

# SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PLAN

Johnstonville Elementary School District

Board Approval Date: June 19, 2023

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## **PREVENTION**

Johnstonville Elementary School recognizes that prevention of youth suicide, violence, and substance abuse and the early identification and treatment of mental health disorders are most effective when students, staff, parents, and community members have access to prevention information and resources.

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION TRAINING FOR STAFF SHALL INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Potential risk factors:
  - Previous suicide attempt(s)
  - History of depression or mental illness
  - Substance use problems
  - Family history of suicide or violence
  - Feelings of isolation
  - Interpersonal conflicts
  - Recent severe stressors or loss
  - Family instability
  
2. Warning signs that may indicate suicidal intentions:
  - Talking about being a burden
  - Being isolated
  - Increased anxiety
  - Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
  - Increased substance use
  - Looking for a way to access lethal means
  - Increased anger or rage
  - Extreme mood swings
  - Expressing hopelessness
  - Sleeping too little or too much
  - Talking or posting about wanting to die
  - Making plans for suicide
  - Changing one's appearance, personality, or behavior
  
3. Groups particularly vulnerable to attempting or committing suicide:
  - Youth bereaved by suicide
  - Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse
  - Homeless youth
  - LGBTQ youth
  - Youth in the juvenile justice or welfare system
  - Native American youth
  
4. Research-based instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum and promoting mental and emotional health
  
5. School and community resources and services

6. District procedures for intervening when a student attempts, threatens or discloses the desire to commit suicide

Training will be provided annually for all teachers and staff:

Keenan Link: [www.keenan.safeschools.com](http://www.keenan.safeschools.com) – Youth Suicide: Awareness and Prevention

More information on evidence-based programs and practices can be found in [SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices](#).

The Trevor Project can be found at: [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

## INTERVENTION

The following process should be followed when a staff member becomes aware that a student is experiencing a crisis that may involve risk of harm to self or others:

- When a staff member suspects, or has knowledge of, a student's suicidal intentions, he/she shall promptly notify the Superintendent, Principal, or designee, who shall then notify the student's parents/guardians as soon as possible. The student may be referred to mental health resources in the school or community.
- Students shall be encouraged to notify a teacher, principal, counselor, or other adult when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions.

### IMMINENT RISK

- There is immediate danger to the student's self or others (for example, the possible presence of a weapon or other means the student intends to use to harm self or others).
- There is a suicide attempt in progress (for example, the student has taken a drug or medication overdose).

The staff member who suspects or has knowledge of imminent risk will do the following:

- Provide continuous supervision of the student at risk until an emergency responder arrives, keeping personal safety in mind. Evaluate the environment for safety and remove access to methods or lethal means.
- Notify the Superintendent or Administrator designee.

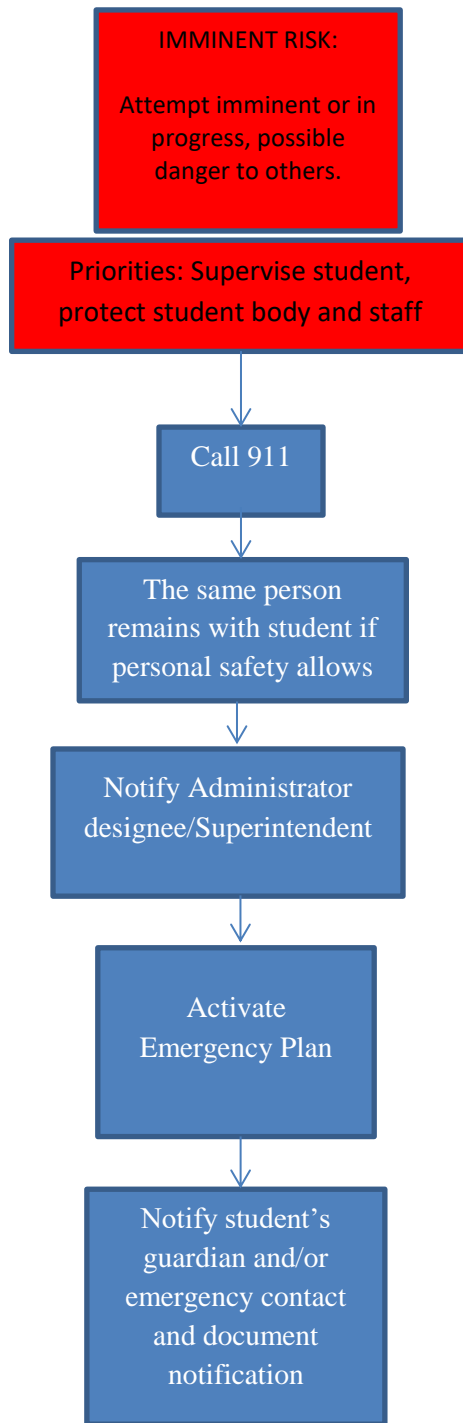
The administrator or other designee will do the following:

