

# San Mateo County Schools

## Comprehensive School Safety Plan

### Part One: Public Component

### 2022-23 School Year

**School District:** Woodside Elementary School

**Address:** 3195 Woodside Rd., Woodside, CA 94062  
Woodside, CA 94062

**School Site:** Woodside Elementary School

**School Address:** 3195 Woodside Rd., Woodside, CA 94062  
Woodside, CA 94062

**CDS Code:** 41690880000000

**School Covered in Document** Woodside Elementary School

**Address of School Sites** 3195 Woodside Rd., Woodside, CA 94062  
Woodside, CA 94062

**Date of Adoption:**

**Approved by:**

Name	Title	Signature	Date
Steve Frank	Superintendent		

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## Comprehensive School Safety Plan Purpose

The California Education Code (sections 32280-32288) outlines the requirements of all schools operating any kindergarten and any grades 1 to 12, inclusive, to write and develop a school safety plan relevant to the needs and resources of that particular school.

The historical requirement of the Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP) was presented in Senate Bill 187. This legislation contained a sunset clause that stated that this legislation would remain in effect only until January 1, 2000. Senate Bill 334 was approved and chaptered in 1999 and perpetuated this legislation under the requirement of the initial legislation. In 2004, the Legislature and Governor recast and renumbered (SB719 & AB 115) the Comprehensive School Safety Plan to support California public schools as they develop their mandated comprehensive safety plans to include strategies aimed at the prevention of, and education about, potential incidents involving crime and violence on school campuses.

Effective January 1, 2019, Assembly Bill 1747 became law, requiring that the school site council or safety committee consult with a fire department and other first responder entities in addition to currently required entities. It requires the CSSP and any updates made to the plan to be shared with the law enforcement agency, the fire department, and the other first responder entities. This bill requires the CSSP to also include procedures for conducting tactical responses to criminal incidents. In January 1, 2019, AB 2291 became law. This bill requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to adopt, on or before December 31, 2019, procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying.

Comprehensive School Safety Plans are required under SB 719 & AB 115 and contain the following elements: Assessment of school crime committed on school campuses and at school-related functions; child abuse reporting procedures; disaster procedures; suspension and expulsion policies; procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils; discrimination and harassment policies; school-wide dress code policies; procedures for safe ingress and egress; policies enacted to maintain a safe and orderly environment; rules and procedures on school discipline and hate crime reporting procedures.

Districts and County Offices of Education are encouraged to include clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the following positions (if used):

- Mental Health professionals, school counselors
- Community Intervention Professionals
- School Resource Offices, police officers on campus

The guidelines are encouraged to include strategies to create and maintain a positive school climate and mental health protocols for the care of students who have witnessed a violent act at any time.

The Comprehensive School Safety Plan may include procedures for responding to the release of a pesticide or other toxic substance from properties located within in-quarter mile of a school.

The Comprehensive School Safety Plan will be reviewed, updated, board approved and submitted to San Mateo County Office of Education by March 1st of every year. In July of every year, the school will report on the status of its school safety plan including a description of its key elements in the annual School Accountability Report Card (SARC).

A copy of the Comprehensive School Safety Plan – Public Component is made available for review at the District Office and on the District Website

District Office Address	District Website
3195 Woodside Rd., Woodside, CA 94062	<a href="http://www.woodsideschool.us">www.woodsideschool.us</a>

## Safety Plan Vision

This Comprehensive School Safety Plan analyzes current safety conditions and school climate. In doing so, the plan describes programs in place at our schools, and defines the strategies and programs in place for continued improvement in providing a safe, orderly, school environment that is nurturing and conducive to learning. Appendices follow the action plan. These Appendices include specific, mandated policies and protocols connected to the safety strategies and programs described within the narrative of this document.

## Components of the Comprehensive School Safety Plan (EC 32281)

### Woodside Elementary School Safety Committee

Members: School Site Council

Name	Agency	Title	Membership Role
Patrick Hurley	Woodside Elementary	Lower School Principal	
Jennifer Pedersen	Woodside Elementary	Upper School Principal	
Jane Glanville	Woodside Elementary	Parent	President
Jonathan Schneider	Woodside Elementary	Teacher	
Cathy Stienstra	Woodside Elementary	Executive Assistant	
Dan Simon	Woodside Elementary	Trustee	
Melissa Land	Woodside Elementary	Parent	
Dana Bailey	Woodside Elementary	Parent	
Alisia Cheuk	Woodside Elementary	Parent	
Christine Jones	Woodside Elementary	Teacher	

### Assessment of School Safety

#### Current Status of School Crime (EC 32282.1)

CSSP shall include an assessment of the current status of school crime at the school and the school related functions. This may be accomplished by reviewing one or more of the following types of information:

- Office Referrals
- Attendance rates/School Attendance Review Board
- Suspension/Expulsion data
- California Health Kids Survey
- School Improvement Plan
- Local law enforcement juvenile crime data
- Property Damage data

Describe the data reviewed and key analysis points, and table of findings. Document how this information was shared with your SSC/planning committee and date shared:

We reviewed the attendance rate/absenteeism data and suspension data for our school by examining data from the California Dashboard with the SSC on 01/31/23. We found that our attendance rates have dropped and need improvement due to high chronic absenteeism rates (17%) and that our suspension rates last year were lower than the current year.

### Strategies and Programs to Provide and Maintain a High Level of Safety (EC 32281(a)1, items A-J)

Include in this section appropriate strategies and program that provide and maintain a high level of school safety and address the school's procedures for complying with existing laws related to school safety.

## **Student Threat Assessment Policy and Protocol**

The San Mateo County Office of Education operates the San Mateo County Student Threat Assessment Center that oversees the Student Threat Assessment Protocol/Process for all school districts in the county. The Student Threat Assessment Protocol and Process is designed for use with students who are engaged in circumstances that suggest the potential for aggression directed at other people, including procedures related to students bringing weapons on school campuses and at school related functions. The San Mateo County Student Threat Assessment Protocol is designed for Districts and/or school sites to oversee the site based multi-disciplinary Level 1 Threat Assessment team. A County-Wide Level 2 Student Threat Assessment Team that is Multi-Disciplinary Team made up of Leaders from San Mateo County Office of Education, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, the Office of Consumer and Family Affairs, Juvenile Probation, Child and Family Services, Members of Law Enforcement and the County Attorney's Office. This team meets regularly and as needed to provide support to school sites and districts is assessing, responding to and providing services to student who make targeted threats of violence or suggest the potential to do so. Annual updates and training on the protocol and process are provided by the San Mateo County Office of Education.

See Board Policy on Philosophy, Goals, Objectives and Comprehensive Plans:

<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806308/>

## **Suicide Prevention Policy and Protocol**

Suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. The San Mateo County Suicide Prevention Protocol for Schools provides schools/districts with a comprehensive approach to prevention, intervention and postvention strategies for students struggling with suicide and self-injurious behavior.

Measures and strategies specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. Prevention and Intervention strategies are developmentally appropriate for the student population that is being served. San Mateo County Suicide Prevention Protocol for Schools addresses the following:

- Strategies to help promote a positive school climate
- Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for all K-12 staff
- Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others
- Information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, basic steps for helping suicidal youth and school and community resources.
- Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
- Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
- Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide.

**(Optional) Include other Program, Protocols, Policies that exist for your school district that provide a high level of safety:**

## **Child Abuse Reporting Procedures (EC 35294.2 [a] [2]; PC 11166)**

Teachers and support staff are mandated reporters and are required by the State of California to report any known or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the county child welfare department or to a local law enforcement agency. No proof of abuse or neglect is needed, only "reasonable suspicion" that child abuse or neglect may have occurred. Any concern about the possibility of child abuse or neglect must be reported. Investigations will be conducted by law enforcement and/or the county child welfare department to determine if abuse or neglect has occurred.

Mandated reporters must report to the County Child Welfare Department or to local law enforcement immediately by phone. A written report must then be sent within 36 hours by fax, or it may be sent by electronic submission, if a secure system has been made available for that purpose in the county. Written reports must be submitted on the California Suspected Child Abuse Report Form 8572. Telling a supervisor does not meet the mandated reporting requirement. If a decision is made that the supervisor will complete and submit the report to the county child welfare department or law enforcement agency, then one report is sufficient.

For mandated reporters, Penal Code 11172 (a) provides absolute immunity from state criminal or civil liability for reporting as required. This immunity applies even if the mandated reporter acquired the knowledge or reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect outside of his or her professional capacity or scope of employment. However, mandated reporters will only have immunity under federal claims if the report was made in good faith.

Legally mandated reporters can be criminally liable for failing to report suspected abuse or neglect. The penalty for this misdemeanor is up to six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine. Mandated reporters can also be subject to a civil lawsuit and found liable for damages, especially if the child victim or another child is further victimized because of the failure to report.

#### Who must report

Anyone who is authorized to work with children - permanent or temporary (even substitute teachers), whether credentialed or not. The responsibility for reporting rests solely with the mandated reporter. Reporting suspected abuse to an administrator, school counselor, or other person is not the end of your obligation.

When two or more mandated reporters jointly have knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect, a single report may be made by the selected member of the reporting team. Any member of the reporting team who has knowledge that the designated person has failed to report must do so him or herself.

#### When to report

Even if the information you learn is old-STILL REPORT. The statute of limitations does not start to run until the failure to report is discovered.

Child abuse must be reported when a mandated reporter "has knowledge of or observes a child in his/her professional capacity, or within the scope of his/her employment whom he/she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse."

Report if you suspect. You are not required to prove that abuse has occurred. That will be determined through investigation by the child welfare professional or law enforcement.

#### Consequences for not reporting

A misdemeanor + six months in jail and/or up to a \$1,000 fine.

The potential civil lawsuit, especially if the child victim or another child is further victimized because of the failure to report.

Loss of credential.

#### How to make report suspected child abuse

Tell an Administrator (Marta Batlle, Jenn Pedersen, Patrick Hurley, or Steve Frank).

You can also consult or get assistance from our school psychologist (Norisa Ramos-Rojas), or school counselor (Mena Lam).

Fill out the form with all the student's information. Before you call, you will need to have the child's name, birthday, parents' and siblings' name, home address, and phone number.

Call San Mateo County Child Protection Services 650-595-7922 or 24-hour Hotline 800-632-4615 for making reports.

Fax written report to CPS within 36 hours or verbal report. (Fax number 650.592.2289.

The original form must be given to Marta Batlle. Teachers can keep a copy.

All reports are kept confidential and locked in Marta's office.

Also, see Board Policy on Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting:

<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806717/>

#### **Disaster Procedures (EC 35295-35297; GC 8607 and 3100)**

#### **Big Five: Immediate Action Emergency Response for Schools Protocol and Hazard Response Protocol**

The San Mateo County Office of Education, in collaboration with Local Law Enforcement, County Government and Local Fire Departments created the Big Five Immediate Action Emergency Response for Schools Protocol for all Public, Private and Charter Schools in the County and update the protocol annually. The Big Five Immediate Action Response is a protocol that can be implemented in a variety of different emergency situations. The Protocol is consistent with the guidelines established in California's Standardized Emergency Management System and shall integrate the procedures of the National Emergency Management System. All employees of the District are Disaster Service Workers, as defined by the California Emergencies Services Act, and are subject to such disaster service activities as may be rightfully assigned to them and that all employees shall be required to subscribe to the oath or affirmation required by the Act.

When an emergency occurs, it is critical that staff members take immediate steps to protect themselves, their students, and other people on campus. With an Immediate Action Response, staff can follow specific directions without having to learn extensive protocols for each of several dozen different emergency situations. Staff, certificated and classified, will be given multiple opportunities annually to be trained on the Big Five School Emergency Guidelines Immediate Action Response and Hazards Response Protocols. These trainings specifically include training on the following:

- Earthquake preparedness, response, and recovery actions. Including Drop, Cover, and Hold On response protocols.
- Fire and Smoke, bomb threat or explosion, dangerous wildlife, bioterrorism and hazardous material spill or leak procedures which may result in a Shelter-In-Place
- Evacuation/Relocation procedures and Student Release to Family for Reunification procedures
- Secure Campus procedures for act of violence or danger of violence in the surrounding community
- Lockdown/Barricade procedures for a violent intruder on school premises

Staff members must learn and train on each Big Five Immediate Action Response and be prepared to perform assigned responsibilities. All students must be familiar with actions to take in the event that a Big Five response is implemented. It is highly recommended that school staff and students participate in the Big Five trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate emergency drills monthly. Table top exercises, walk-through drills, and social stories are examples of trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate training and drills to be used by school sites. Big Five signage and instructions are publicly displayed at all school sites.

#### **Procedures to prepare for active shooters or other armed assailants**

School site staff should participate in action-oriented Lockdown/ Barricade (active shooter) drills when students are not present. The use of Think on Your Feet Peet Book, which teaches young students what to do during a Lockdown/Barricade, Table-Top exercises or Walk-Through Drills are to be used with in lieu of violent intruder drills or simulations when students are present.

#### ***Immediate Action Responses***

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>SHELTER IN PLACE</b>	For environmental hazards: Go inside immediately.
<b>DROP, COVER, &amp; HOLD ON</b>	For earthquakes and explosions: Protect from falling debris. Drop to the floor.
<b>SECURE CAMPUS</b>	For potential threats of violence nearby: Go inside the nearest building. Close and lock all doors. Remain inside until threat has passed.
<b>LOCKDOWN/BARRICADE</b>	For immediate threats of violence on premises: Go inside. Lock and barricade all doors. Cover windows and turn off lights. Remain quiet and alert.
<b>EVACUATION</b>	When conditions outside are safer than inside: Employ "Look, Listen, and Leave". Exit the building and move to a safe location.

The Big Five Immediate Action Response Protocol for School Administrators and Hazard Response Protocol is found in the appendix of this plan.

Site Specific Emergency Response plans can be found in the Comprehensive School Safety Plan; Part 2: Internal Components, for each school site.

See 2022-2023 School Safety Plan attachment.

### **Public Agency Use of School Buildings for Emergency Shelters**

Woodside Elementary School shall make school buildings, grounds, and equipment available to the Department of Emergency Services or other disaster related public agencies, including the American Red Cross, for mass care and welfare shelters during a disaster or other emergency affecting public health and welfare.

See 2022-2023 School Safety Plan attachment.

### **School Suspension, Expulsion and Mandatory Expulsion Guidelines**

Woodside Elementary School desires to provide students access to educational opportunities in an orderly school environment that protects their safety and security, ensures their welfare and well-being, and promotes their learning and development. Rules and regulations set the standard of behavior expected of students and the disciplinary process and procedures for addressing violations of those standards and therefore adheres to California Education Code 48915(a)(1) for grounds for suspension or expulsion.

Cause for Suspension/ Expulsion-

For K-8 students, the California Education Code has specific language defining the grounds for immediate suspension. Please see section 48900 (Grounds for Suspension/Expulsion; Legislative Intent) in the California Education Code for more information regarding suspension and section 48915 (Expulsion; particular circumstances) regarding expulsion.

For more information see the following Board Policy on the school website:

Suspension and Expulsion: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806512/>

Conduct: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/1164294/>

Discipline: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806725/>

### **Procedures to Notify Teachers of Dangerous Pupils (EC 49079)**

The Woodside Elementary School shall inform the teacher of each pupil who has engaged in, or is reasonably suspected to have engaged in, any dangerous acts as described in EC sections 48900, 48900.2, 48900.3, 48900.4, or 48900.7 (excluding 48900[h]).

The Woodside Elementary School shall provide the information to the teacher based upon any records that the district maintains in its ordinary course of business, or receives from a law enforcement agency, regarding a pupil described in this section. An employee of Woodside Elementary School who knowingly fails to provide information about a pupil who has engaged in, or who is reasonably suspected to have engaged in, the acts referred to in subdivision (a) is guilty of a misdemeanor, which is punishable by confinement in the county jail for a period not to exceed six months, or by a fine not to exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000), or both.

Any information received by a teacher pursuant to this section shall be received in confidence for the limited purpose for which it was provided and shall not be further disseminated by the teacher.

