

CRISIS INTERVENTION

The Board of Education recognizes that depression and self-injurious behavior are problems of increased severity among children and adolescents. A pupil under severe stress cannot benefit fully from the educational program and may pose a threat to him or herself or others.

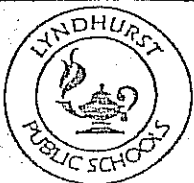
The Board directs all school personnel to be alert to the pupil who exhibits signs of self-injurious behavior or who threatens or attempts suicide. Any such signs or the report of such signs from another pupil or staff member should be taken with the utmost seriousness and reported immediately to the Principal or Chief School Administrator. The administrator or designee shall notify the pupil's parent/guardian, other professional staff members and appropriate agencies in accordance with administrative regulations.

In the event that the parent or guardian indicates an unwillingness to cooperate in the best interests of the student, the district may contact appropriate designated screening center or legal agencies to request intervention on the pupil's behalf.

No student shall be permitted to return to school until deemed to no longer be an imminent risk to self or others by the appropriate health care professional.

The Chief School Administrator shall disseminate regulations for the guidance of staff members in recognizing the pupil who contemplates suicide, in responding to threatened or attempted suicide, and in preventing contagion when a pupil commits suicide.

Dated: February 15, 2005



Lyndhurst Public Schools
281 Ridge Road
Lyndhurst, NJ 07071
201-438-5683

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES
SAMPLE GUIDANCE COUNSELOR FORM

Confidential

TO: _____
FROM: (Case Coordinator Name), I&RS Team
DATE: _____
REFERENCE: _____
GRADE: _____

The I&RS Team is gathering information on the above-named student. Your input is essential in developing a complete and accurate profile of this student. If there is information you prefer not to commit to writing or if you have any questions, please immediately contact me or another member of the team.

Confidential Information:

- Yes No Has a psychological evaluation been conducted on this student?
If yes, please describe: _____
- Yes No In addition to your role, are you aware of any kind of counseling
or therapy (current or past) that has been provided to the student?
If yes, please describe: _____
- Yes No Has any type of educational testing been conducted on this
student? If yes, please describe: _____

Parent Contacts:

Please provide information on the number, purposes and outcomes of parent contacts regarding this student.

Guidance Information:

Please give any additional information that you think would be helpful in the team's assessment of the student, including skills, positive characteristics and environmental supports. (Use the back of the form if necessary.)

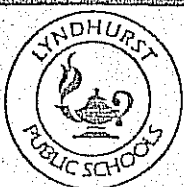
CRISIS INTERVENTION

The following procedures are established for guidance of staff members in recognizing the pupil who contemplates suicide, in responding to threatened or attempted suicide, and in preventing contagion when a pupil commits suicide. Because a prompt response may be essential to a pupil's life, it is imperative that school staff act on information in a timely manner.

1. Recognition of Potential Suicide

All school personnel, both teaching and support staff members, shall be alert to any sign(s) that a pupil may be contemplating suicide. Such signs include, but are not necessarily limited to, a pupil's:

- a. Overt suggestion, regardless of its context, that she/he is considering or has considered suicide or has worked out the details of a suicide attempt;
- b. Evidence of preparation of a will, intention to dispose of his/her possessions, or otherwise get his/her life "in order";
- c. Obsession with death or afterlife;
- d. Possession of a weapon or other means of suicide or obsession with such means;
- e. Sense of hopelessness or unrelieved sadness;
- f. Lethargy or despondency, or, conversely, a tendency to behave more impulsively or aggressively than usual;
- g. Drop in academic achievement, slacking off of energy and effort, or inability to focus on studies;
- h. Isolation from others by loss of friends, withdrawal from friends, lack of companionship, or family disintegration;



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- i. Preoccupation with nonexistent physical ills;
- j. Loss of weight, appetite and/or sleep;
- k. Substance abuse;
- l. Loss of economic resources.

