

**MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY  
INTERMEDIATE  
UNIT #23**

SECTION: OPERATIONS

TITLE: SUICIDE AWARENESS,  
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

ADOPTED: AUGUST 26, 2015

REVISED:

<p>1. Purpose SC 1526 Pol. 103, 248, 249, 806</p> <p>2. Authority Title 22 Sec. 12.12 Pol. 216</p> <p>3. Guidelines</p> <p>SC 1526</p> <p>SC 1526</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>819. SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE</b></p> <p>The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students attending Intermediate Unit programs and the school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.</p> <p>In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the Intermediate Unit’s suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student’s parents/guardians, the program supervisor, building principal or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.</p> <p>The Intermediate Unit shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.</p> <p>The Intermediate Unit shall notify Intermediate Unit employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the Intermediate Unit’s website.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION</b></p> <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Student Education</u></p> <p>Students shall receive age-appropriate education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.</p> <p>Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>SC 1526 Pol. 333</p> <p>SC 1526</p>	<p><u>Protocols for Administration of Employee Education</u></p> <p>All Intermediate Unit employees, including but not limited to secretaries, coaches, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers, shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.</p> <p>As part of the Intermediate Unit’s professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.</p> <p>Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to guidance counselors, Intermediate Unit mental health professionals and school nurses.</p> <p><u>Resources for Parents/Guardians</u></p> <p>The Intermediate Unit may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs; and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>METHODS OF PREVENTION</b></p> <p>The methods of prevention utilized by the Intermediate Unit include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.</p> <p><u>Suicide Prevention Coordinators</u></p> <p><i>Intermediate Unit Level –</i></p> <p>An Intermediate Unit level suicide prevention coordinator shall be designated by the Executive Director. This may be an existing Intermediate Unit employee. The Intermediate Unit suicide prevention coordinator shall be responsible for planning and coordinating implementation of this policy.</p> <p><i>Program Level –</i></p> <p>Each program supervisor or building principal shall designate a school suicide prevention coordinator to act as a point of contact in each school for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation. This may be an existing employee.</p>
--------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Early Identification Procedures

Early identification of individuals with one (1) or more suicidal risk factors or of individuals exhibiting warning signs, is crucial to the Intermediate Unit's suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, Intermediate Unit employees, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicidal risk factors and warning signs.

**Risk factors** refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:

- Behavioral Health Issues/Disorders:
  - Depression.
  - Substance abuse or dependence.
  - Previous suicide attempts.
  - Self injury.
- Personal Characteristics:
  - Hopelessness/Low self-esteem.
  - Loneliness/Social alienation/isolation/lack of belonging.
  - Poor problem-solving or coping skills.
  - Impulsivity/Risk-taking/recklessness.
- Adverse/Stressful Life Circumstances:
  - Interpersonal difficulties or losses.
  - Disciplinary or legal problems.
  - Bullying (victim or perpetrator).
  - School or work issues.
  - Physical, sexual or psychological abuse.

<p>SC 1526</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exposure to peer suicide.</li><li>• Family Characteristics:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior.</li><li>- Family mental health problems.</li><li>- Divorce/Death of parent/guardian.</li><li>- Parental-Child relationship.</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Warning signs</b> are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expressions such as hopelessness, rage, anger, seeking revenge, feeling trapped, anxiety, agitation, no reason to live or sense of purpose.</li><li>• Recklessness or risky behavior.</li><li>• Increased alcohol or drug use.</li><li>• Withdrawal from friends, family, or society.</li><li>• Dramatic mood changes.</li></ul> <p><u>Referral Procedures</u></p> <p>Any Intermediate Unit employee who has identified a student with one (1) or more risk factors or who has an indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for further assessment and intervention.</p> <p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>The Intermediate Unit shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>METHODS OF INTERVENTION</b></p> <p>The methods of intervention utilized by the Intermediate Unit include, but are not limited to, responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school or Intermediate Unit programs, suicide attempts outside of school or Intermediate Unit programs,</p>
----------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>Pol. 806</p>	<p>and completed suicide. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.</p> <p><u>Procedures for Students at Risk</u></p> <p>An Intermediate Unit-approved suicide assessment instrument may be used by trained mental health staff such as counselors, psychologists, social workers.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be notified by the Intermediate Unit. If the Intermediate Unit suspects that the student’s risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, Intermediate Unit staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services.</p> <p>The Intermediate Unit shall identify mental health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance.</p> <p><b>Mental health service providers</b> – may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and primary care providers.</p> <p>The Intermediate Unit shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student’s family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.</p>
<p>Pol. 103, 113.2, 114</p>	<p><u>Students With Disabilities</u></p> <p>For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempt suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p>
<p>Pol. 103, 113.2</p>	<p>If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student’s needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.</p>
	<p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>The Intermediate Unit shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the intervention and assessment process including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.</p>

<p>SC 1526</p>	<p>The Executive Director or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>METHODS OF RESPONSE TO SUICIDE OR SUICIDE ATTEMPT</b></p> <p>The methods of response to a suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by the Intermediate Unit include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying and training the Intermediate Unit crisis response/crisis intervention team.</li> <li>2. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.</li> <li>3. Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians.</li> <li>4. Working with families.</li> <li>5. Responding appropriately to the media.</li> <li>6. Collaborating with community providers.</li> </ol> <p>The Executive Director or designee shall develop administrative regulations with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicidal act or attempt on Intermediate Unit grounds or during an Intermediate Unit-sponsored event or program.</p>
<p>Pol. 103, 113.2</p>	<p><u>Re-Entry Procedures</u></p> <p>A student’s excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student’s return to school and Intermediate Unit programs shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>An Intermediate Unit-employed mental health professional, the program supervisor, building principal or suicide prevention coordinator shall meet with the parents/guardians of a student returning to school or Intermediate Unit programs after a mental health crisis, and, if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and applicable next steps to ensure the student’s readiness to return to school and Intermediate Unit programs.</p> <p>When authorized by the student’s parent/guardian, the designated Intermediate Unit employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside mental health care providers.</p>

<p>SC 1526</p>	<p>The designated Intermediate Unit employee will periodically check in, as needed, with the student to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>REPORT PROCEDURES</b></p> <p>Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.</p> <p>When an Intermediate Unit employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.</p> <p>As stated in this policy, Intermediate Unit employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response.</p> <p>The suicide prevention coordinator shall provide the Executive Director with a copy of all reports and documentation regarding the at-risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to guidance counselors, Intermediate Unit mental health professionals and school nurses.</p>
<p>SC 1526</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION RESOURCES</b></p> <p>A listing of resources regarding suicide awareness and prevention shall be attached to this policy.</p> <p>References:</p> <p>School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 1526</p> <p>State Board of Education Regulations – 22 PA Code Sec. 12.12</p> <p>Board Policy – 103.1, 113.2, 216, 248, 249, 333, 806</p>