In the event of a dangerous pupil, administration will notify all teachers who see that student via email and then follow up with an in person call. Also, see the Board Policy on Weapons and Dangerous Instruments:

<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806694/>

### **Firearms on Campus**

The Woodside Elementary School committed to providing a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors on campus. The Superintendent or designee shall consult with local law enforcement, insurance carriers, and other appropriate individuals and agencies to address the security of school campuses.

District policy regarding the possession of firearms and/or ammunition on school grounds shall be included in the district's comprehensive safety plan and shall be communicated to district staff, parents/guardians, and the community.



Only those persons specified in Penal Code 626.9(l)-(o) and 30310 is authorized to possess a firearm and/or ammunition on school grounds. School grounds include, but are not limited to, school buildings, fields, storage areas, and parking lots. The Superintendent or designee shall not grant permission to any other individual to carry a firearm or ammunition on school grounds.

See Board Policy on Firearms on School Grounds: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/1067241/>

### **Sexual Harassment Policies (EC 212.6 [b])**

The Woodside Elementary School is an equal employment opportunity employer and is committed to implementing a policy of nondiscrimination in all aspects of employment.

Woodside Elementary School provides equal opportunity to all applicants and employees without regard to race, color, religion, pregnancy, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or perceived sex or gender, genetic information or characteristics (with respect to the applicant, employee, or a family member), national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, family care status, marital status, veteran's status, uniformed service, or other basis protected by state or federal law.

Woodside Elementary School does not unlawfully discriminate based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics.

See Board Policy on Sexual Harassment: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806517/>

### **School-wide Dress Code Relating to Gang-Related Apparel (EC 35183)**

A school-wide dress code established pursuant to this section and Section 35183 shall be enforced at Woodside Elementary School and at any school-sponsored activity by the school principal or person designated by the principal. Students' clothing must not present a health or safety hazard or a distraction which would interfere with the educational process. Woodside Elementary School expects students to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to wear clothes that are suitable for the school activity in which they participate. Students are prohibited from wearing gang-related apparel when there is evidence of a gang presence that disrupts or threatens to disrupt the school's activities.

#### **Student Handbook Statement:**

Good grooming and proper dress are essential in establishing an appropriate, safe school environment for learning. Clothing should be clean, neat, and comfortable. The following are guidelines that should be observed:

No wearing of caps, visors, or hoods in the classroom except for religious or medical purposes

Clothing that reveals underwear or cleavage, bare chests, bare stomachs (midriffs), and barebacks, is not permitted

All undergarments must be kept under regular clothing

Waistbands on pants should be high enough to allow students to bend over without exposing undergarments

Students must wear shoes throughout the day, and athletic shoes, socks, and clothing are required for P.E.

Attire promoting alcohol, drugs, or sex is not permitted

Shorts/shirts/skorts should be at least knuckle length with arms straight at your side.

Also, see Board Policy on Dress and Grooming: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/1164291/>

### **Procedure for Safe Ingress and Egress of Pupils, Parents, and Staff to and from School (EC 35294.2)**

In an effort to ensure the safety of students, staff, parents and campus visitors specific policies and procedures have been enacted at Woodside Elementary School

#### **Driving**

##### **Ingress/Drop Off:**

Vehicles to enter either parking lots, near tennis courts or in front of Sellman, and proceed to the drop-off area.

Students exit the vehicle on the right side and move to the sidewalk.  
From there they enter campus and proceed to their class or the playground.  
The school provides at least one adult supervisor to help with this process.

#### **Egress/Pick Up:**

Parents enter either parking lot, near tennis courts or in front of Sellman, and park along the sidewalk or in front of the office.  
Parents wait in their vehicles until student dismissal.  
Once students have entered the vehicle, parents may pull around the vehicle in front.  
We ask parents to pull forward when possible to reduce traffic on Woodside Road.  
The school provides at least one adult supervisor to help with this process.

#### **Walking or Biking**

Students who need to cross Woodside Road are instructed to use one of two crosswalks.  
The crosswalks have flashing lights when activated.  
Students below 4th grade\*\*\* are not allowed to ride their bikes to school unless accompanied by a parent/guardian. All bikes must be locked securely in the bike racks. Bikes may not be left in the racks overnight.

(Optional) Other Programs, Procedures or Policies for Safe Ingress and Egress Include:

- Student Transportation Procedures (optional)
- Student Drop Off & Parking Procedures (Optional)
- Other relevant Procedures or Policies (Optional)

#### ***Safe Routes to School Program (Optional Section)***

The San Mateo County Office of Education and Woodside Elementary School participates in the Safe Routes to School Program which results in less traffic congestion around schools; improved air quality; a greener, healthier community; and an increase in self-reliance among San Mateo County children who walk and bike to school. The San Mateo County Safe Routes to School Program performs walk and bike safety audits assess the walkability and bike ability of a school and its surrounding environment. These audits include analyzing traffic patterns and travel to and from a school. Walking and biking route maps are also generated to support safe and efficient travel flow to and from a school. San Mateo County Safe Routes to School program places particular emphasis on providing access and support for students whose families have limited financial means, students of color, students of all genders, students with disabilities, and others and works to provide additional resources to schools in low-income communities, particularly technical assistance for schools serving low-income communities with higher rates of traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.

See Board Policy on Safe Routes to School Program: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806721/>

#### **A Safe and Orderly School Environment Conducive to Learning (EC 35294.2)**

The Woodside Elementary School works to enhance student learning by providing an orderly, caring, and nurturing educational and social environment in which all students can feel safe, connected and take pride in their school and their achievements. Positive relationships between all members of the school community is paramount.

#### ***Positive School Climate:***

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of school life for all stakeholders, including students, parents, and staff. A school's climate reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. A positive school climate fosters positive youth development and supports a high-quality learning environment that provides young people with the foundation to pursue productive and rewarding lives.

Evidence of a positive school climate includes the following:

- Norms, values, and expectations that support social, emotional, and physical safety

- Respectful and engaging interactions and relationships
- A shared school vision that includes students, families, and educators working together
- Educators who lead by example and nurture positive attitudes
- Meaningful participation in the operations of the school and care of the physical environment by all stakeholders

See Board Policy on Positive School Climate- <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806699/>

***Programs/Procedures to Address Mental Health Care for Students Who Have Witnessed a Violent Act (Optional)***

Students who have witnessed a violent act at school or at a school sponsored activity, while going to or coming from school or a school sponsored activity, or during a lunch period on or off campus, will need attention to address their mental health. Witnessing violence and being a victim of violence at school have been found to both positively and significantly associated with psychological trauma symptoms. Schools should work to identify these students and provide appropriate and timely linkage to mental health services.

**Include policy/date enacted via Board Policy PDF, Imbedded Text or Provide full URL to location on web:**

***Mental Health Supports and School Resource Officers on Campus (EC 32282.1)***  
*Optional*

Woodside Elementary School recognizes that to maintain a positive school climate, promote school safety, and increase pupil achievement, mental health and intervention services, including restorative and transformative justice programs, and positive behavior interventions and support must be prioritized.

The following procedures, protocols, and board policies pertain to how the mental health professionals, school counselors, and school resource officers (if utilized) work directly with students to create and maintain a positive school climate for students:

For more information, see Board Policy on Mental Health: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/1175482/>

***School Discipline Rules and Consequences (EC 35291 and EC 35291.5)***

Woodside Elementary School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and positive school environment which is conducive to student learning and to preparing students for responsible citizenship by fostering self-discipline and personal responsibility. High expectations of student behavior, use of effective school and classroom management strategies, provision of appropriate intervention and support, and parent involvement can minimize the need for discipline measures that exclude students from instruction as a means for correcting student misbehavior.

The Board of Trustees is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and positive school environment which is conducive to student learning and achievement and desires to prepare students for responsible citizenship by fostering self-discipline and personal responsibility. The Board believes that high expectations for student behavior, use of effective school and classroom management strategies, provision of appropriate intervention and support, and parent/guardian involvement can minimize the need to disciplinary measures tat exclude students from instruction as a means for correcting student misbehavior.

See Board Policy on Discipline: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806725/>

**Hate Crime Reporting Procedures and Policies**

**Discrimination and Harassment Policies Including hate crime reporting)**

Woodside Elementary School believes all students are entitled to a safe, orderly, caring, and equitable learning environment that promotes academic achievement, school connectedness, and meaningful participation for all students.

- Protect the right of all students, staff, and parents/guardians to be free from harassment or any activity that degrades the unique qualities of an individual or association with a person or a group with one or more actual or perceived protected characteristics, to include students' parental, family, or marital status, ancestry, color, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, ethnicity, age, culture, heritage, sexuality, physical/mental/intellectual attributes, or religious beliefs and practices.
- The Woodside Elementary School expressly prohibits discrimination, intimidation, bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment of any student or employee by any employee, student, or other person on any school campus or at any school activity whether on or off campus.
- School personnel will take immediate steps to intervene when it is safe to do so and when he or she witnesses an act of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
- The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all students receive age-appropriate information on sexual harassment.
- For students in grades 4-12, disciplinary action may include suspension and/or expulsion provided that, in imposing such discipline, the entire circumstances of the incident(s) shall be taken into account. Any staff member found to have engaged in sexual harassment or sexual violence toward any student shall be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal in accordance with applicable policies, laws, and/or collective bargaining agreements.
- The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a record of all reported cases of sexual harassment to enable Woodside Elementary School to monitor, address, and prevent repetitive harassing behavior at Woodside Elementary School schools.

See Board Policy on Hate-Motivated Behavior: <http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806741/>

## **Procedures for Preventing Acts of Bullying and Cyber-bullying**

Woodside Elementary School recognizes the harmful effects of bullying on student well-being, student learning and school attendance and works towards providing a safe school environment that protects all students from physical and emotional harm. No student or group of students shall, through physical, written, verbal or other means, harass, sexually harass, threaten, intimidate, cyberbully, cause bodily injury to, or commit hate violence against another student, group of students or school personnel.

In compliance with ED Section 32283.5 Woodside Elementary School makes available the [California Department of Education's online training resources](#) to address and prevent bullying and cyberbullying to certificated staff and all other school site employees who have regular interaction with pupils.

Bullying involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group bothering those who are less powerful. Bullying may be physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing), verbal (taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, threatening), or psychological (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or promoting social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation). Bullying is absolutely not tolerated, and any child experiencing it should report it immediately to their teacher or other staff members.

Cyberbullying includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the Internet, social media, or other technologies using a telephone, computer, or any wireless communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's reputation. Off-campus cyberbullying that causes, or is foreseeably likely to cause, a substantial disruption of school activities may result in district-sanctioned discipline.

For more information see Board Policy on Bullying and CyberBullying:  
<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/woodside/DisplayPolicy/806689/>

## **Safety Plan Review, Evaluation and Amendment Procedures**

The Comprehensive School Safety Plan is reviewed and amended annually by the School Site Safety Committee and shall be submitted to the (district) Board for approval. The Completed CSSP and related policies are available for public review at the (District) office. The approved Comprehensive School Safety Plan shall be submitted to the San Mateo County Office of Education prior to March 1 of the current school year. All San Mateo County School Districts plans associated board policies and county wide protocols are available at the San Mateo County Office of Education for public review.

**School District:** Woodside Elementary School

**School Site:** Woodside Elementary School

**Safety Plan Appendices**



# THE Big Five

**School Administrator Packet • 2022-23**

**Immediate Action Emergency  
Response for Schools**



**Coalition for  
Safe Schools &  
Communities**



**SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION**



# STEERING COMMITTEE

## COALITION FOR SAFE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES STEERING COMMITTEE

AGENCY/DISTRICT	REPRESENTATIVE	POSITION/TITLE
Jefferson Union High School District	Dorene Basuino	Associate Superintendent Human Resources & Student Services
Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association	Ed Barberini	Chief, San Mateo Police Department
San Mateo Consolidated Fire	<i>To Be Determined</i>	
San Mateo County Attorney	Claire Cunningham	Chief Deputy County Attorney
San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services	Ziomara Ochoa Shirley Chu	Deputy Director Clinical Service Manager
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Sophia Brink	Legislative Aide, David Canepa
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors	Lena Silberman	Legislative Aide, Don Horsley
San Mateo County Community College District	<i>To Be Determined</i>	Captain, Public Safety
San Mateo County District Attorney	Sharon Cho	Deputy in Charge
San Mateo County Human Services Agency	John Fong	Director, Children and Family Services
San Mateo County Office of Education	Molly Henricks	Coordinator, School Safety and Risk Prevention
San Mateo County Office of Education	Patricia Love	Executive Director, Strategy and Communications
San Mateo County Office of Education	Nancy Magee	County Superintendent
San Mateo County Office of Education	Mary McGrath	Executive Director, Safe and Supportive Schools
San Mateo County Office of Education	Kristen Shouse	Associate Superintendent, Educational Services
San Mateo County Probation	Chris Abalos	Deputy Director
San Mateo County Schools Insurance Group	Tom Ledda	Senior Loss Control Analyst
San Mateo County Sheriff	Andy Armando	Captain
San Mateo County Superintendents Association	Beth Polito	Superintendent, Las Lomitas Elementary School District
San Mateo Union High School District, 9-12 School Districts Services	Don Scatena	Director of Student Services

## FOREWORD

San Mateo County's Big Five protocols provide a shared understanding of emergency response using common language across the county's 23 school districts and 20 law enforcement agencies.

First released in 2014 after a year-long stakeholder engagement process involving experts from education, law enforcement, fire, public health, law, government, and the community at large, the Big Five provides five immediate actions for school leaders to implement in any emergency. The Big Five action responses are Shelter in Place; Drop, Cover, and Hold On; Secure Campus; Lockdown/Barricade; and Evacuation.

The Big Five is under constant review by the multi-disciplinary Steering Committee of the San Mateo County Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities. The Steering Committee meets regularly to review activities, analyze emerging challenges, and make recommendations.

In addition to the Big Five, the Coalition's portfolio includes the following countywide protocols: *Student Threat Assessment*, *Suicide Prevention Toolkit*, *Child Sexual Abuse Protocol*, and *CSEC and Human Trafficking Protocol for Educators*. In 2022-23, the Coalition is releasing its Naloxone Distribution Toolkit to further prevent loss of life due to fatal opioid drugs.

Additionally, the Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities assists the 23 districts with required Comprehensive School Safety Plans, and in 2022-23 will provide feedback and review of all plans.

Through collaboration with many committed county partners, the Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities continues to fulfill its vision to create and sustain safe and positive school and community environments so all youth may thrive and succeed.

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# TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

To minimize detrimental mental health impacts on students and staff, school leaders are asked to use trauma-informed approaches when practicing and implementing the Big Five protocols. The following table provides grade-appropriate guidance for supporting students during the preparation, response, and recovery phases of an emergency. Specific recommendations for planning and implementing trauma-informed drills can be found on page 6.