2. Response to Potential Suicide

A. Level 1: Observation of behaviors or warning signs that indicate a student may be at risk to engage in a suicidal act.

- 1. Any indication of a potential suicide, whether personally witnessed or received by report from another, shall be taken seriously and reported to the Principal or designee immediately.
- 2. The Principal or designee shall immediately inform the Supervisor of Student Services and Superintendent of Schools about the suicide concerns and the Student Assistance/Substance Abuse Counselor of Student Services with the appropriate staff members shall be immediately assigned to investigate the matter promptly to determine the extent of the problem.
- 3. If the judgment of the staff member is that there is serious risk of bodily harm, Level 2 procedures noted below shall be implemented.
- 4. The staff member shall inform the building administrator of the outcome of the student interview.
- 5. Even if the risk of bodily harm is not imminent, the student's parent/guardian shall be contacted by phone immediately following the student interview in order to communicate the information and concerns. The communication might include information regarding types of mental health professionals/agencies the family could consult with. While the parents/guardians may elect to go no further than to accept the information provided, school staff working with the student may feel further intervention is indicated and contacted the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) to report such concerns.

6. A school staff person who has been involved in the student assessment should monitor the student's status with parent/guardian and outside mental health professional. A release of information to permit communication with an outside mental health source must be obtained from the parent/guardian.

7. Documentation of the school's actions on behalf of this student shall be maintained.

B. Level 2: Student has stated or written about intent to engage in a suicidal act.

1. School staff member shall notify the Principal or designee that a student has indicated verbally or in writing, intent to engage in a suicidal act.
2. The student is to be kept under continuous adult supervision until the following steps are completed.
3. The Principal or designee shall have the school counselor or psychologist meet with the student to determine the extent of the problem; if a staff member with a mental health background is not available, the Principal or designee will conduct this student meeting.
4. The student's parent/guardian shall be asked to come to the school immediately for a conference. At this meeting, a staff member shall encourage the family to agree on a treatment plan that includes immediate emergency psychiatric screening.
5. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign a release of information permitting the school district to receive and relate information to the outside mental health professional as needed.
6. In order for this student to return to school after the emergency psychiatric screening, the district must receive a written notice from a mental health professional stating that it is safe for the student to return to school.
7. If it appears that the student's parent will not follow the recommendation and obtain emergency psychiatric screening/care, the DYFS shall be contacted to provide for the safety of the student.

8. Once the student begins psychiatric treatment, a district representative shall follow up with the parent to monitor the student's status.
 9. Upon return to school, a plan of periodic monitoring of the student by a staff member should include input from the outside treating clinician. Communications concerning this student shall be documented.
- C. Level 3: Student has attempted a suicidal act.
1. A school staff member shall immediately notify the building Principal and school nurse who will decide whether or not medical attention is needed and if the police need to be summoned in order to assist the student.
 2. A district representative shall notify a parent of the incident and actions to be taken. The parent shall be requested to report to the treatment facility or school. In addition to medical treatment, emergency psychiatric screening should be done.
 3. The Supervisor of Student Services shall be notified of the incident and all actions taken.
 4. Decisions as to further intervention by school staff shall be based on recommendations of medical and mental health services personnel from the treating facility.
 5. A district representative shall follow-up on the family response to the situation and ascertain that a psychiatric evaluation has been conducted on the student and that the student and family have followed through on the recommended treatment plan.
 6. The student's return to school shall be predicated on written communication from the treating professional stating that it is safe for such return.
 7. Upon the student's return to school, a plan of periodic monitoring by a district representative should include input from the outside treating clinician.
 8. Communications concerning this student shall be documented.

