scope</p>	<p>This policy serves to establish the District’s expectations and organizational approach to providing multi-tiered suicide prevention and mitigation strategies to possible crisis situations, and ensure that every student is healthy and safe and given what they need to flourish socially, emotionally, and academically. This includes suicidal and related high-risk behaviors that take place in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, on school buses or vehicles and at bus stops; as well as at school-sponsored out-of-school events where school staff are present. This policy may also be applied to suicidal and related high-risk behaviors that take place outside of the school environment. Overall, this policy applies to the entire school community.</p> <p>The District will provide separate documentation and guidance to support implementation of suicide prevention, response and recovery across all schools and central office departments. While we cannot predict all events that might require a crisis response, specific types of emergencies and/or threats require specialized response (i.e. Suicide Prevention, Assessment and Response).</p>
<p>Definitions</p>	<p>The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy and the legal obligations of the District.</p> <p>Community Partners: Community Partners are non-school based services that have been formally contracted with to provide additional support to the school community. Schools may have to engage community partners to provide a variety of services based on the nature and/or scope of a crisis.</p> <p>Crisis: According to the National Education Association, a crisis is any traumatic event that seriously disrupts coping and problem-solving abilities of students and school staff. It is typically sudden, unexpected, dramatic and forceful and may even threaten survival. A crisis can cause a drastic and tragic change to the environment. This change is generally overwhelming and uncontrollable as well as unwanted and frightening. It may create a sense of helplessness, hopelessness, and vulnerability combined with a loss of safety. Examples of a school crisis are: Death of a student or staff member; Death by Suicide or Homicide in the school community; natural disaster; school intruder; etc.)</p>

Mitigating: is lessening the risk or harm of a crisis.

Multi-Disciplinary District Crisis Team: A team of designated district staff who have skills in crisis response, who meet regularly and have received training on being first responders in the event of a crisis. Trained District-employed Mental Health Professionals such as School Social Workers, and School Psychologists are critical members of this team, as are School Nurses and/or other medical staff, school resource officers and any other staff that might have training specific to emergency response and/or crisis intervention. Administrators are also critical to this process as communication is critical to successfully addressing crisis situations.

Multi-Disciplinary School Crisis Team: A team of designated staff at each school who have skills in crisis response, who meet regularly and have received training to be the team of first responders in the event of a crisis. School mental health staff, such as school social workers, school psychologists and school counselors that are capable of providing mental health services are ideal for this team, as are school nurses or other medical staff, school resource officers and any other staff that might have training specific to emergency response and/or crisis intervention. School administrators are also critical to this process as communication is critical to successfully addressing crisis situations.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): represents a framework for a continuum of system-wide interventions of increasing intensity depending on need. MTSS emphasizes wellness promotion, prevention, and early intervention, helping to minimize redundancies and gaps in services.

Physical Safety: includes reasonable physical security measures such as locked doors, lighted hallways, and visitor check-in systems.

Prevention: means averting a crisis or lessening the probability of a crisis.

Psychological Safety: includes a positive school climate and trust among staff, students, and families where students feel connected and part of a close-knit and caring community, and where students are empowered to report any safety concerns.

School-employed Mental Health Professionals: are permanent, salaried professionals employed by the school district, such as School Psychologists, School Social Workers, School Counselors, and School Nurses.

School Community - typically refers to the various individuals, groups, businesses, and institutions that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school and its community—i.e., administrators, teachers, parents, community partners, the neighborhoods and municipalities served by the school.

School Emergency Preparedness Plan- PPSD's collection of district procedures regarding response to emergencies that is shared annually.

Guidelines and Implementation Strategies

An identified Multi-Disciplinary District Leadership Team, led by district employed Mental Health professionals, will develop administrative regulations to implement the Suicide Prevention, Response & Recovery Policy.

The Providence School District believes that successful implementation of a Multi-tiered System of Support hinges on the construction of data-informed and universally designed school-wide practices that maintain the intellectual, social, and emotional wellness of all school community members. This work is inclusive of but not limited to:

I. Suicide Prevention

Foundational Supports and Universal Practices (Tier 1)

All Providence Public Schools will implement and integrate universal prevention practices and positive behavioral supports that foster social-emotional development and skills and promote mental health awareness.

Additionally, the following suicide prevention-specific training will be implemented to support foundational knowledge, awareness, and shared understanding to ensure successful application of universal practices.

A. Youth Instruction & Training

- a. Pursuant to Rhode Island General Law 16-21.7, the Nathan Bruno Act, each middle and high school throughout the District shall implement an evidence-based, developmentally appropriate suicide prevention curricula for all public-school students in grades 6-12 each academic year.
- b. All students in grades 6-12 will receive instruction in suicide prevention as part of their health curriculum led by a certified health educator annually.
- c. The identified district leadership team shall select suicide prevention curricula from the RIDE approved list of curricula and approved training materials.
- d. Training is required for all students, each school year. School leaders along with School Crisis Teams & Student Support Teams will use professional judgment to develop appropriate supports and plans to respond to individual students and families who may express discomfort with the training, or discomfort related to the training.
- e. Options for parent and/or individual opt out will be provided based on the curriculum delivered.

B. Staff Professional Development & Training

- a. Pursuant to the Nathan Bruno Act, all public school personnel shall receive training in suicide prevention every year.
- b. District shall select suicide prevention curricula from the RIDE approved list of curricula and approved training materials.
- c. Community Partners are required to complete RIDE approved suicide prevention training annually, and provide proof of training to district designee.

