



SAU23 | Office of Superintendent

Suicide Prevention & Response Plan

2025-2026

Purpose

The School Administration Unit 23 is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This plan supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education to create youth suicide awareness and establishes methods of response to suicide including prevention, intervention and postvention (response to completion of suicide).

Publication and Distribution

The School District Suicide Prevention and Response Plan will be made available on the District's and each school's respective websites. Individual school websites will be updated each year with the contact information for the Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons. Links to state and community crisis or intervention referral intervention resources will also be updated annually. Each school handbook will contain the most updated Emergency Response Plan.

School District Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Moir DeBois shall serve as the appointed school district level suicide prevention coordinator under direction of the Superintendent is responsible for planning and coordinating the implementation of the District Suicide Prevention Plan (per School Board Policy JLDBB).

Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons

The School Principal, or designee, shall serve as the Building Suicide Prevention Liaison and will be the school contact person when a student is believed to be at risk for suicide. Employees who have reason to believe a student is at risk of suicide, or is exhibiting risk factors for suicide, shall report that information to the Building Liaison, who shall implement the SAU 23 response plan in conjunction with the Mental Health Team, using the Suicide Intervention Manual as a resource.

Mental Health Team

A multi-disciplinary team consisting of school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and mental health counselors. The Mental Health Team provides mental health services for effective crisis interventions and recovery support. This team collaborates to reduce barriers and identify interventions and supports to ensure the physical, social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of all students and members of our school community. Each building will outline responsibilities in the Crisis Response Flow Chart.

Prevention

Staff Development

Per RSA 193-1:2 and per School Board Policy JLDBB, all employees of the school district, including designated volunteers, contracted personnel or third-party employees, long-term substitute teachers, coaches, custodians, and any other personnel with regular student contact, shall complete two-hours of SAU 23's designated SEL-Suicide Prevention Training in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may include matters such as youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, intervention, response procedures, referrals, postvention and local resources.

Counseling professionals will engage in specialized professional development in risk-assessment, crisis intervention, and postvention, using nationally recognized and evidence-based practices including, but not limited to NH DOE Office of Social and Emotional Wellness Training Partners.

Student Suicide Prevention Training

Students will be provided with education regarding safe and healthy choices and coping strategies, recognition of risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others, and providing help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help. These topics will be integrated into the curriculum and educational programming of all PreK-12 Health, School Counseling, and other classes as age/developmentally appropriate.

Intervention

Safety Concerns, Safety Assessment and Crisis Intervention

All threats to harm or kill oneself shall be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Building Suicide Prevention Liaison (School Principal and/or designee) in accordance with the school's Crisis Response Flowchart. Safety concerns may include any threat to harm or kill oneself, actions or behavior that threaten self with harm, any expressed desire to die (whether verbally, written, or in art), and behaviors that indicate self-harm. Significant changes in behavior or other risk factors may contribute to concern and will be reported. Reports of safety concerns may result in a safety assessment.

An initial safety assessment will be conducted by a member of the Mental Health Team, using the SAU 23 Suicide Safety Forms resource. A parent/guardian will be notified if a safety assessment is conducted. This assessment will be used to determine if a student is considered at risk. A student may be referred for further assessment with a community mental health professional. If a student is not referred for additional assessment, the Mental Health Team will work with the family to determine if additional supports are needed.

When an expressed suicidal thought or intention is made known after school hours at a school sponsored activity, it is imperative that an adult stay with a student until contact is made with an administrator and/or parent/guardian and next steps are determined. In the event that neither can be reached, it is expected that a call to 911 or local police will occur.

School personnel who become aware of suicidal thoughts or intent when the student is not at school will contact local police by calling 911 to request a welfare check. Prompt follow-up will be made with the Principal or other designated administrator to inform of the situation. The administrator will call to inform the parent/guardian of the incident and the action taken.

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A school may recommend a safety assessment to be conducted by a mental health or medical professional. When a parent or guardian initiates a safety assessment for their student by a mental health professional, the family is encouraged to provide follow-up recommendations to the school counselor or administrator upon return to school.