- Call 911 or designate a person to call. Be mindful that in the presence of a weapon or danger to others, emergency medical personnel will need the scene secured by law enforcement personnel before they can intervene.
- The administrative designee shall notify the Superintendent as soon as possible

Depending on the situation, the administrator or designee will:

- Even with no danger to others, if a suicide attempt is imminent or in progress, other students need to be removed quickly and calmly from the vicinity. (Enact emergency plan.)
- Notify the student's guardian and/or emergency contact and document the time and content of the conversation.
- Fill out the district's incident report forms.

Chart 1: Imminent Risk



A school employee shall act only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or

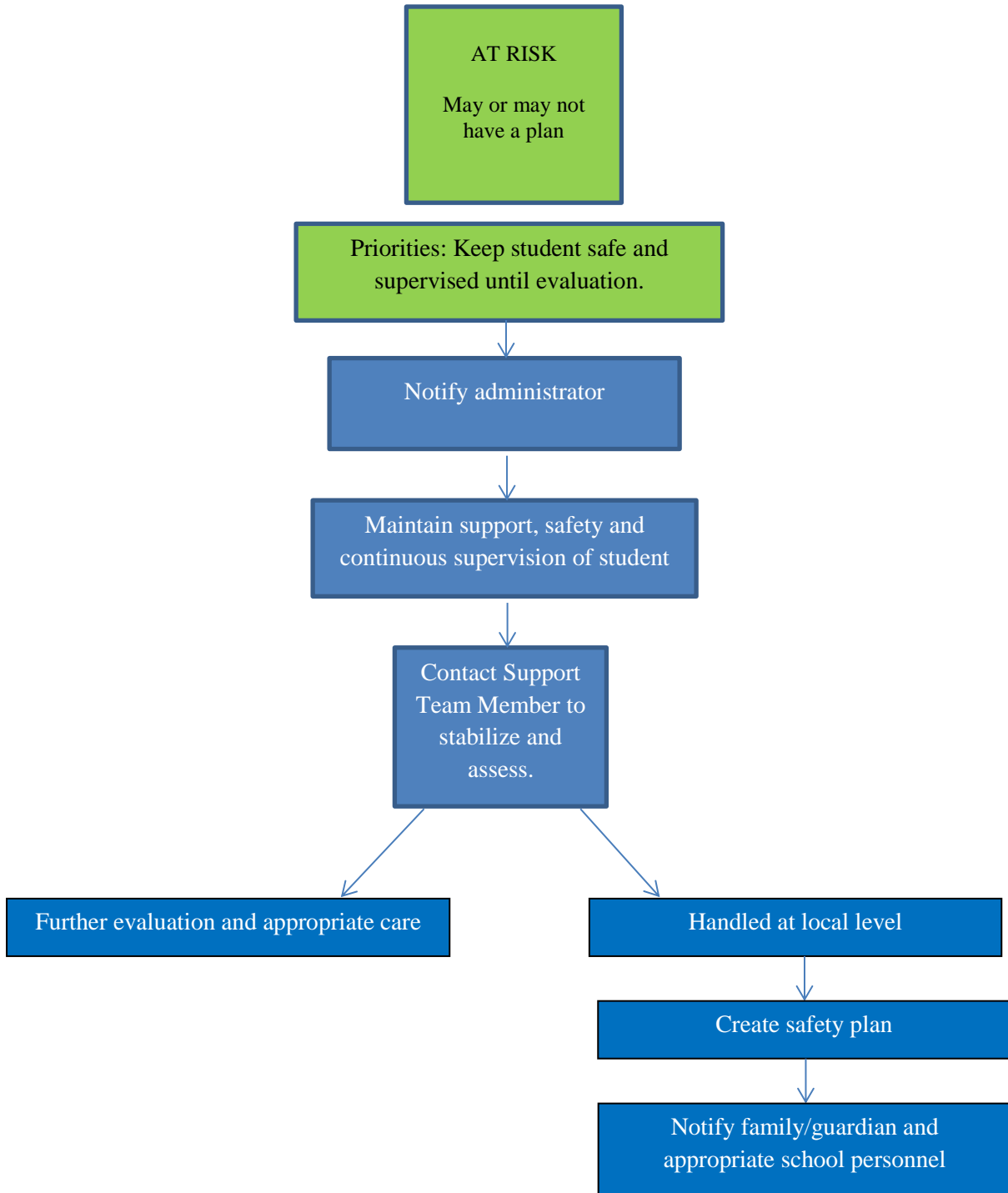
### AT RISK

- The student identifies thoughts of death but has no plan, intent to die, or suicidal behavior.
- The student identifies thoughts of death and may have a plan, intent to die, or suicidal behavior.
- The student is experiencing identified stressors.

