



Oregon Charter Academy

Suicide Prevention & Response Plan

Purpose

Suicide remains a leading and yet largely preventable cause of death in Oregon. Today's youth face a complex array of challenges and stressors that can amplify their risk for suicidal ideation or attempt, especially youth who experience poverty, homelessness, marginalization, trauma, or other adverse events. Public K-12 schools have a unique opportunity and an ethical responsibility to safeguard the well-being of all students, and this important work remains a top priority for Oregon Charter Academy.

The purpose of this document is to set forth a strategic, comprehensive framework for suicide prevention, assessment, intervention and postvention; as well as best practices for creating a safe, supportive school environment where young people can build the skills, connections and self-worth that serve as critical protective factors against suicidal ideation and attempt.

In alignment with [OR Senate Bill 52](#) (also known as "Adi's Act"), Oregon Charter Academy:

- recognizes that physical and mental health are integral components of student outcomes, both educationally and beyond graduation;
- further recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people;
- has an ethical responsibility to take a proactive approach in preventing deaths by suicide;
- acknowledges ORCA's role in providing an environment that is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place youth at greater risk for suicide and helps to foster positive youth development and resilience;
- acknowledges that comprehensive suicide prevention policies include prevention, intervention, and postvention components; and,
- will publish its policy and plan on the ORCA website and will revisit and refine the plan regularly.



Leadership & Training

- Information and processes relating to the ORCA Suicide Prevention & Response Plan can be obtained by contacting **Allison Galvin, Executive Director:** agalvin@oregoncharter.org | (503) 897-2272.
- The Sr. Manager of Counseling and the Principal at each grade level shall annually be determined as a point of contact for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation. Contact the following to request a review of actions by the school in responding to a suicidal risk:

Marci Cammann, Sr. Manager of Counseling mcammann@oregoncharter.org (971) 225-7467	Susan Pollnow, Middle School Principal spollnow@oregoncharter.org (971) 248-6679
Todd Shaffer, Elementary School Principal tshaffer@oregoncharter.org (503) 308-1073	Joseph Mogford, High School Principal jmogford@oregoncharter.org (971) 301-5226

- All staff shall receive annual training in suicide prevention that includes, but is not limited to:
 - suicide risk factors and signs of student distress;
 - student strengths, protective factors, and support systems;
 - assessment and referral protocols;
 - postvention and follow-up procedures; and
 - notification and documentation requirements, including [mandatory reporting of child abuse](#) and appropriate notification of administration in cases of elevated suicide risk, suicide attempt, or suicide completion
- Information about suicide and related behavioral health issues shall be made available to students and caregivers via the [ORCA Counseling](#) website, as well as through Counseling Department resource publications, presentations, and direct school-family collaboration throughout each school year.

Prevention & Screening

- **Suicide Prevention:** ORCA is committed to building a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment that promotes wellbeing for all students through [culturally responsive, anti-racist, equitable](#) (CARE) policies, systems, and [best](#)



[practices](#) designed to protect all students from harm. These include, but are not limited to:

- Welcoming each student to the learning community as a unique and valued individual.
- Building strong relationships of respect and trust that form the foundation of critical school-family-community partnerships.
- Engaging students and families in collaborative problem-solving in order to support school connection, identify needs and navigate challenges.
- Integrating [PBIS](#); [Social-Emotional Learning](#); and [mental health literacy and promotion](#) into every level of school engagement.
- Providing connections to community-based resources to address physical and mental health needs:
 - [ORCA Resource Database](#): Comprehensive collection of local supports and services, organized by county.
 - [CareSolace](#) Partnership: Mental health care coordination service, available 24/7/365 to all ORCA students, families, and staff.
- Continuing education to identify additional resources and strategies.
- **Suicide Screening:** ORCA makes use of evidence-based tools and strategies to identify students at risk of suicide that include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - [Securly](#): online activity monitoring and risk identification program installed on all school-issued Chromebooks.
 - Evidence-based student mental health and risk identification screening tools.

Intervention

Any ORCA staff member who reasonably believes that an ORCA student is at risk of suicide will initiate and follow steps outlined in the ORCA Child in Distress Protocol:

- **Assessment**
 - When disclosures of suicidal ideation, planning, or attempt are made directly to teachers (or other non-Counseling staff) during synchronous communication, the teacher will keep the student engaged in compassionate conversation until either:
 - a suicide risk assessment can be completed by the teacher; or
 - the student can be connected with their School Counselor, who will then complete a suicide risk assessment to determine threat of harm.