	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
<b>All Grades</b>	<b>Staff:</b> Train all staff on procedures Use the word “safety” when conducting drills  <b>Students:</b> Practice grounding and calming skills with students  <b>Parents/Guardians:</b> Educate parents on protocols Inform parents of safety drills well in advance	<b>Staff:</b> Remain calm Students take their cues from adults. Model calm confidence.  <b>Students:</b> Have students learn and practice calming skills and exercises  <b>Parents/Guardians:</b> Notify parents in home language as soon as it is safe regarding the situation or once the drill has concluded	Engage students in a movement activity  Notice students who may be experiencing anxiety/fear. Check in personally with any students of concern and inform counselors or parents as needed.
<b>Pre-K to Kinder</b>  <i>Developmental Considerations:</i> Students require adult guidance to determine what action to take  Engage in social stories with students instead of simulated drills  No prior knowledge of the Big Five or emergency response actions	<b>Students:</b> Use Big Five posters as a visual tool Use <i>Think-on-your-Feet</i> books to help students learn and prepare for emergency drills and responses	<b>Staff:</b> Act with confidence Use age-appropriate language  <b>Students:</b> Allow/encourage students to hold a calming item (stuffed animal, book, small toy)	Praise students for what they did well during the drill  Reinforce the concept that preparedness is key to overall school safety

# TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACHES

	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
<b>1st Grade to 4th Grade</b>  <i>Developmental Considerations:</i> Students can understand safety directions and instructions Students are capable of understanding purpose of safety drills Teachers/leaders engage in social stories with students instead of simulated drills	<b>Students:</b> Use Big Five posters as a visual tool Use Big Five story books and related curriculum to help students prepare and learn  <b>Parents/Guardians:</b> Encourage families to discuss the Big Five Protocols and emergency preparedness at home using the Big Five Books	<b>Staff:</b> Give clear instructions and follow protocol  <b>Students:</b> If needed, allow students to hold a calming item (stuffed animal, book, small toy)	Identify how the class worked well together Give students time to ask questions Reiterate that drills help us stay safe Move back into learning when class is ready
<b>5th Grade to 8th Grade</b>  <i>Developmental Considerations:</i> Students are capable of understanding purpose of safety drills Students benefit from adult direction but are able to perform Big Five actions independently Review prior knowledge of the Big Five protocols	<b>Staff:</b> Clearly post the Big Five Protocols in each classroom  <b>Parents/Guardians:</b> Encourage families to discuss the Big Five Protocols and Emergency Preparedness at home	<b>Staff:</b> Give clear instructions and follow protocol Emphasize cooperation as a class  <b>Students:</b> Assign students to perform action steps during the incident	Acknowledge students who performed specific tasks and identify how the class worked well together Give students time to ask questions Reiterate that drills help us stay safe Move back into learning when class is ready
<b>9th Grade to 12th Grade</b>  <i>Developmental Considerations:</i> Students are able to identify probable dangers confronting a school Students benefit from adult direction, but are able to perform Big Five actions independently in an emergency	<b>Staff:</b> Clearly post the Big Five Protocol in classroom  <b>Students:</b> Have students discuss what to expect during a drill or incident Assign students specific roles and have them walk through those actions	<b>Staff:</b> Give clear instructions and follow protocol  <b>Students:</b> Assign students to perform specific action steps during the drill or incident	Spend time debriefing the drill or incident with the class Allow students to ask questions Identify how the class worked well together Move back into learning when class is ready

# DISASTER SERVICE WORKER

California Government Code, Section 3100, Title 1, Division 4, Chapter 4 states that public employees are Disaster Service Workers and are subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned by their superiors or emergency service commanders. The term “public employees” includes all persons employed by the state or any county, city, city and county, state agency or public district. The law applies in the following cases:

- When a local emergency is proclaimed
- When a state of emergency is proclaimed
- When a federal disaster declaration is made

## WHAT DOES A DISASTER SERVICE WORKER DO?

- Public employees serving in the role of Disaster Service Workers may be asked to do jobs other than their usual duties for periods exceeding normal work hours
- Employees may be scheduled in shifts and asked to return to the work site at hours outside the normal workday
- Disaster Service Workers will be deployed within the Incident Command System and may perform a variety of duties including oversight of shelter care, communications, logistics, first aid and comfort, or community support and safety
- When pressed into disaster service, employees’ Workers Compensation coverage becomes the responsibility of state government (OES), but the employer pays the overtime. These circumstances apply only when a local or state emergency is declared.

To provide effective support as a Disaster Service Worker, employees must have confidence their own families are well prepared to deal with emergencies in their absence. The time and energy a staff member commits to being prepared at home will provide the best assurance they are capable of dealing with the emergency situation at the school/work site.

# CALLING 911

Response is the process of implementing appropriate actions while an emergency situation is unfolding. In this phase, schools mobilize the necessary resources to address the emergency at hand. This may include calling or texting 911.

When calling 911, be prepared to remain on the phone and answer specific questions. In order to complete an accurate assessment of the situation, the 911 Dispatcher must obtain as much information as possible to best inform emergency responders and engage the appropriate level of medical response.

## WHEN REPORTING AN EMERGENCY:

- Remain calm and speak slowly and clearly
- Be prepared to provide name, location of the incident, and caller's location, if different from the scene of the emergency
- Although caller ID information may transfer immediately to the 911 Dispatcher, it is not available in all locations. The 911 Dispatcher will confirm and verify the phone number and address for every call received.
- Answer all questions asked by the 911 Dispatcher, even those that seem repetitious
- Do not hang up until the Dispatcher says to do so

## CALLING 911 FROM A CELL PHONE:

- Cell phone calls to 911 are often sent to a 911 answering point based on cell radio coverage. Cell coverage areas don't always match city boundaries.
- Know your cell phone number and be prepared to give the dispatcher an exact address

## TEXT TO 911:

Text to 911 is the ability to send a text message to reach 911 emergency call takers from your mobile phone or device. However, because text to 911 is currently only available in certain locations, always make a voice call to contact 911 during an emergency whenever possible. Call if you can. Text if you can't.

**When calling 911, time is of the essence. Remain calm; speak slowly and clearly.  
The 911 Dispatcher needs to gather the correct information the first time they ask for it.**

# POWER OUTAGES DURING COVID-19

Power Outages – both planned and unplanned have become more common in San Mateo County. This section will address power outages within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic or other airborne contagious illnesses. Please see the Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities' [Hazard Response Guidelines](#) for more general information on addressing power outages.

- Work with site and district facilities staff to determine the need for generator use to keep key equipment operating (e.g., air purifiers and fan, student medical equipment, kitchen facilities, science lab equipment)
- Open windows and doors, if they are not already open, to provide adequate air flow if HVAC and fans are not available for use
- If possible and air quality permits, move students to an outdoor setting for better air flow
- If a power outage occurs during poor air quality days, consider moving students to distance learning
- If a planned outage is scheduled for multiple days, consider moving students to distance learning
- If a planned power outage may impact student and teachers' ability to use technology at home, send assignments and materials home with students



# DRILLS AND EXERCISES

It is essential for school and district staff to conduct drills and engage in various preparedness exercises. Exercises should occur on a regular basis and include key school staff and local partners. A standardized and compliant emergency management plan utilizes a graduated approach to drills. Begin simply with orientation activities before advancing to more complex and sophisticated drills and exercises. Use drills and exercises to:

- Reveal gaps in preparedness
- Identify resource and supply needs
- Improve coordination between the school and community
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Increase overall level of emergency readiness, including response capacity of all staff and students

## TYPES OF DRILLS AND EXERCISES:

- **Orientation Seminar:** Introduces emergency policies and procedures to new staff and students, allows for discussion and clarifying questions
- **Tabletop Exercises:** Simulates an emergency situation in an informal, stress-free environment, elicits discussion and questions
- **Drill:** Simulates an incident in a limited scope, tests function of emergency plan, initiates informal discussion of simulated emergencies
- **Functional Exercise:** Simulates a real emergency under time-sensitive conditions, tests and measures seldom-used resources
- **Full-Scale Exercise:** Tests an entire community's response capability, uses real equipment, takes place in "real time"

## STRATEGIES FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED DRILLS:

Students and staff may experience anxiety when anticipating and participating in drills. School leaders should take explicit steps to minimize the impact of drills on students and staff. Use a **TRAUMA-INFORMED** and developmentally appropriate approach to drills.

- Consider using social stories (short stories that depict the emergency response situation) or leading the class in tabletop exercises to practice Drop, Cover and Hold On, Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, and Secure Campus Drills
- Conduct Lockdown / Barricade drills only with adult staff when students are not present

# DRILLS AND EXERCISES

- Consider conducting a tabletop exercise with adult staff
- Use *Think-on-your-Feet Peet* storybook for PreK-5 students to engage in classroom activities and discussions about Lockdown/Barricade and other Big Five actions
- Discuss and assign certain roles for 4th-12th grade students during the event (help barricade, close blinds, turn off lights). Involve students in response
- Conduct tabletop activities with students in 6th-12th grade, go over the procedures specifically for each Big Five Action
- Identify objects for students to hold for comfort
- Always announce drills in advance and prepare all participants as “surprise” drills can cause unnecessary panic
- Prioritize the most serious gaps and focus on the specific objectives
- Because children are sensitive to adult behavior, staff should be trained to exhibit confidence and remain calm during drills
- Make sure your school is ready for the type of drill planned
- Allow enough time for the exercise
- Gradually increase sophistication of exercises over time, but do not add unnecessary complications
- Adults should monitor students during the drill for signs of emotional distress and provide support accordingly
- Evaluate every exercise and conduct a debrief with staff and students

# INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

This section lists inclusive practices that can be employed to assist students with non-ambulatory needs, cognitive and developmental needs, sensory needs and mental health needs.

- The needs of students will vary depending on the student
- It is important to model confidence and competence during a drill or emergency incident
- All students need to know that it is okay to feel afraid, sad, angry, or worried during an emergency incident and encouraged to talk about what they are feeling or experiencing
- Consider creating an Individual Emergency Plan for each student

For students with unique needs, consider creating an Individual Emergency Plan for each student.

Student Group	Actions
<b>All Students</b>	<p>Work with students prior to the emergency incident occurring to prepare them. State expectations and outcomes in a developmentally appropriate way (using story boards, social narratives, the Big Five Books or Picture Exchange Systems, etc.)</p> <p>Identify the stressors/triggers for particular students (e.g. noise, chaotic environment, change in schedule, items out of place, hiding in particular locations, etc.)</p> <p>With students who have difficulty with transitions, use a transition marker or surprise card (keep in the Teacher's Go Bag) during an emergency incident</p> <p>Use calming activities and soothing objects for students to hold (stuffed animal, stress ball, fidget spinner, etc.)</p> <p>If students use ASL, PECS, tablets or GoTalk for communication, use these for instructional commands during the incident</p>
<b>Visual/Auditory Needs</b>	<p>Use visual signals in conjunction with verbal commands (classroom signage, the Big Five Posters, desk sized visual aids related to the Big Five or even American Sign Language)</p> <p>Flash lights on and off to secure the student's attention after an announcement or when fire alarm is activated</p>
<b>Non-Ambulatory Needs</b>	<p>Students on crutches, canes or walkers should be evacuated as injured persons. Use a sturdy chair or one with wheels to move the student or help carry the person to the evacuation location</p> <p>Give priority assistance to wheelchair users with electrical</p> <p>Accompany students to the evacuation site and reunite student with their ambulatory equipment as soon as safe to do so</p>

# INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Student Group	Actions
<b>Cognitive/Developmental Needs</b> <b>Sensory/Autism Needs</b> <b>Mental Health Needs</b>	<p>Use the student's reward/reinforcement systems to promote participation and following of directions</p> <p>Allow use of self-soothing behaviors, such as fidgeting, placing hands in pockets or hands in hair</p> <p>Speak slowly, whisper commands and avoid physical contact between others during drills and incidents if able to do so</p> <p>Provide earplugs/noise canceling headphones to decrease sensory input</p> <p>Allow students to color in the Big Five Activity Books, their own coloring pages or calming strategies during the emergency incident</p> <p>Be aware of students who may be vulnerable to stress or trauma, re-experiencing personal experiences or life circumstances or emotional vulnerability. Provide appropriate and timely services or referrals after the emergency incident</p>

# THINK ON YOUR FEET

In the event of an emergency, quick thinking is imperative for survival. During a crisis, an individual must think on their feet to determine the best course of action. These choices may include:

- Get off campus
- Hide
- Go into Lockdown/Barricade
- Fight against an assailant in the most extreme circumstances

Understanding and practicing these options can help an individual respond decisively and in so doing, best ensure the safety and survival of self and others.

In the event of a Violent Intruder on campus, expect to hear noise from alarms, gunfire, explosions, and shouting. It is not uncommon for people experiencing a dangerous situation to first deny or rationalize the possible danger rather than respond. Quality training can help individuals think clearly and quickly during a chaotic scene. Proper training should include helping staff recognize the sounds of danger. Train staff and students to act decisively and remain flexible with a "think on your feet" approach.

## LOOK, LISTEN AND LEAVE: FIRE ALARM

The **LOOK, LISTEN, AND LEAVE** protocol is an important action to practice when training the "think on your feet" mindset. At the sound of a fire alarm, staff and other leaders should take a moment to assess the scene before evacuating. The three steps of **LOOK, LISTEN, AND LEAVE** are:

- **LOOK** - open the classroom door and look out. Do you see smoke or fire? Is the path to your pre-planned evacuation spot clear of obstacles? Do you notice anything out of the ordinary?
- **LISTEN** - in addition to the alarm, are there other sounds? Do you hear anything that would indicate it is unsafe to leave the room (explosions, panicked voices, the discharge of a weapon)?
- **LEAVE** - having determined it is safe to do so, direct students to leave the room toward the pre-determined evacuation spot.

# IMMEDIATE ACTION RESPONSE: THE BIG FIVE

The Big Five is a set of **IMMEDIATE ACTION RESPONSES** intended to be implemented quickly in any variety of emergency situations. When an emergency occurs, it is critical that staff members take *immediate* steps to protect *themselves*, their *students*, and *other people* on campus. Staff members must become familiar with each Immediate Action Response and be prepared to perform assigned responsibilities. All students must also be taught how to implement each of The Big Five protocols.

## IMMEDIATE ACTION RESPONSE: THE BIG FIVE

BIG FIVE ACTION	WHEN	WHAT
<b>SHELTER IN PLACE</b>	Environmental hazards, dangerous air quality due to smoke or other contaminants, fire off-site, dangerous wildlife in the area, or severe weather	Isolate students and staff from the outdoor environment. Go inside. If hazard is airborne, close doors, windows, and air vents. Shut down air conditioning/heating units.
<b>DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON</b>	Earthquake, explosion, or falling debris	Protect students and staff from falling debris, drop to the floor, take cover under heavy furniture and hold on.
<b>SECURE CAMPUS</b>	Potential threat of violence in the surrounding community and/or police activity off-campus and nearby	Calmly direct all staff/students indoors. Close and lock all classrooms/office doors. Continue instruction as planned. Remain indoors until otherwise directed.
<b>LOCKDOWN/ BARRICADE</b>	Violent intruder on campus	Immediately seek safety indoors. Once inside, lock and barricade all doors. Cover windows and turn off lights. Remain quiet and alert. No one is allowed to enter or exit for any reason unless directed by law enforcement.
<b>EVACUATION</b>	Bomb threat, chemical/gas leak, fire inside the building or nearby premises, severe weather alert, after an earthquake or explosion, or when implementing Student Release/Reunification	Use the “Look, Listen, and Leave” protocol. Once it is deemed safe to exit buildings, lead students and school staff from school buildings to a predetermined location.

For more information about specific hazards, see *Emergency Management Resource Guide*.

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE BOX

To ensure site leaders and emergency personnel have access to information and supplies critical in an emergency, prepare two Emergency Response Boxes with the items listed below. Keep both boxes on campus, each in a separate and accessible location.

The Emergency Response Box is referenced in every protocol of the Big Five. The information therein should be updated annually, preferably in July/August in preparation for the new school year.

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	DATE
Aerial Photo of Campus		
Building Blueprints		
Campus Map		
Emergency Plan		
Fire Alarm Turn-Off Procedure		
First Aid Supplies		
Incident Command Assignments		
Incident Command Staging Area Map		
Bell Schedule / Master Schedule Course List		
Sprinkler System Turn-Off Procedure		
Street Map		
Student/Staff Medical Alert List		
Teacher/Employee Roster		
Utilities Shut-Off Procedures		
Yellow Caution Tape		



# SHELTER IN PLACE

**SHELTER IN PLACE** is a short-term measure implemented to isolate students and staff from the outdoor environment and prevent exposure to airborne contaminants or threats posed by wildlife or other environmental hazards. The procedures may necessitate closing and sealing doors, windows, and vents; shutting down the classroom/building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to prevent exposure to the outside air; and turning off pilot lights.

**SHELTER IN PLACE** is considered appropriate for, but is not limited to, the following types of emergencies:

- External chemical release
- Fire in the community
- Hazardous material spills
- Unhealthy air quality outside
- Dangerous wildlife on or near campus

A Shelter-in-Place response may require that HVAC systems be shut down to provide protection from contaminated outside air. Students and staff may freely move about inside the buildings, but no one should leave the protected space until directed by fire officials, law enforcement, or site administration.

