

CHARTIERS-HOUSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Policy No. 237

Section:PUPILS

POLICY GUIDE

Title: STUDENTS AT
RISK/SUICIDE CRISIS
INTERVENTION

Adopted: 7/16/90

Revision adopted: 8/16/99

POLICY NO. 237 STUDENTS AT RISK/SUICIDE CRISIS INTERVENTION

- 1. PURPOSE** Our purpose is to provide for identification, intervention and postvention in times of crisis.
- It is the district's desire that students-at-risk be identified and receive professional help as quickly as possible.
- It is the district's desire to provide support for students, staff and parents in times of school community crisis.
- 2. DEFINITION** For purposes of this policy, a STUDENT-AT-RISK is one who has indicated by changed behavior, depression, written or verbal remarks that he/she may be contemplating self-destructive behavior. A broad spectrum of behaviors may be exhibited.
- 3. AUTHORITY** The Charters-Houston School Board hereby directs that
- all school personnel shall be in-serviced as to the warning signs of childhood and adolescent depression and suicide and the subsequent immediate response strategies
 - a postvention assistance team is to be provided

- this policy is to be implemented through the cooperative efforts of professional, administrative and support service staff, students, parents and community service agencies

- the primary focus of these efforts shall be education, prevention and intervention

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The superintendent in consultation with staff and community service groups shall prepare regulations for the identification and referral of students possibly at risk.

LEGAL

REFERENCE:

Mental Health & Mental Retardation Act of 1966

50 PS Section 4102, et seq.

Mental Health Procedures

50 PS Section 7101, et seq.

50 PS Section 7302

18 PS Section 508 (d)

50 PS Section 7114

50 PS Section 7201

24 PS Section 13-1317

CHARTIERS-HOUSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent's Regulations

STUDENT AT RISK: SUICIDE CRISIS (Policy 237)

PREFACE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among teenagers. Recognizing the alarming increase in teenage depression/suicides, the individuals involved in the Charters-Houston School District Student Assistance Program have developed these regulations to assist administrators and staff in dealing with Students-at-Risk. The primary focus of this effort will be the implementation of a referral process.

The Charters-Houston School District will support prevention, intervention and postvention efforts that contribute to the safety and well being of all students.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

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| 1. | Student Assistance Program Team | Staff members formally trained to observe behaviors, analyze behavioral data, and refer students to an appropriate source for further evaluation. |
| 2. | Confidentiality | In recognition of a student's right to privacy, information is only shared on a "need to know" basis according to legal guidelines. Members of the staff and Team must not permit the issue of confidentiality to interfere with necessary action in the case of a life-threatening situation. |
| 3. | Crisis | Any situation which creates an unstable or critical time or state of affairs for student and/or school population. |
| 4. | Intervention | Procedures designed to protect an individual from harm and to intercede in self-destructive behavior. |
| 5. | Postvention | Appropriate procedures for dealing with the aftermath of a crisis situation. |
| 6. | Prevention | Deterrent of self-harm through support, education and/or referral. |

7. Suicide Ideation Suicide ideation is an indication, either verbal or written, of a student's thoughts about committing suicide.
8. Informal Intervention One or more Team members meet with the student to relay concerns, monitor behavior, and provide support in identifying referral alternatives.
9. Formal Intervention All Team members meet with student and parents to present all data that has been gathered and to identify alternatives and conditions to be addressed in the referral process.

POSTVENTION PROCEDURES

Despite the best prevention and early identification methods utilized by district staff, a student may attempt to take his/her life or the lives of others. If destructive behavior or other crisis does occur, it is the intent of the Chartiers-Houston School District to provide support for students, parents, and members of the school staff.

The following procedures are established to help all affected individuals react in as positive a fashion as circumstances allow.

1. The principal shall inform or arrange to have informed the superintendent, assistant principal, nurse, building Student Assistance Team, and teachers of the injured or deceased.
2. As soon as possible, the principal will bring the professional staff together to review postvention procedures.
 - The principal will instruct the faculty to monitor the behavior of peers of the deceased or injured and to offer support
 - The principal will give the faculty direction as to how to refer affected students to various support personnel
 - The administrative assistant to the superintendent may temporarily assign the guidance counselor and support staff from the other building to provide support as needed
 - The Student Assistance Team in consultation with the principal will make referrals to outside agencies
3. The administrative assistant to the superintendent may bring in professionals from outside agencies to assist in the postvention procedures

4. Members of Student Assistance Team shall contact the affected families to offer support and referral to outside agencies when deemed appropriate.

Members of Student Assistance Team will notify families of other identified "at risk" students and families of students who seem to be most affected. They will alert them to their child's concerns and to offer support and/or referrals to outside agencies.

5. Members of Student Assistance Team will be ready to accept an increased number of formal referrals and to work actively in other ways with pupils, staff and parents.
6. The Superintendent, or in his/ her absence the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent will coordinate any contacts with the media.

Acknowledgment of a student's suicide will be announced by the building principal. Announcements might express sympathy to the family and friends of the deceased. A moment of silence would be appropriate. The principal, in consultation with others will determine the timing for this announcement.

7. School will be conducted as scheduled. The upsetting event will not be allowed to interfere with normal activity anymore than absolutely necessary.