The administrator or designee will do the following:

- Remain with the student and provide support, safety, and continuous supervision.
- Contact support team members (school counselor, behavioral counselor, school psychologist, Lassen County Behavioral Health).
- The administrator must be notified if the student will be leaving school grounds.
- If the assessment is that the student needs additional evaluation, appropriate arrangements will be made.

Chart 2: At Risk



A school employee shall act only within the authorization and scope of the employee’s credential or license.



## **POSTVENTION**

Johnstonville Elementary School recognizes that the death of a student, whether by suicide or other means, is a crisis that affects the entire school and community. In the event of a student's death, the school's response must be swift, consistent, and intended to protect the student body and community. In the case of a death by suicide, other concerns such as the prevention of suicide contagion will be taken into account.

### **CONFIRMING THE NEWS AND CONVENING THE EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM**

Upon receiving news of a student's death, including an unconfirmed rumor, a staff member must immediately contact the Superintendent, Principal, and/or designee. Contact must be made whether this is during or outside school hours.

- The Superintendent, Principal, or designee will contact:
  - Lassen County Office of Education (LCOE) County Superintendent of Schools
- The LCOE County Superintendent of Schools will convene the educational support team which may include:
  - Administrators
  - Behavioral Counselors
  - School Psychologists

### **Re-Entry to School After a Suicide Attempt**

A student who threatened or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well-planned re-entry process ensures the safety and well-being of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention. Involving students in planning for their return to school provides them with a sense of control, personal responsibility, and empowerment.

The following steps are part of the re-integration process:

- Obtain a written release of information signed by parents/guardians and providers;
- Confer with student and parents/guardians about any specific requests on how to handle the situation;
- Inform the student's teachers about possible days of absences;
- Allow accommodations for student to make up work (be understanding that missed assignments may add stress to student);
- Mental health professionals or trusted staff members should maintain ongoing contact to monitor student's actions and mood;
- Work with parents/guardians to involve the student in a reintegration plan.

## **Responding After a Suicide Death**

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on students and staff. Therefore, it is vital that we are prepared ahead of time in the event of such a tragedy. The Johnstonville Elementary School District along with its county and community mental health agency partners will develop a Suicide Postvention Response Plan. The components of the plan will include both immediate and long-term steps and objectives. The Suicide Postvention Response Plan will become activated when it is determined by a staff member that a student or staff member has died by suicide;

- The Suicide Postvention Response Plan will:
  - Identify a staff member to contact the deceased's family (preferably within 24 hours);
  - Enact the Suicide Postvention Response Plan, including an initial meeting (in person or over the phone) of the district's Suicide Postvention Response Team;
  - Notify all staff members (ideally in-person or via phone, not via e-mail or mass notification).
  
- Coordinate an all-staff meeting, to include:
  - Notification (if not already conducted) to staff about suicide death;
  - Emotional support and resources available to staff;
  - Notification to students about suicide death;
  - Information that is relevant and that which you have permission to disclose;
  - Coordination of support services from partnering county and community agencies for both students and staff;
  
- Prepare staff to respond to the needs of students regarding the following:
  - Review of protocols for referring students for support/assessment;
  - Talking points for staff to notify students;
  - Resources available to students and staff (both on and off campus).

- Identify students significantly affected by suicide death and other students at risk of imitating behavior;
- Identify students affected by suicide death but not at risk of imitating behavior;
- Communicate with the larger school community about the suicide death;
- Consider funeral arrangements for family and school community;
- The district's public information officer will respond to social media outlets:
  - Identify what platforms students are using to respond to suicide death
  - Identify/train staff and students to monitor social media outlets
- Include long-term suicide postvention responses:
  - Respectfully decline long-term memorials due to the impact on emotionally vulnerable students and at risk of suicide
  - Consider important dates (i.e., the anniversary of the death, the deceased's birthday, graduation, or other significant events) and how these will be addressed
  - Support siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of the deceased.

