

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School
Policy S30: SUICIDE PREVENTION
Adopted: October 22, 2020
Amended: September 14, 2023

Southwest Georgia S.T.E.M. Charter School shall provide to all certificated personnel annual training in suicide awareness and prevention in accordance with state law and rules established by the Georgia Department of Education.

The School Leader or designee shall develop procedures to address at a minimum, suicide prevention efforts, intervention, and postvention. Such procedures shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts. The School counselor shall serve as the school's suicide prevention coordinate and shall ensure that all staff is annually trained on the warning signs of suicide and possible prevention tips.

If a student displays warning signs for suicide,

- 1) School staff should continuously supervise the student to ensure his or her safety until the parents/guardians and/or mental health professional arrive. Under no circumstances should the student be left alone, sent back to class, or sent home on the bus without constant adult supervision.
- 2) The School Suicide Prevention Coordinator (school counselor) and school leader shall be contacted immediately.
- 3) The principal or mental health professional should contact the student's parent or guardian and should assist the family with urgent referral for professional assessment. When appropriate, this may include calling emergency services or bringing the student to the local emergency room, but in most cases will involve contacting the **Georgia Crisis and Access Line** or setting up an outpatient behavioral health appointment and communicating the reason for referral to the healthcare provider.

If the student is under the age of 18 and the parent or guardian refuses to seek appropriate assistance, the school shall have the option to contact and file a neglect report with the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS). The school may also involve the appropriate law enforcement agency, if necessary.

- 4) The School Leader shall ask the student's parent or guardian for written permission to discuss the student's health with outside care, if appropriate.

In accordance with state law, no person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the implementation of this policy or its implementing procedures or resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by state law or this policy. The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of state law shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of care. Neither the training nor the procedures are designed to impose ministerial duties but to provide a framework in which educators can exercise their professional judgment in the best interest of students. After a student suicide has

occurred, the School Leader and School counselor shall coordinate for crisis prevention and counseling for students.

Steps for parental/guardian notification:

1. Notify the parents/guardians about the situation and ask that they come to the school immediately.
2. When the parents/guardians arrive at the school, explain why you think their child is at risk for suicide.
3. Explain the importance of removing from the home (or locking up) firearms and other dangerous items, including over-the-counter and prescription medications and alcohol.
4. If the student is at a low or moderate suicide risk and does not need to be hospitalized, discuss available options for individual and/or family therapy. Provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) with the contact information of mental health service providers in the community. If possible, call and make an appointment while the parent(s)/guardian(s) are with you.
5. Provide the parent(s)/guardian(s) with resources to explain the risk of suicide and the role of parent(s)/guardian(s) in getting and maintaining help for their child.
6. Ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) to sign the Parent/Guardian Contact Acknowledgement Form confirming that they were notified of their child's risk and received referrals for assessment.
7. Tell the parents that you will follow up with them in a few days. If this follow-up conversation reveals that the parent has not contacted a mental health provider:
 - Stress the importance of getting the child help.
 - Discuss why they have not contacted a provider and offer to assist with the process.
8. If the student does not need to be hospitalized, release the student to the parents.
9. Document all contacts with the parent(s)/guardian(s).