In School Suicide Attempt

In the case of any suicide attempt, the physical, mental health, and safety of the student are paramount. If this situation occurs on school property or at a school event, the following additional responses are required:

- In the event of an active overdose or injury requiring medical attention, call EMS (911) and stay with the student
- Notify administration and school nurses,
- If the attempt threatens the safety of others, the school emergency response plan will be followed.
- Initial responder will stay to provide context and details to the Administration and Mental Health Team.
- Initial responders and witnesses will engage in a debrief process with a counseling professional.

Re-entry Procedure

If a student has been hospitalized for being a risk to themselves or others, the parent or guardian is urged to share any pertinent information and/or a discharge summary with the school counselor. The information provided shall be deemed confidential. A re-entry meeting will be held before the student returns to school.

Re-entry meetings for students who are transitioning back to school from hospitalization, may involve the student (as developmentally appropriate), a parent/guardian, an administrator, and a member of the Mental Health Team. The goal of the re-entry meeting is to create a plan that supports the academic, social-emotional, physical, and medical needs of the student.

After a Suicide Death

The Mental Health Team will meet to get the facts, assess the situation, and determine a communication plan that includes messaging for faculty, students, and community. The Mental Health Team will develop a support plan that includes mitigation of suicide contagion by actively triaging particular risk factors and following safe messaging guidelines.

The Mental Health Team shall coordinate support services for students and staff in need of mental health first aid, as appropriate. Support from other SAU #23 schools (school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists), community partners (Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, Northern Human Services - White Mt Health Care, and NH Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (DBHRT), may be initiated.

Reference: Policy JLDDB - Suicide Prevention and Response

The School Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; to establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt ("postvention"); and to promote access to suicide awareness, prevention and postvention resources.

1. District Suicide Prevention Plan and Biennial Review. The Superintendent shall develop and provide to the Board for approval, a coordinated written District Suicide Prevention Plan (the "Plan") to include guidelines, protocols and procedures with the objectives of prevention, risk assessment, intervention and response to youth suicides and suicide attempts.
 - a. Specific Requirements for Plan Terms: The District Suicide Prevention Plan shall include terms relating to:
 - i. Suicide prevention (risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, referrals);
 - ii. Response to in-or-out-of-school student suicides or suicide attempts (postvention, suicide contagion);
 - iii. Student education regarding safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, recognition of risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide; and help seeking strategies;
 - iv. Training of staff, designated volunteers, and contracted personnel on the issues of youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, post-intervention and resources available within the school and community;
 - v. Confidentiality considerations;
 - vi. Designation of any personnel, in addition to the District Suicide Prevention Coordinator and Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons, to act as points of contact when students are believed to be at an elevated risk of suicide;
 - vii. Information regarding state and community resources for referral, crisis intervention, and other related information;
 - viii. Dissemination of the Plan or information about the Plan to students, parents, faculty, staff, and school volunteers;
 - ix. Promotion of cooperative efforts between the District and its schools and community suicide prevention program personnel;
 - x. Such include such other provisions deemed appropriate to meet the objectives of this Policy (e.g., student handbook language, reporting processes, "postvention" strategies, memorial parameters, etc.).
 - b. Biennial Review: No less than once every two years, the Superintendent, in consultation District Suicide Prevention Coordinator, and Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons, and with input and evidence from community health or suicide prevention organizations, and District health, and guidance personnel, shall update the District Suicide Prevention Plan, and present the same to the Board for review. Such Plan updates shall be submitted to the Board in time for appropriate budget consideration.
2. Suicide Prevention Coordinator and Liaisons.
 - a. District Suicide Prevention Coordinator: School Psychologist, Moira DeBois shall serve as the appointed District Suicide Prevention Coordinator, who, under the direction of the Superintendent shall be responsible for:
 - i. developing and maintaining cooperative relationships with and coordination efforts between the District and community suicide prevention programs and personnel;

