

## Students

### Suicide Prevention/Intervention

The Thomaston Board of Education recognizes that suicide is among the three leading causes of death among young people and, consequently, is a concern to this school system and the community it serves. It is the policy of the Board of Education to actively respond in any situation where a student verbally or behaviorally indicates an intent to attempt suicide or to physically harm himself/herself.

The Board recognizes the need for youth suicide prevention procedures and will establish program(s) to identify risk factors for youth suicide, procedures to intervene with such youth, referral services and training for teachers, other school professionals and students to provide assistance in these programs.

It is also recognized by the Board that suicide is a complex issue, and that, while school staff members may recognize potentially suicidal youth, they cannot make clinical assessment of and provide in depth counseling, but must refer the youth to an appropriate agency for such assessment and counseling.

Therefore, any school employee who may have knowledge of a suicide threat or intent will report this information to the school principal or his/her designee, who will in turn, mobilize the crisis intervention team as described in the district's Guide to Crisis Intervention Procedures. The student's family will be notified, and an appropriate referral will be made. At no time during this process is the student to be left alone.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-221(e) Boards of education to prescribe rules.

Policy adopted: December 10, 2007

THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Thomaston, Connecticut

## Students

### Suicide Prevention Procedures

When a staff member in the Thomaston Public School System is confronted with a situation in which a student's statements or actions are suggestive of suicidal thought or potential suicidal action, or when that staff members becomes aware of a suspicion of a possible suicide involving a student, the following actions will take place:

The staff member will immediately inform the school principal or his/her designee.

In the event the staff member perceives that a student has taken an action which creates a medical and/or psychiatric emergency, medical procedures will be followed.

The school principal or his/her designee will activate appropriate personnel of the school's Crisis Intervention Team. A member of the Crisis Intervention Team will immediately meet with the student for the purpose of determining the risk status of the student. During the meeting, the student will be informed of the limit of confidentiality. **AT NO TIME DURING THIS PROCESS WILL THE STUDENT BE LEFT ALONE.** Following student interview the Crisis Intervention Team will meet and complete Crisis Team Meeting Minutes form.

If the student is found to be suicidal, the parents will be notified of the referral and of all conclusions reached.

If the student is found to be suicidal, immediate contact will be made with a parent or guardian and a conference will be held the same day. During the conference, the parent or guardian will be advised that an immediate mental health intervention is needed. Community resources will be identified and suggestions to parents will be provided. A Crisis Intervention Report will be completed by the most appropriate member of the team and will be given to the parents or guardian. In addition, the principal or his/her designee may inform the parents or guardian that the student will not be accepted back into school until a formal mental health intervention has taken place. Under no circumstances is the student, who is determined to be at risk, be allowed to go home alone.

If the student requires medical attention, he/she will be transported immediately to an area hospital. Parents will be informed to meet the student at the hospital.

If reasonable attempts to reach the parent or guardian of the student are not successful, the case will be treated as a medical emergency and arrangements will be made to transport the student to an area hospital emergency room or mental health facility. Failure on the part of the student's parent or guardian to take the school's recommendation seriously and provide for the safety of the student will be reported to the Department of Children and Families by the principal or his/her designee.

## **Students**

### **Suicide Prevention Procedures (continued)**

Follow up contact will be in accordance with the Crisis Intervention Team's recommendations. The Crisis Intervention Team member assigned to the case will maintain contact with the student's mental health professionals to support programming needs and follow-up procedures. Documentation that procedures were followed will be given to the school principal and/or designee and the Director of Pupil Services. If the Crisis Team determines a need exists for changes in the student's program, the school's planning and placement team may convene and consult with the student's mental health professional, the parent(s) or guardian, appropriate outside facility staff, and if feasible, the student, to plan the student's educational program.