II. Crisis Response
Suicide Screening & Intervention

A. Assessment and Referral

- a.* The district will develop and maintain regulations and a protocol for school-based suicide screening and response.
- b.* Members of the School Crisis Team will receive additional training (in addition to their professional training related to assessing risk) on the Rhode Island Suicide Prevention Initiative, School-based Prevention and Intervention Protocol & Flowchart, and the Rhode Island Suicide Prevention Screener (RISPS).
- c.* Students identified by staff or peers as experiencing a crisis that may involve risk of harm to self or others, shall be immediately referred to a member of the School's Crisis Team, in person. Students should not be left without staff supervision.
- d.* A qualified School-based Mental Health Professional who is a member of the School Crisis Team shall assess the student's risk level and implement aligned levels of support and make appropriate referrals in accordance with the RI/PPSD School-based Suicide Prevention Intervention Protocol; followed by documentation of risk assessments and any follow-up supports, communication with legal guardians/caregivers and any next steps.
- e.* School-based Mental Health Team members will be responsible for informing administration immediately, in person, if a student is found to be at high risk and in an immediate crisis. If a student is found not to be in immediate crisis or not at risk, no immediate communication to the administrator is required, however, there should be follow up with the Student Support Team to ensure appropriate levels of prevention and intervention are secured if needed.

B. In-School Suicide Attempts

- a.* The district will develop and maintain regulations and a protocol for in-school suicide attempts.
- b.* In the event of an in-school suicide attempt, School Crisis Teams and staff shall also adhere to the following:
 - i.* Maintain supervision of the student at all times.
 - ii.* Contact a qualified School-based Mental Health Professional who is a member of the School Crisis Team and the School Administrator.
 - iii.* Call 911 and provide as much information as possible (i.e. a suicide note, medications taken, and access to weapons, if applicable).
 - iv.* Remain calm and always maintain the student's privacy and dignity.
 - v.* Provide care and determine appropriate supports to students and staff impacted by suicide attempt

	<p>C. <u>Out-of-School Suicide Attempts</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The district will develop and maintain regulations and a protocol for out-of-school suicide attempts. b. In the event of an out of school suicide attempt, School Crisis Teams and staff shall adhere to the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Protect the privacy of the student and their family. ii. Provide care and determine appropriate supports to students and staff impacted. iii. School Crisis Teams and Administrators will determine one point of contact for the caregivers(s)/legal guardian(s) and offer support to the family. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather and review how the student/family would like the school to respond and provide support that is aligned to their needs and wants. 2. Obtain permission from the guardian(s) to share information with appropriate personnel when applicable. <p>III. Crisis Recovery <i>After a Death by Suicide</i></p> <p>A. The District shall develop a suicide postvention response plan (Recovery) that includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The District’s Public Information Officer will manage all communications with the media. b. Process to notify staff members. c. Provisions of emotional support and resources to staff d. Plan for communication to students, as appropriate, of death and/or the availability of support services e. Preparing staff to respond to needs of students, including a review of protocols for referring students for support/assessment.
<p>Training, Oversight, and Communication</p>	<p><u>Training & Coaching Procedures</u></p> <p>District & School-based Crisis Teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The District Crisis Team will coordinate training and coaching to the School Based Crisis Teams to consistently build competencies and capacity across the district and schools. ● School Based Crisis Teams will provide suicide prevention training to all staff annually to each school community. This is mandatory training for all staff to attend. ● The District Crisis Team will annually review Providence Public School’s policy and procedures to ensure efficacy, and attend approved evidence based curriculum training through an approved source per RIDE. <p>Community Partnerships: All community partners contracted with the district will be required to annually complete suicide awareness and prevention training.</p>

	<p>Parental Engagement, Involvement & Notification: Each school will be responsible for informing parents of the date that students will receive suicide prevention instruction and training. Additionally, parents will receive districtwide family instruction regarding suicide prevention, response, and recovery, mental health and social-emotional health and competencies.</p> <p><u>Documentation, Accountability Measures, Monitoring & Evaluation</u></p> <p>School Health Profile Documentation: The annual School Health Profile completed by the Superintendent, district health administrators, and school administrators will provide additional accountability and evaluation measures to effectively and efficiently implement suicide prevention, response and recovery practices. Results should be reviewed annually by the Multidisciplinary District Leadership Team & Crisis Team.</p> <p>Critical Incident Reporting & Documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based Mental Health Team members will be responsible for informing administration immediately, in person, if a student is found to be at high risk and in an immediate crisis. The School Administrator should follow up with documenting this into a critical incident report the same day. • District and school-based teams will examine critical incident and crisis response data, at minimum, 3x/ per year to inform prevention and intervention practices and align appropriate supports efficiently and effectively. <p>Student Support Teams: If a student is found not to be in immediate crisis or not at risk, no immediate communication to the administrator is required, however, there should be follow up with the Student Support Team to ensure appropriate levels of prevention and intervention are secured if needed.</p> <p>This policy shall be reviewed by the School Board every 3 years.</p>
<p>Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements</p>	<p>The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD employees and PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board policies. In the event any part of any policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such an event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of the policy.</p>
<p>Legal Reference</p>	<p>“The Nathan Bruno and Jason Flatt Act,” R.I. Gen. Laws 16-21.7 Individuals with Disabilities Act</p>
<p>Cross Reference</p>	<p>Multi-Tiered System of Supports Basic Education Plan Wellness Policy Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention RI Model on Suicide Prevention</p>
<p>History</p>	<p>Approved by Board: Amended: Regulations Issued: Next Review:</p>