- When risk of suicidal ideation, planning, or attempt is identified via asynchronous communication or Securly alerts, the receiving staff will notify the appropriate School Counselor immediately:
 - The student's School Counselor will immediately attempt synchronous contact with the student.
 - Upon reaching the student, a suicide risk assessment will be completed by the student's School Counselor to determine threat of harm.
 - If the student cannot be reached within the hour, the School Counselor will attempt to contact the parent/guardian of the student to determine the student's whereabouts and threat of harm.
- **Reporting and Referral**
 - **Imminent Threat:** Call 9-1-1 immediately
 - When possible, staff will keep the student engaged in conversation until help arrives, and confirm their address via school records.
 - Staff will remain on the line with the 911 operator until emergency personnel arrive at the student's location or as otherwise instructed by the 911 operator.
 - **Non-Imminent Threat:** Determine if a call to DHS or non-emergency police (for welfare check) may be appropriate
 - Staff will contact Oregon's statewide child abuse hotline: 1-855-503-SAFE (7233). **School employees are mandatory reporters** and need to personally make these calls, but can first consult with counselors/administrators if guidance is needed.
 - **Caregiver Involvement:** If doing so will not compromise student safety, staff will contact the student's parent/guardian to share information and determine next steps, including (but not limited to):
 - Sharing the details of the student's suicide risk level and mental health needs.
 - Placing the student under continuous adult supervision.
 - Taking the student to a hospital emergency room for evaluation.
 - Completing a long-term safety plan.
 - Pursuing intensive/long-term mental health support.
 - **Supervisory Notification:**
 - Staff will report suicide alert, assessment and steps taken to supervisory point(s) of contact as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the day.



- Staff will complete all required documentation and share with supervisory point(s) of contact within 24 hours.
- **Support and Follow Up**
 - Upon completion of the suicide risk assessment and appropriate reporting, staff will connect the student with appropriate Counseling/CoRe Team support, interventions and resources.
 - The student's School Counselor staff will follow up with the student's parent/guardian to verify that the student has received appropriate mental health intervention outside of school.
 - The student's School Counselor will follow up with community care provider(s) such as physicians, therapists, DHS staff, case workers, etc. (obtain Release of Information) to determine student's ongoing needs and support plan.

Postvention

If any ORCA staff member should learn that an ORCA student has died by suicide, the following actions will be taken:

- **Notification:** The ORCA staff member who received the initial disclosure of suicide shall notify their direct supervisor immediately. Relevant details shall then be shared with appropriate administrative points of contact to activate a Crisis Support Team comprised of grade-level principal(s), Counseling/CoRe Team staff, and teacher(s) of the deceased.
- **Identification:** The Crisis Support Team will work to identify students/staff who may have direct experience with the suicide or its aftermath, have had a personal connection/relationship with the deceased, who have previously demonstrated suicidal behavior, have a mental illness, have a history of familial suicide, or who have experienced a recent loss.
- **Communication:** In respectful, compassionate collaboration with the family of the deceased, ORCA's Executive Director will determine whether and how to share information about the suicide and any funeral or memorial services as appropriate.
 - Under Administrative direction, the Crisis Support Team will gather expressions of sympathy and available support resources, including both school-based and community-based mental health support, to share with the family.
 - Often, reporters are some of the first people to learn of tragedies. If staff should be contacted by the media regarding a student death, including to



confirm that an ORCA student has died, they will be directed to contact ORCA's Executive Director. **NOTE:** ORCA TAKES THE PRIVACY OF OUR STUDENTS VERY SERIOUSLY. DUE TO FERPA LAWS, STAFF ARE UNABLE TO DISCUSS PERSONAL OR ACADEMIC INFORMATION ABOUT ANY STUDENT WITH MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA (INCLUDING TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA).

- **Support:** The Crisis Support Team will follow up with student absentees in the days following a student suicide, particularly those who were known to be closely associated with the deceased, those who belong to the same socio-cultural groups as the deceased, and those who have inconsistent support outside of school.
 - Under Administrative direction, the Crisis Support Team may hold synchronous grief processing meetings for parents and/or students, provide information related to grief and loss, share connections to appropriate mental health services, and collaborate with law enforcement and other community agencies.
 - As appropriate, the Crisis Support Team will provide continued monitoring and follow-up with the family and other close connections of the deceased.

Resources

- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)
- [Adi's Act](#): OR Senate Bill 52
- [Mid-Valley Suicide Prevention Coalition](#)
- [National Center for School Mental Health \(NCSMH\)](#)
- Oregon Department of Education (ODE): [Spring 2025 Call to Action](#)
- Oregon Health Authority (OHA):
 - [2021-2025 Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan](#)
 - [2022 Youth Suicide Intervention and Prevention Plan Annual Report](#)
- Oregon Health News Blog: [To prevent youth suicide, connection is key](#)
- [Oregon YouthLine](#)
- [Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#)
- [Santiam Canyon School District Suicide Prevention Plan](#)
- [Suicide Prevention Resource Center – Schools](#)
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): [National Strategy for Suicide Prevention](#)