## SHELTER IN PLACE:

- All heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems may need to be shut down immediately depending on the hazard
- All pilot lights and sources of flame may need to be extinguished
- Any gaps around doors and windows may need to be sealed
- Allows for free movement within classrooms or offices

## POOR AIR QUALITY:

Continue to monitor the EPA's [AirNow website](#) and refer to the [School Air Quality Activity Recommendations](#) for guidelines about when and how to modify outdoor physical activity and outdoor learning based on the AQI. If the AQI reaches 150 or higher, the school should begin to implement its shelter-in-place protocols. Refer to the [Decision Making Guide for School Closure](#) to help determine whether the school and district meet the requirements to stay open. Closure decisions are made in collaboration with district leadership.



# SHELTER IN PLACE



- If the school's HVAC system air filter is new or has been upgraded, set the central system's circulating fan to operate continuously (set to "ON" rather than "AUTO") and make sure HEPA or MERV-13 filters are installed.
- An alternative option is to use portable air cleaners, which should be set to run continuously. Windows and doors should be closed for greatest effectiveness. For classrooms, consider Medify-ma-40 (or similar) air purifiers. For larger rooms, consider Medify-ma-112 (or similar) air purifiers.
- Avoid activities that create more indoor and outdoor air pollution, such as frying foods, sweeping, vacuuming, and using gas-powered appliances.
- If COVID-19 is prevalent in the community, recirculate air if high-quality air filters are installed and/or expand use of portable filters.

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER - SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command (IC) role
- Instruct designee to call 911. Designee must be ready to provide location, status of campus, and all available details of situation
- Make public address announcement. Instruct students and staff to remain calm and convey reassurance that the situation is under control

### EXAMPLE:

"Your attention please. Due to (name the environmental hazard) affecting our campus, we are implementing SHELTER IN PLACE procedures. Students and all staff are to remain indoors and follow directions as they come. If you are outside, move indoors immediately. Do not go outside for any reason until you receive further instructions. This is NOT a drill."

– REPEAT –

- Designate assigned individual to close doors and windows in administration building
- Designate assigned individual to shut off heating or air conditioning units in administration building, if necessary



# SHELTER IN PLACE

- Initiate central HVAC shutdown, as necessary
- When able, alert Superintendent's office
- Put on emergency IC/Admin vest and continue as Incident Commander until relieved by law enforcement
- Access the "Emergency Response Box" (p. 12) to provide fire officials with maps, rosters, etc.
- Meet fire department or law enforcement at Incident Command Post
- Transfer incident command to fire officials but provide whatever assistance/information is required. School Incident Commander remains part of the ICS Unified Command and is expected to serve at Incident Command Post through duration of event.
- If possible, provide periodic updates to staff via public address, email, or other agreed upon means. Continue updates even if there is no change in the situation.
- When directed by fire, health, or other authority, give the **ALL CLEAR** instruction to indicate that the normal school routine can resume
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/ guardians with a brief description of the emergency, how it was handled, and what steps are being taken to ensure the ongoing safety of students and staff

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- Immediately clear students from the halls. Stay away from all doors and windows.
- Keep all students in the classroom until further instructions are received. Support those needing special assistance.
- If directed by Incident Command, secure individual classrooms: a) close doors and windows; b) shut down the classroom HVAC system to; c) turn off fans; d) seal gaps under doors and windows with wet towels, duct tape, or other materials if instructed by School Incident Commander
- Take attendance and call or email attendance report to school secretary or according to site protocol
- Wait for another action or, if **ALL CLEAR** announcement is issued, return to normal class routine

# DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON



**DROP, COVER AND HOLD ON** is the immediate action taken in the event of an earthquake or explosion and protects students and staff from flying and falling debris. It is an appropriate action for, but is not limited to, the following types of emergencies:

- Earthquake
- Explosion

In the event of an explosion, earthquake, or other event causing falling debris, immediately “DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON.” Students and staff should drop to the floor, duck under a sturdy desk or table, cover the head with arms and hands, and hold onto furniture. Turn away from windows to stay clear of breaking glass. Individuals in wheelchairs can secure against an interior wall and lock the wheels. Protect head by covering with arms if possible.

## DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON:

- Must be practiced for immediate and automatic response
- Is the single most useful action to protect from injury in an earthquake
- In the event it is impossible to duck under sturdy furniture, continue to cover face and head with arms and hold onto something sturdy
- Most injuries in earthquakes are caused by breaking glass or falling objects
- Fire alarms and sprinkler systems may go off in buildings during an earthquake, even if there is no fire
- Stay alert to aftershocks
- Assist those with special needs to ensure safe cover for all
- Evacuate **only if** there is damage to the building, the building is on fire, or location is in a tsunami zone



# DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER - SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command (IC) role
- As soon as possible after recognizing seismic activity, make a public address (PA) announcement. If the PA system is not available, use other means of communication, i.e., sending messengers to rooms to deliver instructions.
- Remain calm and give clear directions

### EXAMPLE:

“Attention please. We are experiencing an earthquake.  
For your protection, follow DROP, COVER, and  
HOLD ON procedures. This is NOT a drill.”

– REPEAT –

- According to site protocol, collect status reports from each classroom. Determine the extent of physical injuries and/or structural damage.
- If injuries are reported, instruct designee to call 911 immediately if classroom teacher/supervisor has not already done so
- Access the “Emergency Response Box” (p. 12) in order to chart reported injuries and/or building damage on building map. Be ready to provide this map to First Responders upon arrival.
- Put on emergency IC/Admin vest and continue as Incident Commander until relieved by fire officials or law enforcement
- Before initiating any evacuation, and if deemed safe to move around the building, deploy Security/Search and Rescue Team to check for fires, status of utilities, and structural and nonstructural damage. If the team can smell or hear gas, take appropriate steps to shut the gas off.
- Based on available information, decide on the need for evacuation
- An evacuation outdoors should be ordered if the structural integrity of the building is in doubt
- Structural damage might not require an evacuation. Inside may be safer than outside.

# DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON



## SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS *(continued)*:

- When able, report campus status to Superintendent's office
- If 911 is called, meet fire officials, emergency medical responders, or law enforcement at Incident Command Post
- If incident includes casualties, deploy (School) Liaison Officer to First Responder's Emergency Medical Command Post
- After proper identification, only Coroner, police chaplain, or other public official should deliver official notification of the deceased
- Be prepared to transfer command of immediate emergency to First Responders. School Incident Commander remains part of the ICS Unified Command and is expected to serve at Incident Command Post through duration of event
- If site is designated unsafe to return, initiate **STUDENT RELEASE** procedures
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a description of the emergency, how it was handled, and what steps are being taken in its aftermath

## STAFF ACTIONS - INSIDE:

- At first recognition of an earthquake, instruct students to move away from windows
- Initiate **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON** procedures. Immediately drop to the floor under desks, chairs, or tables. With back to windows, place head between knees, hold on to a table leg with one hand, and cover the back of the neck with the other arm.
- Move as little as possible. However, if a person is unable to find protection under sturdy furniture, direct them to shelter against an interior wall and turn away from windows and other glass.
- Each time an aftershock is felt, **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON**. Aftershocks frequently occur minutes, days, even weeks following an earthquake.



## **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON**

- When it appears safe to release from **COVER**, assess any injuries and/or damage and report status to Incident Commander according to site communications protocol. Be prepared to call 911 directly if necessary.
- Wait for further instructions from School Incident Commander or First Responders or if that seems unlikely and building is compromised, evacuate students to predetermined Evacuation Assembly Area

### **STAFF ACTIONS - OUTSIDE:**

- Find a clear spot and drop to the ground. (Stay away from buildings, power lines, trees, and streetlights, etc.)
- Commence **DROP AND COVER** in the **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON** procedures
- Place head between the knees; cover back of neck with arms and hands
- Remain in place until shaking stops or for at least 20 seconds
- Each time an aftershock is felt, **DROP AND COVER**. Aftershocks frequently occur minutes, days, even weeks following an earthquake.
- When it appears safe to move, report location, injuries and/or any damage to School Incident Commander according to site communications protocol
- Wait for further instructions from School Incident Commander or First Responders, or if that seems unlikely, evacuate students to predetermined Evacuation Assembly Area

# SECURE CAMPUS



**SECURE CAMPUS** is implemented when the threat of violence or police action in the surrounding community requires precautionary measures to ensure the safety of staff and students. When a campus is in **SECURE CAMPUS** status, classroom instruction and/or activity may continue if all classroom and office doors are locked and all students and staff remain inside *through the duration of the event*, except for essential needs. Outer gates and other entrance/exit points can be closed (**NOT LOCKED**) to deter a potential perpetrator from entering school grounds.

During a Secure Campus, the Incident Command Team or staff assigned by the Incident Command Team shall assist in escorting students and staff who may need to leave the classroom for Essential Needs. Essential Needs can include but are not limited to the following.

- Bathrooming/Toileting
- Medical Needs/Response
- Mental Health/Wellness Needs/Response

This response is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, the following types of emergencies:

- Potential threat of violence in the surrounding community
- Law enforcement activity in the surrounding community

A **SECURE CAMPUS** response may be elevated to **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE** as circumstances demand in which case instruction immediately ceases and students and staff follow **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE** procedures.

Secure Campus allows for instruction to continue while the school takes preventative action in the event of a threat in the neighborhood surrounding a school. Lock all classroom/office doors, close entrance and exit points on the school's perimeter, and continue classroom instruction.

## SECURE CAMPUS:

- Is intended to prevent a potential threat present in the community from entering campus
- Heightens school safety while honoring instructional time
- Requires that all exterior classroom/office doors are locked and remain locked



## SECURE CAMPUS

- Is intended to prevent intruders from entering occupied areas of the building
- Requires that students and staff remain in **SECURE CAMPUS** status until **ALL CLEAR** is issued by School Incident Commander

### SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER - SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command role
- Make public address announcement. Instruct teachers and staff to immediately lock doors and remain in the classroom or secured area until further instructions are provided

#### EXAMPLE:

“Your attention please. Due to law enforcement activity in the community, please implement **SECURE CAMPUS** procedures immediately. This is **NOT** a drill.”

– REPEAT –

- Instruct designee to call law enforcement non-emergency number and inform them of Secure Campus status. Ask to be kept current on the active event.
- Designate assigned individual to lock all doors leading into administration building
- Designate assigned individual to close (**NOT LOCK**) all entrance and exit points on the campus perimeter
- If relevant to site staffing assignments, contact campus School Resource Officer or other security personnel and provide available information
- When able, alert Superintendent’s office
- Maintain heightened state of readiness in the case the community threat intensifies and school needs to elevate response to **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE**
- Assign staff to assist in escorting students and staff to locations on campus for essential needs break if necessary





## SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS *(continued)*:

- If students are out at break, recess, or lunch and situation is deemed imminent, announce **SECURE CAMPUS** status and ask that all students return to assigned classrooms immediately
- Communicate clearly with students about what is going on. Explain there is no immediate threat of danger and the school is taking extra safety precautions. Give students a chance to ask questions related to the event and protocol.
- Continue teaching and learning until Secure Campus is released
- If possible, provide periodic situational updates to staff via public address, email, or other agreed upon means. Continue updates even if there is no change in the situation.
- Depending on the timing of the situation, consider deactivating the passing period bells. Students and staff must remain inside for as long as the threat persists.
- Utilized assigned staff to provide Essential Need breaks during the situation
- After the emergency has been neutralized, initiate **ALL CLEAR**
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a description of the emergency, how it was handled, and what steps are being taken in its aftermath

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- Move to the door and instruct any passing students to return to assigned classroom immediately
- Close and lock the door
- Continue the class instruction or activity as normal
- Enforce the “no entrance” and “no exit” protocol. Remain in the classroom or secured area and wait for further instructions.
- Be alert to the possibility that the response may elevate to **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE**
- Do not call the office to ask questions; School Incident Commander will send out periodic updates



## SECURE CAMPUS

- Be prepared to escort students to locations on campus for essential need breaks
- Wait for another action or, if **ALL CLEAR** is issued, return to normal class routine

### STAFF ACTIONS - IF STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN CLASS ACTIVITY ON AN OUTLYING FIELD (PE OR OTHER ACTIVITY):

- Gather students together and organize into an orderly formation
- Inform students that as part of **SECURE CAMPUS** procedures, the class will move immediately to a pre-determined classroom location
- Proceed to pre-determined classroom location as quickly as possible
- Once inside, take attendance to ensure all students are accounted for
- By classroom phone, cell phone, walkie-talkie, or other means, contact School Incident Commander to report class location and any absent or missing students
- Implement all classroom policies and procedures for **SECURE CAMPUS** status
- Wait for another action or, if **ALL CLEAR** announcement is issued, return to normal class routine

# LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE



**LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE** is implemented when the imminent threat of violence or gunfire is identified on the campus, or the school is directed to do so by law enforcement. During **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE**, students are to always remain in designated classrooms or lockdown locations. Do not evacuate until room is cleared by law enforcement or site administration. This response is considered appropriate for, but not limited to, the following types of emergencies:

- Gunfire
- Threat of extreme violence outside the classroom

During a **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE**, remember that immediate safety from the violent intruder is the priority and guides all actions, above all other concerns, including COVID-19 safety procedures.

**Lockdown/Barricade requires closing and locking doors and barricading with heavy objects. No one is allowed to enter or exit until door-to-door release by law enforcement or School Incident Commander who will unlock door from the outside with keys.**

## **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE:**

- Is a response to an immediate danger; it is not preceded by any warning
- Demands quick action; an active shooter, for example, can fire one round per second
- Requires common sense thinking under duress; do what must be done to best ensure survival of students and staff
- If it is possible to safely get off campus with students, take that action immediately (Run)
- If it is not possible to get off campus, quickly lockdown inside a safe room and barricade the entrance (Hide)
- Once a room is secured, no one is allowed to enter or exit under any circumstances
- Prioritize clear communication. Remove face covering if necessary.
- In the extreme instance that a Violent Intruder is able to enter a room, occupants should be prepared to fight back (Fight)



# LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE

## THINK ON YOUR FEET

In the event of a Violent Intruder on campus, quick thinking is imperative for survival. Especially when an active threat of violence is present, an individual must think on their feet to quickly determine the best course of action.

In the event of a Violent Intruder on campus, expect to hear noise from alarms, gunfire, explosions, and shouting. It is not uncommon for people confronted with a threat to first deny the possible danger rather than respond. Quality training can help individuals think clearly during a chaotic scene. Proper training should include helping staff recognize the sounds of danger and teaching them to forcefully communicate and take necessary action.

These actions would likely include:

## ESCAPE / GET OFF CAMPUS:

- Only attempt this if confident the suspect(s) is not in the immediate vicinity
- Safely get off campus; find a position of cover or safe place for assembly
- Guide/encourage others you might encounter on the way to follow you to safety
- Call 911 immediately to report location and request emergency services if necessary
- Once in a safe place – stay there

## HIDE / LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE:

- Clear all hallways; get students and staff inside immediately
- Once locked and barricaded inside a room, follow all protocols for Lockdown/Barricade as practiced
- Direct all those in the room to remain still and quiet; turn off/silence cell phones
- If unable to find cover inside a secure room, quickly seek out a hiding place on campus

# LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE



## FIGHT:

- If confronted by an assailant, as a last resort, consider trying to disrupt or incapacitate through aggressive force or by using items in the environment such as fire extinguishers or chairs
- There are documented instances where aggressive action on the part of the victims resulted in stopping the attacker
- Fighting back is NOT an expectation, merely one option for a last resort response

## LOOK, LISTEN, AND LEAVE: FIRE ALARM

If site alarm is triggered during Lockdown/Barricade, always respond with caution and **LOOK** and **LISTEN** for unusual or violent activity before initiating an evacuation **LEAVE**.

