

Lancaster School District Suicide Prevention Policy Summary

NEW LAW (AB 2246, 2016) mandates districts serving grades 7-8 to adopt policy on suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention by the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. This policy reflects the mandate to address any related staff development to be provided to teachers in grades 7-8 and to address the needs of specified high-risk student populations. In addition, the policy adds best practices in prevention, intervention, and postvention, including, but not limited to, student instruction, crisis intervention procedures, follow-up care for a student who threatens or attempts suicide, and the provision of counseling and other postvention strategies to reduce suicide contagion.

Why was the law put in place? Suicide is the third leading cause of death for youth 10-24 years old in the United States. For every young person who dies by suicide, between 100-200 attempt suicide. Males are four more times to die by suicide, although females attempt suicide three times as often as males.

Who does this law impact? This law affects students in grades 7-12 and the staff who works with this population.

What does Lancaster School District's Policy Include?

1. Staff development for teachers, administrators, school counselors, and school psychologists in our middle schools
 - a. Training needs to include risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, and prevention factors
 - b. Teachers will learn how to respond appropriately when a student expresses suicidal ideation
 - c. School Psychologists and School Counselors will receive training in all the same areas as the teacher, along with district procedures, legal requirements, and best practices for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.
2. Lessons for 7th and 8th grade students in the areas of problem-solving, coping skills, instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicide in self and others.
 - a. School Counselors will provide lessons to all 7th and 8th graders
 - b. Lessons will occur on an annual basis
3. Information for parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the district's suicide prevention efforts, steps for helping suicidal youth, school/community resources to help a child in crisis
 - a. This information will be placed on the district website
 - b. This information will be available on middle school websites as well

Resources available to parents:

1. 7th and 8th grade suicide prevention lessons that the counselors will be providing to all students
2. The Lancaster School District Suicide Policy
3. A list of mental health providers in the Antelope Valley
4. Guidelines for parents of elementary and secondary students (English and Spanish)
 - a. Including statistics involving youth suicide
 - b. What parents can do if their child expresses suicidal ideation
 - c. Risk Factors
 - d. Warning Signs
5. Parent/Student Suicide Hotlines and other Resources (English and Spanish)