

HOLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SUICIDE RISK PROTOCOL

Should any staff member become aware of a student who has attempted or intends suicide, the following policy should be followed.

1. Communication of Risk

Such information must be reported to the student's counselor. The staff member should tell the student that they must discuss the shared information with the student's counselor.

2. The Safety of the Student is Primary

Two situations are possible:

- A. If there has been a suicide attempt and medical attention is needed, the staff member will remain with the student and send someone to report to the principal and school nurse. The principal and nurse will determine the emergency contacts that may need to be made and will contact the parent/guardian to inform them.
- B. If the student seems at risk but does not require medical attention, the staff member will take the student to the student's counselor. If the student is unwilling to go, the staff member will share the information with the counselor immediately.

3. Staff Members Should Not Make Decisions in Isolation

If a staff member becomes aware of or suspects a student intends suicide, the staff member should discuss the matter with the student's counselor immediately. The counselor, after the discussion and appropriate inquiry will notify the building principal.

4. Assessment of Risk

The counseling team will meet with the student to assess risk.

5. **After the Assessment the Counseling Team will report to the Principal the Level of Risk.**
- A. If the student is at high or immediate risk, even if the student does not consent, the student must remain with a staff member while the principal informs the parent/guardian who will be requested to come to the school immediately. The counselor may recommend an emergency psychological examination. The counselor will provide the parent with a referral for an evaluation of safety and a recommended plan of action. If the student refuses to remain with the counselor, the principal will notify both the parents and the police department.
- B. If the student is moderately at risk, the counselor will contact the parent/guardian as soon as possible to inform them of the school's concern. The counselor will request that they come for an appointment with the counselor or some other member of the team to discuss a plan of treatment. The student will be released to a parent/guardian with a plan of action.
- C. If the student is mildly at risk, the counselor will inform the parent/guardian as soon as possible that the school considers there is a risk of suicide, The counselor will invite them to discuss the situation with the counselor or some other member of the team. The student may leave after the assessment.

Whatever the level of risk, students who are 14 years of age or older should be invited to participate in any meeting at school where parents/guardians and school personnel discuss a plan of treatment. The counselor will complete a memory aid form. The counselor will also be the liaison to give appropriate feedback to personnel and to communicate with any professional involved in treatment.

Assessment of Suicidal Risk

1. **Warning Signs of Suicidal Risk**
- Talking about hurting oneself or wishing to be dead.
 - Cutting or other self-mutilating behavior.
 - Previous suicide attempts.
 - Family history of suicide.
 - Changes in school performance.
 - Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
 - Personality changes such as depression, apathetic moods, agitation or irritability.
 - Problems concentrating on routine tasks.
 - Reckless/ impulsive behavior or engagement in high- risk activities.
 - Alcohol/drug abuse.
 - Loss of interest in friends, withdrawal from social activities previously enjoyed, increased self-isolation.

- Expressions of hopelessness and anger at oneself or the world.
 - Death themes in spoken, written or artwork.
 - Recent history of trauma.
 - Statements that family or friends would not miss one.
 - Anniversary of a significant loss.
 - Giving away personal possessions.
2. If a staff member becomes aware of a student at risk for suicide, the warning signs should be taken seriously and discussed freely with the student. Your attitude should show you are concerned. If you have reason to believe a student may be contemplating suicide but has not confided in you, discuss it with the counselor or principal. Regardless of confidentiality the staff member must report the information to the student's counselor and established suicide risk procedures should be followed.

COUNSELING TEAM

In the event of a suicide attempt or report of intent of suicide, each of the Holbrook Schools has a counseling team with the following responsibilities:

1. If a report is made that a student is contemplating suicide or has made a suicidal gesture, then the team will be called in to make an assessment of risk and report to the building principal.
2. If a student or staff member has committed suicide, the team will work with the building principal to assist him/her as outlined in the protocol "Aftermath of a Suicide".

The team will include the following members:

1. The counselor of the student involved.
2. The school social worker or psychologist.
3. The nurse assigned to the student's school.

The building principal may include any staff member with whom the student has developed a close relationship.

REF: School Crisis Staff Manual

Adopted: April 3, 2002

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