- **LOOK** - open the classroom door and look out. Do you see smoke or fire? Is the path to your pre-planned evacuation spot clear of obstacles? Do you notice anything out of the ordinary?
- **LISTEN** - in addition to the alarm, are there other sounds? Do you hear anything that would indicate it is unsafe to leave the room (explosions, panicked voices, the discharge of a weapon)?
- **LEAVE** - only after determining it is safe to do so, direct students to leave the room toward the pre-determined evacuation spot



## LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE

### SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER - SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command role
- Instruct designee to call 911. Designee must be ready to provide location, status of campus, all available details of situation
- Make public address announcement. Instruct teachers and staff to immediately lock doors and barricade in the classroom or secured area until further instructions are provided.

#### EXAMPLE:

“Your attention please. We have a Violent Intruder on campus.  
Implement LOCKDOWN/BARRICADE procedures immediately.  
This is NOT a drill.”

– REPEAT –

- Designate assigned individual to lock all doors leading into administration building
- Instruct office staff to seek safe refuge in a pre-determined “safe” location within the building
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a description of the emergency, how it was handled, and what steps are being taken in its aftermath

### ONLY IF SAFE TO DO SO:

- Attempt to contact on-campus School Resource Officer or other security personnel and provide available information
- When able, alert Superintendent’s office
- Put on emergency IC/Admin vest and continue as Incident Commander until relieved by law enforcement
- Access the “Emergency Response Box” (p.12) in order to provide law enforcement with maps, rosters, etc.
- If possible, provide periodic updates to staff via public address, email, or other agreed upon means. Continue updates even if there is no change in the situation.
- If safe to do so, meet law enforcement at Incident Command Post

# LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE



## ONLY IF SAFE TO DO SO *(continued)*:

- After the emergency has been mitigated, initiate EVACUATION or room-to-room clearing procedures as directed by law enforcement
- Collect attendance and notify law enforcement of any missing persons
- If incident includes casualties, deploy (School) Liaison Officer to First Responder's Emergency Medical Command Post. After proper identification, only Coroner, police chaplain, or other public official should deliver official notification of deceased persons.
- Transfer incident command to law enforcement but provide whatever assistance/information they require. School Incident Commander remains as part of the ICS Unified Command and is expected to serve at Incident Command Post through duration of event.
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a description of the emergency and the response, and if appropriate, what steps are being taken in its aftermath

## STAFF ACTIONS - IF STUDENTS ARE IN CLASS AT TIME OF LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE:

- *Immediately* move to the door and check for passing students. Divert as many students as possible into the classroom.
- Lock and close the door and barricade with heavy objects
- Close blinds and turn off lights. If the door has a window, cover with a pre-cut piece of dark paper or cardboard.
- Instruct students to stay quiet and out of sight. Relocate against the wall least visible to the outside and out of sight of intruder.
- Turn off television, LCD projector, document camera, etc. The room should be dark and quiet.
- Silence all cell phones
- **DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR FOR ANYONE.** Law enforcement and/or School Incident Commander will use keys to unlock door and clear the room.
- *Only if* there is a life-threatening emergency inside the room and there is no other way to request medical assistance. Place a red colored item (card, red cross, sweatshirt, etc.) on/in the window or slide under the outside door.



## LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE

- If an active threat is still present at the time law enforcement comes on scene, law enforcement will ignore the red signal until the active threat has been neutralized
- If safe to do so, locate emergency packet and attendance roster, remove staff ID placard and put it on
- If safe to do so, take attendance and document students who are present in the room
- Remain in the classroom or secured area until further instructions are provided by School Incident Commander or law enforcement
- Do NOT call office to ask questions; School Incident Command will send out periodic updates
- In the extreme instance that a Violent Intruder is able to enter a room, occupants should be prepared to fight back (Fight)
- Maintain order in all areas of shelter or assembly and await the arrival of law enforcement. Be ready for lengthy stay of 2-4 hours

### **STAFF ACTIONS - IF STUDENTS ARE OUT OF CLASS AT TIME OF LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE:**

- Move students to nearest available safe building or location, without drawing attention to self or students. If doors are locked, continue to look for a safe area. Consider moving students off-campus if that seems the safest option.
- Do not chase students who run. Let them go.
- Do not go into rooms that cannot be secured and offer no way out
- If secure inside a room, lock all doors, close blinds/curtains, turn off lights, and direct students to relocate against the wall least visible to the outside and out of harm's way
- Instruct students to stay quiet and out of sight
- Silence all cell phones
- Turn off television, LCD projector, document camera, etc. The room should be dark and quiet.
- Remain calm. If safe to do so, attempt to maintain separation between students and the perpetrator.



# LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE



## STAFF ACTIONS - IF STUDENTS ARE OUT OF CLASS AT TIME OF LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE *(continued)*:

- If an active threat is still present at the time law enforcement comes on scene, law enforcement will bypass injured victims in order to neutralize the threat
- If safe to do so, locate emergency packet and remove staff ID placard and put it on
- If safe to do so, take attendance and document individuals who are present in the room
- If safe to do so and according to site communications protocol, contact School Incident Commander or designee to document your whereabouts as well as any students/staff under your supervision
- In the extreme instance that a Violent Intruder is able to enter a room, occupants should be prepared to fight back (Fight)
- Maintain order in all areas of shelter or assembly and await the arrival of Law enforcement. Be ready for lengthy stay of 2-4 hours

## STAFF ACTIONS - IF STUDENTS ENGAGED IN CLASS ACTIVITY ON AN OUTLYING FIELD (PE OR ACTIVITY CLASSES):

- Gather students together
- Inform students that as part of **LOCKDOWN / BARRICADE** procedures, the class will evacuate off-campus to a pre-determined Off-Site Evacuation Location
- Follow pre-arranged evacuation route to evacuation location
- Should the group be confronted by the intruder who is intent on doing harm, consider taking defensive measures to run, hide, or fight the assailant
- Upon arrival at the pre-arranged location, take attendance
- By radio communication or cell phone, contact School Incident Commander or designee or 911 Dispatcher to report class location and any absent or missing students
- Maintain order in all areas of shelter or assembly. Do not release students to parent/guardian until instructed by School Incident Commander or law enforcement



# EVACUATION

**EVACUATION** is implemented when conditions make it unsafe to remain in the building. This action provides for the orderly movement of students and staff along prescribed routes from inside school buildings to a designated outside area of safety.

**EVACUATION** is considered appropriate for, but is not limited to, the following types of emergencies:

- Bomb threat
- Chemical accident
- Explosion or threat of explosion
- Fire
- Earthquake

In the event of an explosion, earthquake, or other event causing falling debris, **EVACUATION** will be preceded by a **“DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON”** protocol. Students and staff should drop to the floor, duck under a desk or table, cover the head with arms and hands, and hold onto furniture.

## THINK ON YOUR FEET: LOOK, LISTEN, AND LEAVE - FIRE ALARM

Before evacuation, take a moment to look outside the door for any potential dangers. Listen for anything unusual that might pose a safety risk. Once it's determined the path is safe, evacuate the office or classroom to a designated safe area.

## EVACUATION:

- Requires exit from the building to a designated safe site, on-campus or off-site
- May require that students and staff rely on district bus transportation
- May require staff to exit via alternate routes based on circumstances
- Requires that students remain with assigned teachers unless circumstances prohibit it
- Requires that staff and students assist those with special needs to ensure for safe egress of all

# EVACUATION



## EVACUATION ROUTES:

Take care in choosing a designated evacuation area. Consider whether there is a clear route to the area from all parts of the campus, and whether it is far enough away in the case of a fire or gas leak, but close enough to be reached on foot. Consider also having multiple designated evacuation areas in the event one is obstructed or otherwise becomes unsafe during an emergency. Make sure there is a clear, unblocked path onto campus for emergency vehicles. Be sure to include evacuation to designated area(s) as part of drills and training.

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER - SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command role
- Instruct designee to call 911. Designee must be ready to provide location, status of campus, all available details of situation.
- Initiate the alarm and make public address announcement. Instruct teachers and staff to immediately evacuate the building and for students to remain with their teachers until further instructions are provided.

### EXAMPLE:

“Your attention please. We have an emergency.  
Evacuate all buildings immediately (to the on-site location OR to the  
off-site location.) Students are to remain with assigned teacher.  
Evacuate all buildings immediately. This is NOT a drill.”

### – REPEAT –

- When able, alert Superintendent’s office
- Access the “Emergency Response Box” (p. 12) to provide fire officials and/or law enforcement with maps, rosters, etc.
- Put on emergency IC/Admin vest and continue as Incident Commander until relieved by fire officials or law enforcement
- Meet fire officials or law enforcement at Incident Command Post
- Collect attendance and notify fire officials or law enforcement of any missing persons
- If incident includes casualties, deploy (School) Liaison Officer to First Responder’s Emergency Medical Command Post. After proper identification, only Coroner, police chaplain, or other public official



# EVACUATION

should deliver official notification of deceased persons

- Transfer incident command to fire officials or law enforcement but provide whatever assistance/information they require. School Incident Commander remains part of the ICS Unified Command and is expected to serve at Incident Command Post through duration of event.
- When cleared to return to the buildings, announce **ALL CLEAR** and oversee a safe return to classroom and normal school activities
- If site is designated unsafe to return, initiate **STUDENT RELEASE** procedures
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a brief description of the emergency, the school's response, and what steps are being taken to ensure safety of students and staff

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- Prepare students to leave all belongings and calmly exit the building
- Gather emergency supplies/materials (Go Bag, p. 40) including the student roster for current class and that of "Buddy Teacher" (p. 41)
- Remove staff ID placard from emergency materials and put it on
- Ensure that the door is closed, but unlocked
- Check with "Buddy Teacher(s)" to determine each other's health status, need to assist with injuries, need to stay with injured students, responsibility to ICS duty, etc.
- If necessary, one "Buddy Teacher" will evacuate both classrooms
- Take care to ensure the safety and address the unique needs of students or staff with disabilities according to site protocol
- Students and staff may remove s while outside
- Emphasize that the class stay together en route to the Evacuation Assembly Area
- According to site protocol, take attendance once class is safely in assembly location
- According to site protocol, report missing students
- Remain in the Evacuation Assembly Area until further instruction

# EVACUATION



## **STAFF ACTIONS** *(continued)*:

- Wait for another action or, if **ALL CLEAR** announcement is issued, return to school buildings and normal class routine

# FIRST AID: TRIAGE

First Aid response is an important part of any emergency response plan and should be developed in cooperation with partner agencies including local Emergency Medical Services, local hospitals, and the health department. All employees should be trained, and staff roles should be clearly defined and integrated into the site's written plan.

## THE BASICS OF FIRST AID RESPONSE:

- Remain calm and assess the situation
- Be sure the situation is safe for the responder
- In the case of serious injury involving difficulty breathing, loss of consciousness, uncontrolled bleeding, head injury, or possible poisoning, call **911** immediately
- Do NOT move a severely injured or ill person unless necessary for immediate safety
- If moving is necessary, protect the neck by keeping it straight to prevent further injury

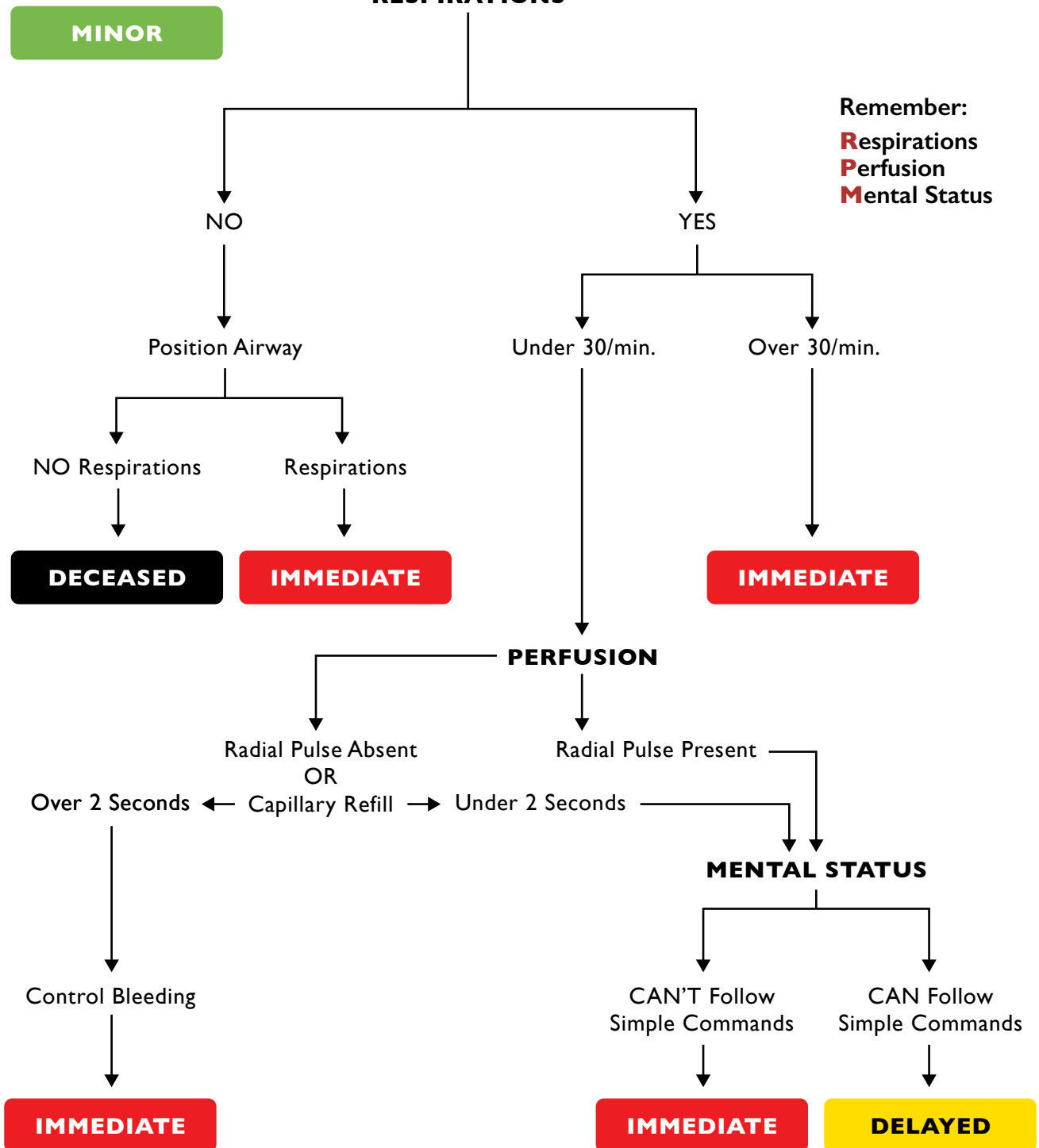
## RECOMMENDED FIRST AID EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FOR SCHOOLS:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Portable stretcher and cot with waterproof cover                      | 12. Gauze squares (2" × 2"; 4" × 4"), individually packaged   |
| 2. Ten Triage Tags   | 13. Trauma Pads (5" × 9")                                     |
| 3. Blankets, sheets/pillows/pillowcases (disposable covers are suitable) | 14. Adhesive tape (1" width)                                  |
| 4. Wash cloths, hand towels, and small portable basin                    | 15. Gauze bandage (2" and 4" widths) rolls                    |
| 5. Covered waste receptacle with disposable liners                       | 16. Ace bandage (2" and 4" widths)                            |
| 6. Bandage scissors, tweezers  | 17. Splints (long and short)                                  |
| 7. Disposable thermometer  | 18. Quick clot dressing                                       |
| 8. Pocket mask/face shield for CPR                                       | 19. Cold packs  |
| 9. Disposable latex free gloves  | 20. Triangular bandages for sling and safety pins             |
| 10. Cotton-tipped applicators, individually packaged                     | 21. Tongue blades   |
| 11. Assorted adhesive bandages (1" × 3")                                 | 22. Disposable facial tissues, paper towels, sanitary napkins |
|  | 23. One flashlight with spare bulb and batteries              |