3. Prevention of Suicide Contagion

- a. The Principal shall be promptly informed when a pupil of this district commits suicide.
- b. The Principal will assemble teaching staff members prior to the opening of school to provide them with accurate information, plans of the school day, and guidelines for handling the concerns of pupils.
- c. The Principal will assemble a crisis team from the school staff to assist in dealing with the general school situation and any individual problems that may arise.
- d. The Principal will take precautions to minimize the risk of contagion in cases of suicide by doing the following:
 - Compile a list of all students who were close to the deceased;
 - Compile a list of all school staff members who had contact with the deceased;
 - Compile a list of all students considered at-risk for possible suicidal ideation;
 - Review planned school response during subsequent school days and weeks, including policy regarding contacts with the new media;
 - Review planned small group (in-class) disclosure to students of relevant facts and develop a suggested discussion format;
 - Review procedures for making student referrals from classes to designated support persons/stations;
 - Meet with all students in small groups (classrooms) only. Reorient students to ongoing classroom activities and dismiss students in accordance with pre-planned protocol;
 - Reschedule any immediately impending stressful academic exercises/tests if possible;
 - Initiate survivor group counseling sessions for students who were closest to deceased, for other concerned/troubled students and for staff members in need.
- e. With the intent of minimizing contagion and responding to all deaths in a uniform manner, avoid giving the suicide prominence by public

announcement, flying the flag at half-staff, planning school-wide assemblies or similar expressions of grief or remembrance. School will not be closed in order to permit pupils and staff to attend the funeral. Teachers will respond to the needs of pupils with as little interruption of the educational program as possible.

- f. The district's crisis team, Chief School Administrator and Principal shall review all memorialization activities within 21 school days of the request.
- g. Pupils will be provided with accurate information and will be given the opportunity to discuss their feelings of loss and their memories of the victim, both good and bad, without penalty.
- h. All school personnel shall be especially alert to signs of contemplated suicide among the victim's peers.
- i. Teaching staff, under the direction of the Principal, shall attempt to prevent social contagion by:
 - Preventing glorification or romanti-cization of the suicide, which may lead to copycat behaviors.
 - Encouraging memorialization activities that focus on prevention and education.
 - Helping pupils recognize that suicide is irreversible and permanent, and does not truly resolve problems.
 - Encouraging pupils to report fellow students who make remarks that suggest she/he is considering suicide to a teaching staff member.
 - Discussing ways of handling depression and anxiety without resorting to self-destruction.
- j. Pupils who were close to the victim and their family shall be offered special counseling services at the school and notified of available community mental health services.
- k. Inform local hot line and mental health center of events at the school so they can be prepared to meet student needs.
- l. Avoid convening a large parent meeting. Communicate with other students' parents through the telephone and written notice. Review

school/community resources they may wish to use and remind parents of their children's special needs during this time.

- m. Contact administrators in surrounding districts since the aftermath of tragedy also affects students and staff in other schools.

Legal References: NJSA 18A:11-1

General mandatory powers and duties

NJSA 30:9A-12

Youth suicide prevention program

Dated: February 15, 2005

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

**SAMPLE GENERAL RELEASE OF INFORMATION
CONSENT FORM**

Confidential

I, _____,
(student or parent/guardian name)

authorize _____
(name of individual/school disclosing information)

to disclose to _____
(name or title of individual/organization
to whom the information is to be disclosed)

the following specific information from my record: _____

This consent to disclose information may be revoked by me at any time, except to the extent that action has already been taken in reliance thereupon.

This consent, unless expressly revoked earlier, expires upon (specify the date, event and/or condition upon which consent expires):

Date: _____
Event: _____
Condition: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Legal Representative Signature: _____ Date: _____

Specify Relationship of Legal Representative _____

INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL SERVICES
SAMPLE INITIAL REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FORM

Confidential

TO: Intervention and Referral Services Team

FROM: _____

DATE: _____

STUDENT: _____

Reasons for Request for Assistance (Must be for school-based issues, i.e., academics, behavior, school health):

Specific and Descriptive Observed Behaviors (Hearsay or subjective comments will not be accepted):

*Place the completed forms in a sealed envelope
and deliver to the I&RS team mailbox.*