Legal Reference:        Connecticut General Statutes

10-221(e) Boards of Education to prescribe rules

## **Students**

### **Crisis Response**

The Board of Education is committed to averting and resolving crises that may occur and may involve students, faculty, staff, or the total school community. Through its educational programs, student assistance teams, student support personnel, and other strategies and mechanisms, the public school system will strive to prevent crisis situations and to prepare its community members to address crises as they occur, and circumstances that may pose the threat of crisis.

School personnel, through training and with the aid of specialists, shall strive to identify possible crises and to intervene early and appropriately in the lives of children and families where the danger exists.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

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### Crisis Response

#### Crisis Management Plan (Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

#### Components of the Plan

*Note: The following administrative regulation should be modified to reflect district practice.*

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that District and school site plans address, at a minimum, the following types of emergencies and disasters:

1. Fire on or off school grounds which endangers students and staff.
2. Natural disasters.
3. Environmental hazards.
4. Attack or disturbance, or threat of attack or disturbance, by an individual or group.
5. Bomb threat or actual detonation.
6. Biological, radiological, chemical, and other activities, or heightened warning of such activities.

*Note: As part of its Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that a district's emergency and disaster preparedness plan include procedures for dealing with medical emergencies, such as a pandemic flu outbreak.*

7. Medical emergencies and quarantines, such as a pandemic influenza outbreak.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District's procedures include strategies and actions for prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Regular inspection of school facilities and equipment and identification of risks.
2. Instruction and practice for students and employees regarding emergency plans, including:
  - a. Training of staff in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
  - b. Regular practice of emergency procedures by students and staff.

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### Crisis Response

#### Crisis Management Plan (Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

##### Components of the Plan (continued)

3. Specific determination of roles and responsibilities of staff during a disaster or other emergency, including determination of:
  - a. The appropriate chain of command at the District and, if communication between the District and site is not possible, at each site.
  - b. Individuals responsible for specific duties.
  - c. Designation of the Principal for the overall control and supervision of activities at each school during the emergency, including authorization to use his/her discretion in situations which do not permit execution of prearranged plans.
  - d. Identification of at least one person at each site who holds a valid certificate in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
  - e. Assignment of responsibility for identification of injured persons and administration of first aid.
  
4. Personal safety and security, including:
  - a. Identification of areas of responsibility for supervision of students.
  - b. Procedures for evacuation of students and staff, including posting of evacuation routes.
  - c. Procedures for release of students, including a procedure to release students when reference to the emergency card is not feasible.
  - d. Identification of transportation needs, including a plan which allows bus seating capacity limits to be exceeded when a disaster or hazard requires students to be moved immediately to ensure their safety.
  - e. Provision of a first aid kit to each classroom.
  - f. Arrangements for students and staff with special needs.
  - g. Upon notification that a pandemic situation exists, adjustment of attendance policies for students and sick leave policies for staff with known or suspected pandemic influenza or other infectious disease.

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### Crisis Response

#### Crisis Management Plan (Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness Plan)

##### Components of the Plan (continued)

5. Closure of schools, including an analysis of:
  - a. The impact on student learning and methods to ensure continuity of instruction.
  - b. How to provide for continuity of operations for essential central office functions.
6. Communication among staff, parents/guardians, the Board of Education, other governmental agencies, and the media during an emergency, including:
  - a. Identification of spokesperson(s).
  - b. Development and testing of communication platforms, such as hotlines, telephone trees, and web sites.
  - c. Development of methods to ensure that communications are, to the extent practicable, in a language and format that is easy for parents/guardians to understand.
  - d. Distribution of information about District and school site emergency procedures to staff, students, and parents/guardians.
7. Cooperation with other state and local agencies, including:
  - a. Development of guidelines for law enforcement involvement and intervention.
  - b. Collaboration with the local health department, including development of a tracking system to alert the local health department to a substantial increase of student or staff absenteeism as indicative of a potential outbreak of an infectious disease.
8. Steps to be taken after the disaster or emergency, including:
  - a. Inspection of school facilities.
  - b. Provision of mental health services for students and staff, as needed.