# FIRST AID: TRIAGE

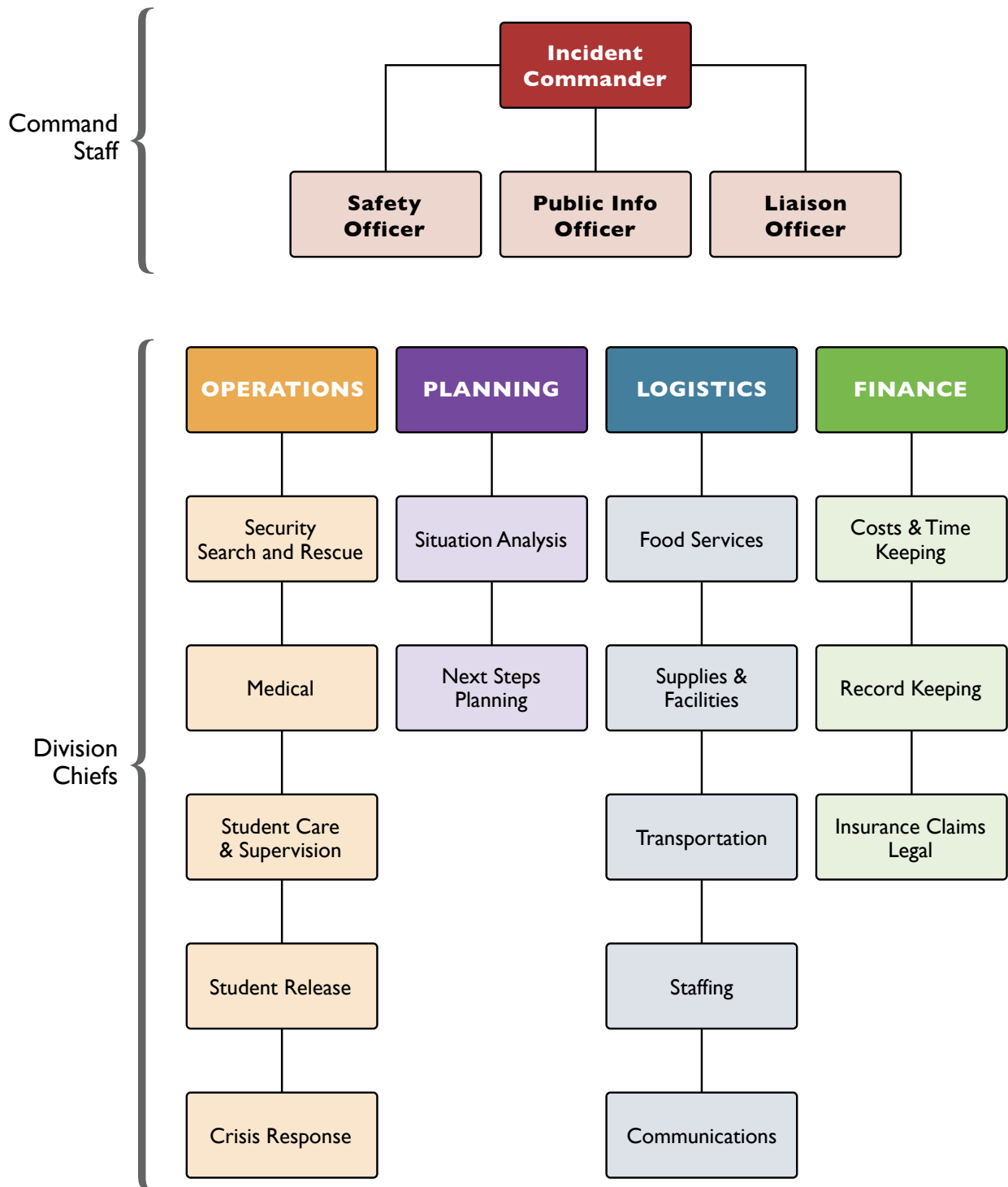
In **TRIAGE**, patients are classified with a color tag to indicate the level of urgency. Those colors are displayed in this diagram.

All Walking Wounded



# SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMAND CHART

This chart should be used as a guide for school site and districts to plan their Incident Command Structure. At a School site the flexibility for each role is paramount as staff is not also on site or able to perform duties during an emergency. For an explanation of roles and job duty expectations, please see the [ICS Cards and Roles](#).





# SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMAND FORM

## THREE-DEEP ASSIGNMENTS

Refer to the chart on the preceding page and choose three qualified delegates for each position. In the event the first individual is not available during an emergency, the responsibility will fall to the second person listed. If the second person is also unavailable, the third will fill the role. An individual may be listed more than once, but within reasonable limits. For an explanation of roles and job duty expectations, please see the *ICS Cards and Roles*.

## COMMAND STAFF

Incident Commander:

Safety Officer:

Public Information Officer:

Liaison Officer:

## OPERATIONS

Security/Search and Rescue:

Medical:

Student Care & Supervision:

Student Release:

Crisis Response:

# SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMAND FORM

## PLANNING

Situation Analysis:

Next Steps Planning:

## LOGISTICS

Food Services:

Supplies & Facilities:

Transportation:

Staffing:

Communications:

## FINANCE

Costs & Time Keeping:

Record Keeping:

Insurance Claims/Legal:

# GO BAG

Each classroom should maintain an up-to-date Go Pack. Each teacher is responsible to monitor the contents of their classroom's Go Pack and to obtain any materials that need replacing or updating. While other appropriate items might be included, each Go Pack must contain the following:

#	Item	Verified (Date)	Verified (by Whom)
1	Updated Class Lists		
2	"Buddy" Class Lists		
3	In-Room Attendance Forms		
4	Evacuation Attendance Forms		
5	Staff ID Placard		
6	Teacher Name Sign		
7	Evacuation Routes Map		
8	Red Cross Placard		
9	Pens/Pencils		
10	Individual Safety Plans of Students with Special Needs		
11	Comforting Objects for Students		
12	Transition Markers/Surprise Cards		
13	Snacks (optional, depending on class)		

# BUDDY TEACHER LIST

Use the chart below to assign Buddy Teachers for emergency evacuation purposes. Each teacher is responsible for assisting the Buddy Teacher's class evacuate should the need arise. The classroom Go Pack should contain current rosters for both classrooms.

## BUDDY TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

#	Teacher	Room No.	Teacher	Room No.
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

# COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS

The California Education Code (sections 32280-32288) outlines the requirements of all schools operating transitional kindergarten, kindergarten, and any grades 1 to 12, to write and develop a school safety plan relevant to the needs and resources of that school.

Comprehensive School Safety Plans are required under SB 719 & AB 115 and contain the following elements:

- Assessment of school crime committed on school campuses and at school-related functions
- Child abuse reporting procedures
- Disaster procedures
- Suspension and expulsion policies
- Procedures to notify teachers of dangerous pupils
- Discrimination and harassment policies
- School-wide dress code policies
- Procedures for safe ingress and egress
- Policies enacted to maintain a safe and orderly environment
- Rules and procedures on school discipline
- Hate crime reporting procedures

The San Mateo County Office of Education will be offering direct support and guidance to school districts in writing the Comprehensive School Safety Plan to ensure compliance and to integrate the following protocols: The **Big Five Emergency Response Actions**, **Hazard Response**, **Suicide Prevention Toolkit**, and **Student Threat Assessment** in all plans. To access support from the County Office of Education, please contact Molly Henricks, Coordinator of School Safety and Risk Prevention, at [mhenricks@smcoe.org](mailto:mhenricks@smcoe.org).

Each district's Comprehensive School Safety Plans must be reviewed, updated, and submitted for District Board approval prior to March 1st of each year and once approved, are submitted to the San Mateo County Office of Education.

# THE BIG FIVE SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

**Big Five Planning Calendar:** Administrator planning tool to map out action steps for the school year and to plan drills for the school year.

**Decision Making Guide for School Closure:** A tool to help administrators determine when it is appropriate to close a school site and when it is safe to continue operation of school during wildfire, power outages and/or smoke days.

**Emergency Communications Guide and Template** (*Word .docx*): Intended to be a companion document to the Big Five Administrators Packet.

**Facilities Report:** A comprehensive approach to facilities safety and management, best practices in facility safety and a hazard mitigation and school safety checklist.

**Fire Watch:** Information and guidance on how to protect school sites when surrounding areas are being threatened by fire.

**Guidance Concerning Air Quality:** Document for distribution to families and staff that includes access to information to help track air quality and prepare families for days when air quality is not good.

**Hazard Response:** For Immediate Action Responses to Chemical Spills, Fires on and off campus, power outages and poor air quality.

**Pandemic Recovery Framework:** Health, education, and legal guidance needed to develop local plans for providing safe on-campus instruction and learning.

**School Air Quality Recommendations:** Specific instructions and guidance regarding outdoor activity for schools and school related programs to follow activity during poor air quality days.

**Survey of Staff Skills:** To help administrators identify specific skill sets staff hold that may be useful during an emergency.

**Incident Command Cards:** Detailed cards that describe roles and responsibilities of School Site Incident Command.

**Think-on-your-Feet Peet:** Link to the webpage for access to the English and Spanish digital version of the book, curriculum support, and activity booklet.

# THE BIG FIVE SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

**Comprehensive School Safety Plan:** County online portal for uploading District and Site plans for compliance, templates, required content and feedback support.

## RESOURCES USED FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Safe and Sound Schools: TEAMS Framework for Inclusive Safety Planning  
<https://safeandsoundschools.org/>

Supporting Students with Disabilities During School Crises: A Teacher's Guide; Laura S. Clarke, Dusty Columbia Embury, Ruth E. Jones, and Nina Yasel. Council for Exceptional Children, November 2, 2015

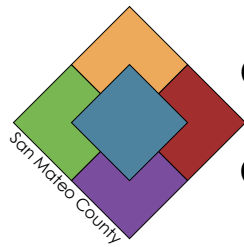
Safe Kids, Inc.: The H.E.R.O Program: Student Accessibility Guide  
[www.safekidsinc.com/hero-program](http://www.safekidsinc.com/hero-program)



# San Mateo County

## Student Threat Assessment Team

**Level One Protocol  
2022-2023**



**Coalition for  
Safe Schools &  
Communities**



**SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION**



# **This protocol is only for use by staff who have been trained on the Level One Threat Assessment Process**

*If consultation is needed regarding this process, or if you have yet to be trained in the process, please call Mason Henricks (650-802-5434) at the San Mateo County Office of Education, or email Mason Henricks ([mhenricks@smcoe.org](mailto:mhenricks@smcoe.org)) and Mary McGrath ([mmcgrath@smcoe.org](mailto:mmcgrath@smcoe.org)).*

This protocol does not predict future violence nor is it a foolproof method of assessing an individual's or group's risk of harm to others. This survey is not a checklist that can be quantified. It is a guide designed to assist in the investigation of potential danger and to assist school staff in development of a management plan.

Each school site should form a Level One Student Threat Assessment Team, which is a multidisciplinary team consisting of an administrator, a school counselor, and a School Resource Officer. The Level One Team will investigate the incident and fill out the assessment form, as set forth below.

The following people should be considered for participation in Level One meetings as sources of additional information:

- Teachers, coaches, case managers, or other educators. (If education staff is unavailable to attend, ask individuals to complete and return the Teacher's Questionnaire prior to the Level One meeting.)
- Campus supervisors, instructional aides, transportation staff, or other people who have contact with student/students.
- Parents/guardians, if time and circumstances allow (If parents/guardians are unable to attend, complete the Parent Interview form).
- Case managers or Probation Officers if adjudicated or a ward of the Court.
- Students should NOT attend this meeting. (Student information is gathered through Student Interview and Student Witness Interview forms)

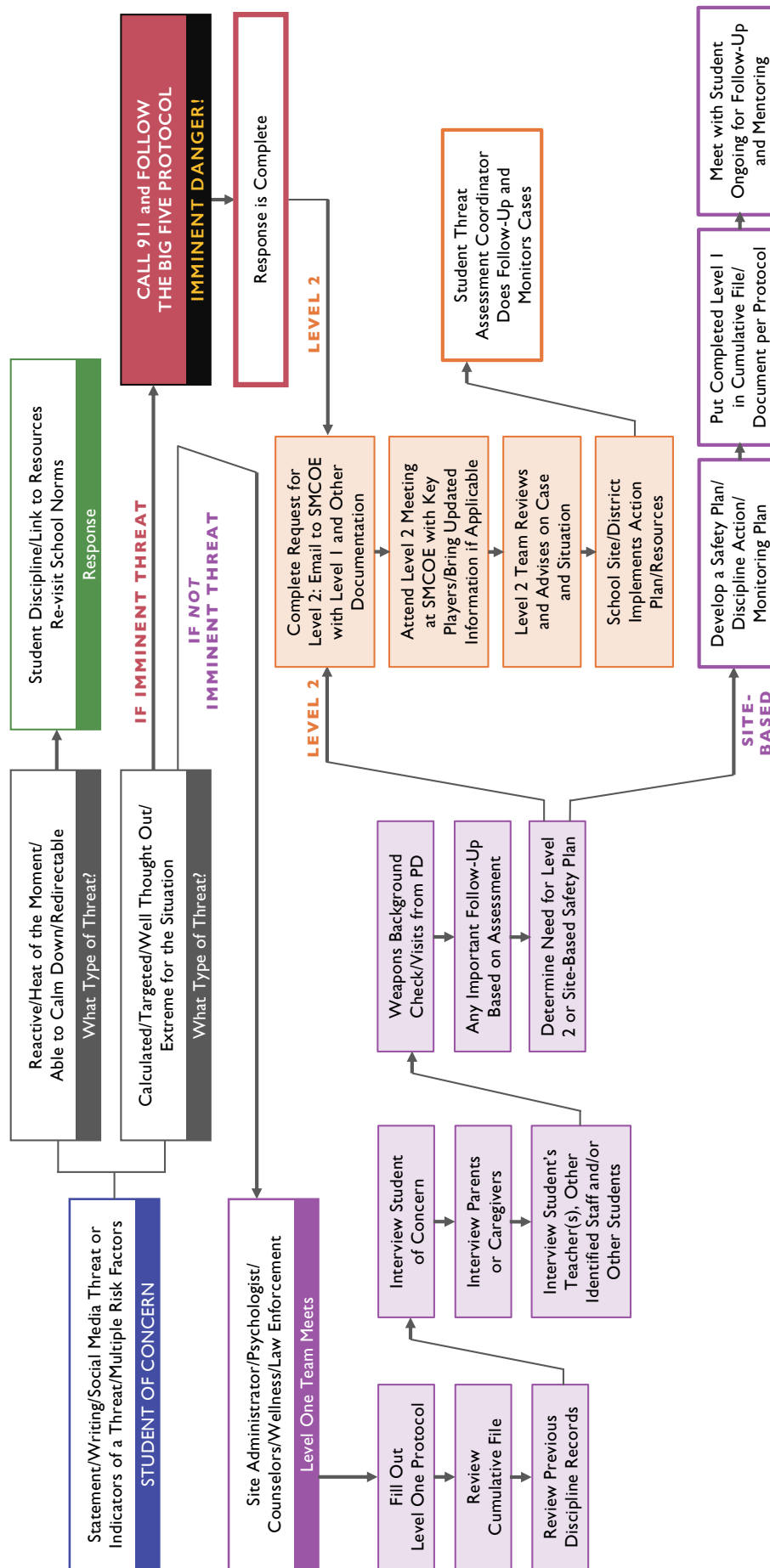
Many cases can be managed through a Level One Assessment with appropriate interventions. The assessment usually takes 20 to 45 minutes and is a method of documenting concerns and management strategies. It is also the method of determining if there is a need to request a more extensive Level Two Assessment.

## Ensure Student and Staff Safety

If there is **IMMINENT DANGER** to others, call law enforcement and the district office contact. Follow The Big Five immediate response guidelines as appropriate.

- If necessary, take appropriate precautions, such as school-wide security measures, detaining the student(s) of concern, or restricting access to coats, backpacks, etc.
- If law enforcement is involved in the investigation or protective response, provide the name of the investigating officer(s) and case number
- What were the results? (i.e., student arrest, charges, detainment, search of belongings, parent/student interviewed, etc.)