- ii. annual updating of (i) State and community crisis or intervention referral intervention information, and (ii) names and contact information of Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons, for inclusion in student handbooks and on the District's website;
 - iii. developing - or assisting individual teachers with the development - of age appropriate student educational programming, such that all students receive information in the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies, recognizing risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others, and providing help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help;
 - iv. developing or assisting in the development of the annual staff training required under section 3 of this policy;
 - v. Such other duties as referenced in this Policy or as assigned by the Superintendent.
- b. Building Suicide Prevention Liaison. The Building Principal or designee shall be designated as the Building Suicide Prevention Liaison, and shall serve as the in building point-of-contact person when a student is believed to be at an elevated risk for suicide. Employees who have reason to believe a student is at risk of suicide, or is exhibiting risk factors for suicide, shall report that information to the Building Liaison, who shall, immediately or as soon as possible, establish and implement a response plan with the District Suicide Prevention Coordinator.
- 3. Annual Staff Training. The Superintendent shall assure that beginning with the 2020-21 school year, all school building faculty and staff, designated volunteers, and any other personnel who have regular contact with students, including contracted personnel or thirdparty employees, receive at least two hours of training in suicide awareness and prevention. Such training may include such matters as youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, intervention, response procedures, referrals, and postvention and local resources.
- 4. Dissemination. Student handbooks and the District's website will be updated each year with the contact information for the Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons, State and community crisis or intervention referral intervention resources. The District Suicide Prevention Plan will be made available on the District's, and each school's respective websites.

See Also: JLDDBB-R – Suicide Prevention Plan/Protocol

Legal References: RSA 193-J: Suicide Prevention Education

Other Sources:

The New Hampshire Department of Education's Bureau of Student Wellness, Office of Social and Emotional Wellness (OSEW), provides resources and technical assistance to school districts to work collaboratively with their community to respond to the needs of students through a multi-tiered system of support for behavioral health and wellness.

For further information:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) - <https://www.afsp.org>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center - <http://www.sprc.org>

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – <https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

The Trevor Project - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

NH Disaster Behavioral Health Response Teams: www.dhhs.nh.gov/esu/dbhrtnh.htm

If in danger call
admin or 911

IS A STUDENT AT RISK?

You are a Gatekeeper and your role in identifying students at risk is important. Remember that they confided in you for a reason and staying calm and empathetic is important. Use non judgmental language to initiate more information.

HIGH RISK

Student has voiced intent or a specific plan about suicide, has engaged in self-harm or self harming-statements and/or has access to lethal means.

ACT WITH URGENCY

DO NOT LEAVE STUDENT UNSUPERVISED

- Let student know that you care and cannot keep this information confidential
- Escort student to school counselor, if student will not go with you have school counselor come to you.
- Communicate all of your knowledge to school counselor
- You may be asked to remain during assessment
- Mental Health Team members will follow protocol from SAU 19 Suicide Intervention manual

MODERATE RISK

Student may express direct or indirect statements about death or killing oneself, withdrawal, sleep disturbance, sudden mood changes and reckless behavior.

ACT NOW

- Keep student under supervision
- Support and validate student
- Notify school counselor immediately, if they are unavailable notify admin or mental health team
- School counselor or Mental Health team member will conduct assessment - School counselor will advise on next steps for you

LOW RISK

Take every warning sign seriously! Student may: express sadness, helplessness, worthlessness in verbal or written (art) expression and/or have marked changes in behavior.

ACT PROMPTLY

Promptly notify school counselor of concern Communicate all of your knowledge to school counselor/ mental health team member School counselor will advise on next steps for you

Mental Health Team

- School Counselors
- School Psychologist
- Emotional/Behavioral Specialist
- Building Admin

DO NOT COMMUNICATE Private Health information.

The Mental Health team/admin will:

- share any needed information with necessary staff
- consult with you as needed
- initiate parent contact and paperwork

Next Steps:

- Debrief with all present members and present member of Mental Health Team
- Be supportive to student upon reentry while maintaining confidentiality
- Engage in reentry as necessary
- Post-event self-care
- LifeResources EAP at 800.759.8122