

Student Suicide Prevention Policy

4.XX.XXX-P

OSBA:

Background and Purpose

Portland Public Schools recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that an even more youth consider and attempt suicide. The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. This policy is required by Oregon law, which was passed in 2019 in response to the advocacy of the family of a former PPS student, Adi Staub who identified as transgender and died by suicide in 2017.

As a result, we must engage in best practices to provide school-wide suicide prevention and intervention strategies in an effort to minimize suicidal ideation and prevent attempts, and deaths. We also must work to create a safe and nurturing campus that increases connections and builds strengths and self-worth in students. These efforts will directly align with the PPS Racial Equity Social Justice framework.

As the emotional wellness of students greatly impacts school attendance and educational success. This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors.

Recognizing that PPS and our schools must protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy aims to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including ensuring adequate supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss.

District Plan for Suicide Prevention

The District will collaborate with local and national experts to create a comprehensive approach to address suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The District will continually review and update the plan with consultation subject-matter experts that may include state or national suicide prevention organizations, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), school-based mental health professionals, parents, guardians, employees, students, administrators, and school board associations when implementing the plan.

The plan shall include, at a minimum:

1. Training plan for all schools

- A. All school staff trained on the risk factors and warning signs of suicidal risk;
- B. Training for the specific staff responsible for screening after a report of suicidal risk; as well as training in procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and activities that reduce risk and promote healing after a suicide;
- C. Identification of evidence-based suicide prevention programming school-wide that is culturally and linguistically responsive.

2. Best practice methods to address the needs of research-indicated high-risk groups, including:

- A. Youth exposed to suicide;
- B. Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders;
- C. Youth experiencing homelessness or out of home settings, such as foster care;
- D. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other minority gender identity and sexual orientation, and
- E. Native American, Black, Latinx, and Asian students.

3. Suicide prevention materials and curriculum options must be reviewed annually by a multi-disciplinary group, including students and families.

4. Processes for re-entry into a school environment following hospitalization or behavioral health crisis¹.

5. All families will be notified of the policy, paths to an informal discussion of concerns about actions related to suicidal risk, as well as the PPS complaint process.

The plan must provide that District employees act only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credentials or licenses.

The plan must be available to the PPS community, including students, their parents, and guardians, and employees, volunteers, and contractors of the District, and readily available at the District office and on the District website.

¹ "Behavioral health crisis" as defined by Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 581-022-2510, means a disruption in an

individual's mental or emotional stability or functioning resulting in an urgent need for immediate treatment to prevent a serious deterioration in the individual's mental or physical health. R5/01/20 | PH Student Suicide Prevention** – JHH 1-2

END OF
POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 332.107](#) [ORS 339.343](#) [OAR 581-022-2510](#)

2 ODE will provide a list of available programs.

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