# Threat Assessment Protocol



# Level One Student Threat Assessment: Summary Information

Student Name:  Date of Birth:

Age:  Grade:  Gender:  Ethnicity:

Primary language spoken in the home:  English Learner Classification of Student:

District:  School:

Student State ID:

Does student have a: ☐ 504 Plan ☐ IEP

If yes, please specify eligibility category:

Is the student in self-contained classroom (Special Education)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is student adjudicated (found guilty of committing a delinquent act)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, name of probation officer:  and phone #:

Is student a ward of the court or under other supervision? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, name of caseworker:  and phone #:

Is the student experiencing: Foster Care ☐ Yes ☐ No Homelessness ☐ Yes ☐ No

Parent/Guardian(s) Names:

Sibling(s) Name(s):

Sibling(s) School(s):

Primary District Contact Person:

Title:  Phone Number:

Email Address:

Date(s) of Level 1 Threat Assessment(s):

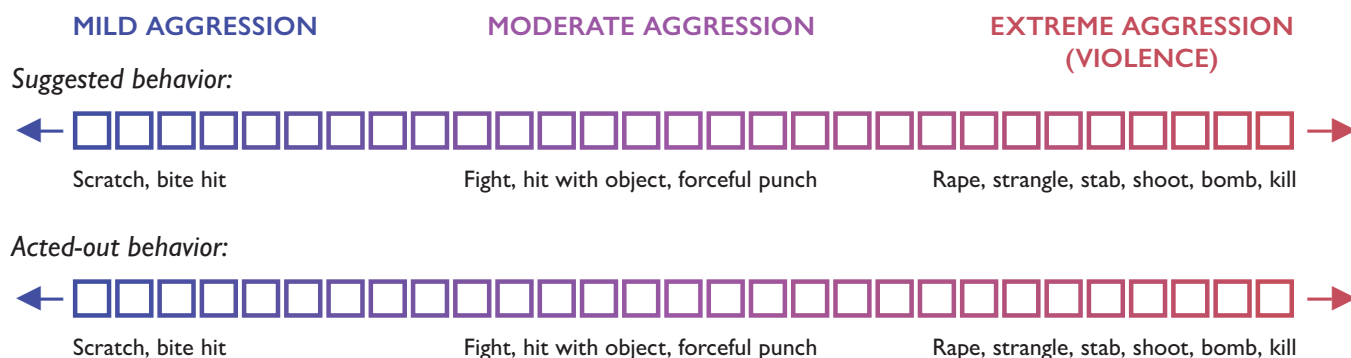
Has this student ever been referred to a Level 2 Threat Assessment, to your knowledge? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has the student been referred to: ☐ SARB ☐ CSEC MDT

Consider reviewing or having these the sources of information available prior to conducting the Threat Assessment.

- Cumulative file review, including confidential folder and discipline records
- Academic-related communications, such as journaling, artwork, etc.
- Student/family criminal history (law enforcement to run weapons check/calls for services at primary and secondary residencies)
- Student of concern interview (Appendix A)
- Student witness interview (Appendix B)
- Parent interview (Appendix C)
- Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D)
- Search of belongings
- Search of social media

1. **Note the location of the threat, behavior or dangerous situation on the following continuum.** Identify level of threat and/or acted out behavior on the continuum and describe details of concerns. (The behaviors listed within the continuum are only examples.)



2. **Have there been communications suggesting a potential attack, threats or acts of aggression?** Threats can be direct, through verbal communication, artwork, email, internet research, social media, written assignments, and other modes of communication. Threats can be indirect or veiled (such as ominous warnings), or even include casual references to possible harmful events or previous violent events (such as school shootings).

☐ No    ☐ Yes, describe:

3. **Are there indications of a plan, feasible process, or clear intention to harm others?** Many threats are not stated directly but are indicated by vague references combined with behavior. Attack-related behavior may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- A plan to carry out a targeted act of violence against a specific individual or group.
- Acquisition of a weapon, attempted acquisition of a weapon, or research about how to acquire a weapon.
- Rehearsal (practice and simulation) of the event or similar event. Rehearsal can be indicated through artwork, fantasy games, writing or film projects, the use of movies or internet sites with themes and sequences of targeted violence, through first-person shooter video games, etc.
- Scheduling an attack.

☐ No    ☐ Yes, describe:

4. **Are there indications of suicidal ideation?** Is there a history of suicidal ideas, attempts, gestures, references, and/or intent? Has someone from the school site completed a Suicide Risk Assessment using the Suicide Prevention Protocol for Schools? Describe the outcome and upload the DORA here.

☐ No    ☐ Yes, describe:

5. **Are there indications of a specific, ongoing target or a focus of aggressive or violent ideation?** Is there ongoing consideration or focus on a particular person, group, or student body? Is the student currently in, or have they been in a relationship (romantic, friendship, working, peer group) with the intended target?

☐ No    ☐ Yes, describe:

6. **Are there indications of a weapon(s) choice/availability?** If weapons are being considered but not immediately available within the home, are they available through relatives, friends, or other means (law enforcement should run a weapons check at those addresses)? Note your level of confidence in the source of your information. *Be sure to ask both student and parent directly about weapons availability and document their responses by completing the student and parent/guardian interview form.*

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

7. **Are there indications of unusual interest in acts of violence, previous school/community attacks or attackers, weaponry, law enforcement or military paraphernalia or appearance, or anti-social characters, notorious criminals, murderers, or gangs (historical or fictional)?** Are there indications of violent revenge fantasies or a desire to be an agent or martyr of a particular cause or belief system?

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

8. **Are there indications of a motive, goal, or justification for aggressive behavior or a lethal attack?** If the focus is on a specific target(s), then there is very likely a motive. Motives tend to revolve around a need to establish or re-establish control. A few common motives are revenge for lost love or humiliation, the desire to prove bravery after making a threat or taking a dare.

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

9. **Are there indications of hopelessness, overwhelming, or desperate situations (real or perceived)?** It is important to note that the point of this question is to examine the perception of the person or party you are concerned with, not necessarily the reality of what is occurring as observed by others (staff, parents, other students, or the community).

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

10. **Are there indications of a capacity or ability to plan and attempt to carry out an act of targeted violence?** Based upon the cognitive or adaptive capacity of the person or party of concern, what is the likelihood of a successfully organized and executed planned attack?

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

11. **Is there any indication of a mental health disorder (paranoid, obsessive, a feature of a disability)?** Threatening talk as a feature of mental illness, such as psychosis, Tourette syndrome, or autism, is often grandiose or implausible and usually disconnected from attack-related behavior, specific targeting, and clear motive.

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe and include a history of assessment and services:

## Equity Pause

At this point in the assessment, consider assessing for the need to evaluate for special education or increased special education services, linking to mental health services or holding a team meeting with current providers. Continue with the assessment, possibly inviting members of the current support team or special education department to provide insight and inclusive and equitable practices when safety planning.

- 12. Are actions and behaviors consistent with communications?** If threats are made but lack attack-related behaviors, motives, or a specific target(s), consistent with that threat, then risk decreases. Many threats that lack attack-related behavior are a likely means of communicating dissatisfaction or anger, attention seeking, releasing stress, or an affectation of strength or power (bravado).

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

- 13. Are caregivers, peers, and/or campus staff concerned about a potential for acting out aggressively?** Concerns may range from an odd discomfort to a complete list of reasons why caution should be taken.

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

- 14. Are there trusting and successful relationships with one or more responsible adults either on campus or within the community?** Consider interviewing the adult to gain insight about the student. The greater and healthier the connection with teachers, coaches, parents, administrators, church leaders, etc., the less chance of wanting to disappoint or hurt them and the greater opportunity for fostering positive values, community connections, and prosocial choices. A situation that lacks connection to adults increases risk since there is less to lose by acting out.

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

- 15. What circumstances, events, or triggers increase or agitate the likelihood of a violent or aggressive attack?**

What situations agitate or trigger aggressive thinking, threats, and behavior? Is there an indication that the student(s) of concern is awaiting an event or action before making a final decision regarding violent behavior?

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

- 16. What circumstances, events, or inhibitors decrease the likelihood of a violent or aggressive attack?** Identify all positive influences (activities, events, interests, relationships, goals, organization memberships, etc.) that promote responsible and accountable pro-social behavior. The situation that lacks inhibitors is one of greater risk since there is less to lose by acting out and little motivation toward healthy solutions.

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

17. Are there indications that a peer group reinforces delinquent thinking? Are there peer relationships, marginalized peer-group status, and/or peer-accepted delinquent thinking that supports the use of violence as a solution. Have members of this group been interviewed based on the situation/incident?

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe (include role within peer group):

18. Is there a history of behavioral, drug/alcohol, or developmental issues? Are there issues related to vulnerability and coping skills not necessarily directly related to targeted aggression? Indications that the student might be a victim of trafficking, abuse, or recruitment into domestic violent extremism or gang affiliation?

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

19. Describe the student's ability to use coping skills, resiliency-based skills:

20. Does the student have language capacity to advocate for their needs, express their thoughts clearly? Developmental ability to comprehend the implications of their behavior?

☐ No ☐ Yes, describe:

21. Other concerns: Are there other concerns not noted elsewhere on this survey? Examples may include sexual misconduct, fire play, animal abuse, exposure to domestic violence, criminal behavior, etc.

Describe:

Do the responses indicate that the situation does pose a potential threat? ☐ No ☐ Yes

If NO, complete a student safety plan.

### Always Request a Level Two Assessment If:

- A student(s) of concern brought a gun to school, attempted to acquire a gun with intent to harm or intimidate others, or has been arrested for firearms-related offenses in the community.

### Consider Requesting a Level Two Threat Assessment If:

- You have concerns regarding extreme aggression but are unable to confidently answer questions on this protocol
- You have confidently answered the questions on this protocol and have safety concerns regarding impulsive or reactive behavior that will likely result in serious or lethal injury to another or threats



of targeted aggression that indicate motive, plan, preparation, scheduling and/or other behavior that suggests the serious consideration of an act of targeted aggression

- You have exhausted school site resources and would like to explore community support to assist with supervision

**[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE THE REQUEST FORM  
FOR A LEVEL TWO ASSESSMENT WITH THE  
SAN MATEO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION](#)**

# Request for Level Two Student Threat Assessment Meeting San Mateo County Office of Education

Name of person requesting a Level Two:

List of names and emails of school/district/partner agency staff to attend the Level Two meeting:


Is the student of concern currently being detained somewhere? ☐ No ☐ Yes, Please explain

☐ Juvenile Hall

☐ Inpatient Psychiatric Facility

☐ Otherwise detained, explain:

Currently Suspended: ☐ No ☐ Yes

Date student is supposed to return to campus:

If student is currently suspended and not detained, is there concern that the student may appear on campus and cause harm prior to their return to campus date?

Other concerns regarding urgency:

San Mateo County Office of Education will reach out to you and the team members listed above with the next available date and time for the Level Two Student Threat Assessment Meeting.

If you have questions or concerns please feel to contact Mason Henricks,  
[mhenricks@smcoe.org](mailto:mhenricks@smcoe.org) or Mary McGrath, [mmcgrath@smcoe.org](mailto:mmcgrath@smcoe.org)

# Supervision & Support Plan for Student of Concern

- The Supervision and Support Plan for the Student of Concern is designed to assist a school site in identifying strategies and resources that will support the student in being successful in the educational setting, at home and in the community.
- Discipline consequences should be kept separate from the supervision and support plan.
- This plan should be viewed as a supportive and caring measure and not a punitive one.
- Input from the student of concern and their family will help increase the effectiveness of the strategies identified.
- This plan is a great place to problem solve around the barriers that are preventing student safety, success and school connectedness.

## If target(s) are identified:

- ☐ Intended victim warned; parent/guardian notified. Requires a phone call notification within 12 hours, followed by a notification letter within 24 hours. Use the Notification Log and Notification Letter to document.
- ☐ Protective Response initiated by law enforcement and district office.
- ☐ Design and implement a safety plan using the form Plan to Protect Targeted or Victimized Student for identified target(s). Consider both physical and psychological safety needs of targeted student.
- ☐ Other:

## Individual and family options:

- ☐ Increase supervision (curfew, monitor communications, monitor in community, supervise transportation, etc.)
- ☐ Safety-proof home (secure or remove all weapons, potential weapons, add/test smoke detectors, etc.)
- ☐ Suicide Assessment initiated on:  (Use San Mateo County Schools Suicide Prevention Protocol)
- ☐ Review and pursue crisis and/or mental health services: Care Solace for help linking student and family to services
- ☐ Request parent/guardian consent for an authorization form to allow communication between school and medical/mental health provider.
- ☐ Monitor social media activity for concerning statements, agitators, triggers, threats, or behavior related to the preparation of an attack. Use a Family Social Media Contract or refer to [www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org) for information on appropriate youth media.

Consider making the following firearms admonition to guardians: “Firearms are the responsibility of the owner. Do not assume a child/student/adult has not learned the combination to a gun safe or the location of the key. Keys can be removed and duplicated, and combinations can be discovered through a variety of means. Consider changing keys or combinations or removing firearms from the home.” Document the date, time, and guardian’s response.

Inform the parent/guardian of mandatory reporting laws. Note that the school will contact the parent/guardian when a child is in a dangerous situation or causing considerable disruption to school setting. If the parent/guardian is non-responsive or refuses to assist, school staff (as required by mandatory reporting law) must inform Child Protective Services regarding a potential neglectful situation. Document the date, time, and parent/guardian's response.

### Engage student and family in other resources and support when not at school:

- ☐ Anger management program/mediation program alcohol/drug
- ☐ Evaluation
- ☐ Parenting program
- ☐ Mentoring program
- ☐ Faith community youth program
- ☐ Foster positive community activities/interest (sports, tutoring, 4-H club, After School supports, Music, Theatre, Dance Classes)

### School options:

(If student is on IEP/504 plan, any change in placement or Special Ed services must be done through Special Education Team process or 504 team process.) Alert staff and teachers on need-to-know basis.

- ☐ Decrease or eliminate pass time or unsupervised time      ☐ Modifications of daily schedule
- ☐ Late arrival/early dismissal      ☐ Individual Accountability Plan (Check in/Check out)
- ☐ Intermittent/random check of backpack, locker, pocket, purse, etc. by:
  - ☐ Administrator    ☐ CDS/Counselor School Resource Officer    ☐ Office staff
  - ☐ Other:
- ☐ Notify Probation/Parole Officer
- ☐ Assign identified staff to build trusting relationship through check-in or mentorship:
  - ☐ Administrator    ☐ Mentor    ☐ Counselor    ☐ School Resource Officer    ☐ Teacher
  - ☐ Other:
- ☐ Provide means by which student may safely report and discuss thoughts or intentions to harm others and receive appropriate intervention.
- ☐ Referral to appropriate Special Education Team to consider psychoeducational evaluation/special education assessment or behavior team referral. (NOTE: Must be done through Special Education Team Process.)  
Referral to appropriate school team to consider alternative placement.
- ☐ Increased supervision in the following settings:

- ☐ Other intervention or supervision strategies that directly address triggers and agitators:

- ☐ Identify and further develop activities, friendships, or experiences of value that inhibit possibility of acting out:

- ☐ School Counselor or Behavior Specialist intervention, including:

### **Ongoing Administrator tasks:**

- ☐ Assign tasks and completion date expectations.
- ☐ Routinely check in with teachers, coaches, campus monitors, counselors, and parents for changes in behaviors, academics, attendance, or other concerns. Include both positive and negative behavior.
- ☐ Status checks should be completed as often as necessary until your Level One Team determines the level of risk has diminished.
- ☐ Document your updates and management steps through the process.
- ☐ If the student moves to another school or program, include the Level 1 Student Threat Assessment form and collateral information in a sealed envelope that is transferred with the student of concerns' educational record (cumulative folder) to the next school.

