

## STUDENT SUICIDE AWARENESS

The Evansville Community School District (ECSD) Board of Education recognizes that depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions and self-destruction are severe problems among children and adolescents. A student who lives with a mental illness may not be able to benefit fully from the educational program of the schools, and a student who has engaged in or attempted self-harm poses a danger both to themselves and to other students. To protect the health and well-being of all students, this policy outlines the necessary practices in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to death by suicide.

### **Prevention:**

In accordance with state statutes, the District will provide students with age appropriate suicide awareness and prevention education which:

- Encourages positive emotional development
- Teaches life skills such as problem-solving and sound decision making
- Provides knowledge of the relationship between youth suicide and the use of alcohol and controlled substances
- Promotes awareness of the warning signs of suicide, how to respond to potential suicidal persons and available community counseling and mental health services

### **Role of Staff:**

In accordance with State Statute, the district will annually inform staff of the resources available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and other sources regarding suicide awareness and prevention.

Any ECSD employee who has reason to believe, either by direct knowledge or a report from another person, that a student is in danger of harming themselves through an attempted suicide is to report the situation immediately to a Student Services Team member. The Student Services Team includes the Director of Student Services, Building Principal, School Psychologist, School Counselor, School Nurse, and School Social Worker. The Student Services Team will be called upon to serve as a resource and to provide services during a crisis situation, which may include a threatened, attempted, or death by suicide.

The District and any district employee, Board member, or school volunteer who in good faith attempts to prevent suicide by a student is protected from civil liability for their acts or omissions in respect to the suicide or attempted suicide as per state law.

### **Intervention:**

#### **Suicide Assessment and Referral:**

The role of the district is not to treat students, however, when a student is identified by an ECSD staff member as potentially suicidal (i.e. expresses suicidal thoughts, presents overt risk factors, engages in self-harm or a student self-refers) a member of the Student Services Team will interview the student to determine the level of risk, collaborate with parents, and develop a safety plan.

#### **Re-Entry Procedure:**

For students returning to school after a mental health crisis (e.g. suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization), a member of the Student Services Team, Principal, or designee will meet with the student's parent or guardian, and if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and appropriate next steps to ensure the student's readiness and safety to school.

**Parent Notification and Involvement:**

In situations where a student is determined at risk for suicide or has made a suicide attempt, the student's parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible. If the student has exhibited any kind of suicidal behaviors, the parent/guardian should be counseled on "means restriction", limiting the child's access to mechanisms for carrying out a suicide attempt. Staff will seek parental permission to communicate with outside mental health agencies regarding their child.

Through discussion with the student, the building principal or student services employee will assess whether there is further risk of harm due to parent/guardian notification. If in their professional capacity, they determine that contacting the parent/guardian would endanger the health or well-being of the student, they may delay such contact as appropriate. If contact is delayed, the reasons for the delay shall be documented.

**Postvention:**

The Student Services Team will meet for debriefing to gather factual information regarding a threatened, attempted or death by suicide, and plan for the District's response. The goal is to ensure a factual and sensitive response so that students can share, express, and work through their feelings in a structured and supportive environment.

Legal Ref. Sections 115.365 Wisconsin Statutes (Assistance for Schools for Suicide Prevention Programs)  
118.01(2)(d)7 (Educational Goals and Expectations)  
118.295 (Suicide Intervention, Civil Liability Exemption)

Local Ref. Policy 453.7: Mental Health and Wellness  
Policy 457 Rule: Student Suicide Awareness Information Administrative Rule  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Youth Suicide Prevention Resources