**The San Mateo County Student Threat Assessment Protocol has been adapted from the following:**

Developed by John Van Dreal at Salem-Keizer Public Schools using the following information: Pynchon and Borum, *Assessing Threats of Targeted Group Violence: Contributions from Social Psychology*; Reddy, Borum, Berlun, Vossekuil, Fein, and Modzeleski, *Evaluating Risk for Targeted Violence in Schools: Comparing Risk Assessment, Threat Assessment, and Other Approaches*; O'Toole, *The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective*; Fein, Vossekuil and Holden, *Threat Assessment: An Approach to Prevent Targeted Violence*; Meloy, *Violence Risk and Threat Assessment, Specialized Training Services Publication*; De Becker, *The Gift of Fear*; Johnson, *Assessment of Violent and Potentially Violent Youth In the Schools*; Calhoun, *Hunters and Howlers*; Vossekuil, Pollack, Bourne, Modzeleski, Reddy, and Fein, *Threat Assessment in Schools, A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*.

All above reference material can be linked from [studentthreatassessment.org](https://studentthreatassessment.org).

**Team Signatures:**

_____	<div></div>	_____	<div></div>
ADMINISTRATOR, PLAN SUPERVISOR	DATE	COUNSELOR	DATE
_____	<div></div>	_____	<div></div>
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER	DATE	OTHER	DATE
_____	<div></div>	_____	<div></div>
OTHER	DATE	OTHER	DATE

Notes:

# Student Interview

## Level One Protocol

Please complete the student interview and parent/guardian interview, so that you have the student's and Family's perspective on what happened prior to the Level 1 questions. If the student is not available please indicate why:

- Student is incarcerated:
- Student is in a Psychiatric Inpatient Facility:
- Student is otherwise detained:

This interview is only to be conducted by an administrator, SRO, or school counselor/mental health or wellness counselor (if possible, utilize the staff person that is closest to the student to complete the interview to help elicit authentic answers through a more collaborative and less punitive conversation with the student).

It is best to hold the student interview prior to answering the Level One threat assessment questions.

Address the following questions through an interview or open-ended inquiry with the student or students of concern (who is/are in a situation that poses a threat).

Do NOT ask the student to read and complete the questions by themselves.

Student's Name:

Interviewer's Name:

Address the student and describe the perceived threat, dangerous situation, or violent action that has brought this situation to your attention.

### *Equity Pause*

What is the interviewer's relationship with the student? ☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Positive

- If you feel you may not have the best rapport with the student, or you find yourself triggered by the actions and behaviors of the student of concern, please consider having someone else perform the interview with the student to make sure that it is conducted in a trauma-informed way.
- If you have the artwork or creative writing that school staff find concerning due to perceived content prior to starting the Student Threat Assessment process, asking the student to tell you about the artwork/writing can help determine if there is even a need for a Threat Assessment. Many students write and draw images that they have seen in popular culture media, which has no indications of causing harm to others. Always ask about the images and writing first, if there are concerns of threats or targeted violence after, consider preceding with the assessment.
- If language capacity is a factor, please make sure you provide the interview in their preferred language.

**Ask the following questions through conversation or direct inquiry:**

1. Do you know why I'm speaking with you? It has been reported that (let the student know what has been reported). What are your thoughts on what is being reported by others?

2. (If student owns the behavior or threat and states they did engage in it) Do you know why you did that? Can you explain, so I can understand better? (If student states they did not engage in that behavior or threat) Why do you think other people are reporting that you (explain), (if you have social media/written evidence that states a threat) can you tell me what these images/writings mean then?

3. How do you get along with your peers at school, what about the adults on campus? Is there anyone in particular that you are upset or angry with?

4. Do you know if others feel this way? How do you know? Was anyone else involved in the (perceived/ actual) threat or behavior?

5. We are here because people are concerned about what happened. Why do you think they are concerned?

6. Do you have a plan to hurt anyone, including yourself? What does that plan look like? Have you practiced or pretended to hurt others or yourself? If so, how?

7. Are you currently in possession of any weapons? Do you have access to weapons, or are you trying to get access weapons (including knives, swords, bats, explosives, etc.)?



8. Are there certain people or things that cause you stress? How do you deal with them? For instance, being bullied, harassed, school work, threats to you or gang issues? Any other type of stress you are experiencing?

9. Do you use any social media (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.)? Have you ever posted anything that others would be concerned about? Would you be willing to let me see your account activity? *[Remember, school employees can only access student social media if your district has satisfied the requirements of Education Code § 49073.6]*

10. What is school like for you? Is there an adult on campus that you trust and feel you can talk to about this situation? What about at home or in the community? (education staff, relative, adult within the community)

11. Do you currently have positive things or good things happening in your life? What are some good things? Are you involved in sports, clubs, recreational activities, art, music, church, scouts, etc.? Do you enjoy those activities? Would you be interested in joining any of those activities?

12. Who are your friends? How do you feel supported by them? What do they do to make you know they care about you?

13. Do you feel like you have the ability to change this current situation? How so?

14. Is there anything else about this situation or about school you want to let me know?

15. What can we at school do to help you? What type of supports would you like?

# Student-Witness Interview

## Level One Protocol

Please complete the student-witness interview right after the student interview and parent/guardian interview so that you have greater perspective on what happened prior to answering the Level One questions. If a student-witness is not available please indicate why:

- There is no student witness in this case. Student-Witness is currently incarcerated
- The Student – Witness is currently in a Psychiatric Inpatient facility
- Student Witness is otherwise detained
- Student-witness declines to participate

This interview is only to be conducted by an administrator, SRO, or school counselor as a supplement to the Level One Screening Protocol. Address the following questions through an interview or open-ended inquiry with the student or students of concern (who is/are in a situation that poses a threat).

Do NOT ask the student to read and complete the questions by themselves.

Although the student can provide crucial information regarding a situation, do not delay the Level One Assessment if the student is not available or is unwilling.

The following is an examination of current circumstances; as these circumstances change, so too does risk potential. Therefore, review the results of this interview while being mindful of supervision, intervention, and the passage of time. Each question is a prompt for exploration of circumstances that may involve the escalation of violence.

### *Equity Pause*

What is the interviewer's relationship with the student? ☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Positive

- If you feel you may not have the best rapport with the student, or you find yourself triggered by the actions and behaviors of the student of concern, please consider having someone else perform the interview with the student to make sure that it is conducted in a trauma-informed way.

Student's Name:  Date:

Interviewer's Name:

Address the student and describe the perceived threat, dangerous situation, or violent action that has brought this situation to your attention. Explain our obligation and responsibility to investigate and assess all situations that may be dangerous for the student, other students, and/or staff.

**Ask the following questions through conversation or direct inquiry:**

1. It has been reported that you witnessed a threat. Can you tell me what happened?

2. When did this happen? Who is/are involved in the threat/situation? If yes, do you know how they are involved?

3. What exactly was said (written, posted, drawn, filmed, or otherwise communicated)? Do you have any screen shots of the potential threat that you can share with us?

4. Do you know exactly who was threatened? Do you have an idea as to why they might have been threatened?

5. Do you know if there is a plan to hurt anyone? What is that potential plan?

6. Do you know if any of the students who are involved with the threat have weapons or access to weapons (including knives, swords, bats, explosives, etc.)?

7. Have any of the students involved done anything that would make you think they are practicing or preparing to follow through on the threat and harm someone?

8. Are there multiple people involved in this situation? Do you know if there is a clear leader/main student or adult that seems to be leading the group?

9. What do you think of this situation? Is this something that happens frequently at school? Is the potential threat, behavior, or concern we raised typical for this school site?

10. Is there anything else you think we should know about this situation?

11. What do you think would help this situation or the student(s) of concern?

# Parent/Guardian Interview

## Level One Protocol

Please complete the student and parent/guardian interview so that you have the student's and family's perspective on what happened prior to the Level One questions. If the student is not available, please indicate why:

- Student is incarcerated
- Student is in a Psychiatric Inpatient Facility
- Student is otherwise detained

### *Equity Pause*

What is the interviewer's relationship with the student? ☐ Difficult ☐ Neutral ☐ Positive

- If you feel you may not have the best rapport with the student, or you find yourself triggered by the actions and behaviors of the student of concern, please consider having someone else perform the interview with the student to make sure that it is conducted in a trauma-informed way.
- If language capacity is a factor, please make sure you provide the interview in their preferred language.

This interview is only to be conducted by a school counselor or administrator as a supplement to the Level One Screening Protocol (by phone or in person). Address the following questions through an interview or conversation with open-ended inquiry. Do NOT ask the parent/guardian to read and complete the questions by themselves.

Student's Name:  Date:

Parent/Guardian's Name:

Interviewer's Name:

Contact parent/guardian and describe the threat, dangerous situation, or violent action that has brought this student to your attention. Explain our obligation and responsibility to investigate and assess all situations that may be dangerous for the student, other students, and/or staff.

### **Ask the following questions through conversation or direct inquiry:**

1. Do you (or other family/community member) have concerns about behaviors, potential violence, or issues specific to the incident?

2. Has your student communicated any threats, ideas of violence, or wishes/intentions to harm anyone or themselves (at school, at home, in the community)?

3. Are there any fascinations, identifications with violence (especially vindictive or revengeful acts of violence through movies, music, video games, literature, or internet usage)? Does the student justify the use of violence to solve problems?

4. Has your student become increasingly focused or agitated about a particular issue (such as local/global political problems, justice, social problems, girlfriend/boyfriend, bullying, revenge, etc.)? How has it changed their behaviors? Have there been any relationship changes (peers, family) or belief changes?

5. Are there certain situations that your student faces that seem to increase agitation, aggression, or anger? What are they? Have there been any changes at home that may have increased stress? What concerns do you have, if any, about these changes?

6. How do you think your student perceives themselves? (Leader, follower, victim, outcast, etc.) How do you perceive your student?

7. Are there concerns or previous issues with drug/alcohol issues with the student, family, or friends? Would you like help getting services for these concerns?

8. Is the student involved with the Juvenile Probation Department, Police, Children & Family Services (CPS), Mental Health, or other agencies? Could we obtain a Release of Information for these providers to better coordinate care and services for your student? Would you like assistance in accessing mental health services?

9. What are student's positive activities, interests, relationships (scouting, church, sports, clubs, recreation, pets, family, friends, community)?

10. Are firearms or other weapons accessible? Are firearms available anywhere in your house or within the houses of regularly visited relatives or friends? Has the student attempted or communicated a desire to obtain a firearm or weapon? If needed, are you able to search the student's room or possessions? Would you be willing to safely store the firearms/weapons during this time?

11. To your knowledge, does the student use social media (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, Kik, etc.)? What method do you use to monitor the student's social media use? Have you ever been concerned by a post, link, or comment?

12. Are there any other concerns not addressed by these interview questions?



# Teacher/Staff Interview

## Level One Protocol

- This questionnaire is only to be completed as a supplement to the Level One Assessment Protocol if a teacher or staff does not attend the Level One Assessment.
- Explain our obligation and responsibility to investigate and assess any situation that may be dangerous for the student, other staff, and/or staff.
- Request that teacher/staff complete this questionnaire as thoroughly as possible and maintain confidentiality by not discussing the situation except with school administrators and members of the Level One Team.

Student's Name:  Date:

Teacher/Staff Name:

### Directions to Teacher/Staff:

Please address the following questions regarding the student noted above and return to administration:

1. Do you have concerns about disruptive behavior or potential aggression?

2. Has the student communicated any threats, ideas of aggression, or wishes/intentions to harm anyone, animal, or object (at school, at home, in the community, or himself/herself/themselves)?

3. Does the student discuss or reference the availability of or the desire to obtain firearms or other weapons?

4. Does the student discuss or reference interests, fascinations, or identifications with violence (especially vindictive or revengeful acts of violence through movies, music, video games, literature, and internet usage)? Does the student justify the use of aggression to solve problems?

5. Has the student become increasingly focused or agitated about a particular issue (such as social problems, girlfriend/boyfriend, justice, bullying, revenge, grades, etc.)?

6. Are there certain situations that agitate the student or his/her/their inclination to aggressive activity, ideas, or communication? Has the student experienced any relationship changes (peers, family) or belief changes?

7. What is the student's self-perception? (Leader, follower, victim, outcast, etc.)

8. Are there indications of drug/alcohol issues with the student or family?

9. What are student's positive activities, interests, and relationships (clubs, church, sports, recreation, hobbies, pets, family, friends, community)?

10. Do you have any other concerns not addressed in the above questions?

11. What is your relationship like with the student of concern?

# Notification Letter

## Level One Protocol

Use this letter as written communication to legal guardians of threatened or victimized students. Sending both via email and regular mail is recommended.

*[Date]*

*[Parent/Guardian Address]*

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This letter is a follow-up to our phone conversation of *[date of phone call]*. To further ensure the safety of all our students, the district provides written notification to the parent of a student who may be at risk for potential harm.

This matter has been referred to the *[police agency]*. The contact officer will be the School Resource Officer *[name of officer]* who may be reached at *[phone number]* for information regarding the law enforcement investigation.

The validity of this threat will be investigated by a multi-disciplinary team, which will include law enforcement, school administration, and a school counselor, as well as other disciplines and community agencies as needed. This team is currently assessing risk and implementing safety measures for your student. If you have any further questions, I am the contact person for this team and you may call me at the above number.

Sincerely,

*[Signature]*

*[Administrator Name]*

# Notification Log

## Level One Protocol

Use this log as documentation for notification to legal guardians of threatened or victimized students.

☐ An interpreter was used for non-English communications

☐ Attached copy of District Incident Report

School:

Student's Name:  Date:

Date/Time of Incident:  Name of Administrator Completing Form:

Parent/Guardian Name:  Home #:  Work #:

Parent/Guardian Name:  Home #:  Work #:

#1 Emergency Name\*:  Home #:  Work #:

#2 Emergency Name\*:  Home #:  Work #:

*\*No information regarding the incident should be given to the emergency contact person—only parent/guardian*

### Document Contacts or Attempts to Contact in Log Below:

Name	Number Used	Attempted Date and Time	Message Left

## Notification Checklist

☐ Identified myself as the contact person regarding the school's investigation of this incident and provided the name of the School Resource Officer for the Law Enforcement portion of the investigation (provided officer's contact information).

☐ Described incident to parent/guardian. Parent/guardian comments below.  
(Attach additional sheet if necessary.)

☐ Informed the parent/guardian that San Mateo County Student Threat Assessment Team personnel, law enforcement, and other agencies as necessary are investigating the validity of this threat.

☐ Described to parent/guardian any immediate safety measures that have been taken - parent/guardian's comments (attach additional comment sheet if necessary):

☐ Notified parent/guardian that a follow-up letter to this conversation will be arriving within a couple of days.

☐ Notified parent/guardian of meeting scheduled on  to develop a Plan to Protect their student from harm.

# Plan to Protect Targeted or Victimized Student

## Level One Protocol

Student's Name:  DOB:  Today's Date:   
Student #:  School:  Date of Incident:

---

### INCIDENT

The following is a plan to protect  from harm.

*Attach copy to Level 1 and place in student's Confidential Folder.*

### SAFETY CONCERNS

The safety issues of concern are:

### SUPPORT PLAN

After meeting with:

<input type="checkbox"/> Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> Counselor	<input type="checkbox"/> School Resource Officer*
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Guardian*	<input type="checkbox"/> Security*	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education*
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Threat Assessment*	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	

the following will be implemented:

☐ Law Enforcement has been notified  
☐ The parent/guardian of the above student was notified of this incident on   
and a follow-up letter was sent to parent/guardian on .

\*Further assessment will be pursued through the Student Threat Assessment Team. The student will aid in his/her own protection by:

The student will receive the following support from the school:

The student will receive the following support from the community:

The student will receive the following support from home:

The student will receive the following support from law enforcement:

ADMINISTRATOR, PLAN SUPERVISOR

DATE

COUNSELOR

DATE

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN

DATE

STUDENT

# **San Mateo County Schools Suicide Prevention Protocol**

**2021-2022**



**SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION**



## **TITLE**

Suicide Prevention Protocol

## **POLICY**

The San Mateo County Office of Education is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and secure school environment. Each school district is responsible for responding appropriately to a student expressing or exhibiting suicidal ideation or behaviors and to follow up in the recovery phase following a completed suicide.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this protocol is to outline administrative procedures for intervening with suicidal and self-injurious students and offer guidelines to school site crisis teams in the recovery phase following a completed suicide.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2019, the rate of hospitalizations due to mental health issues in San Mateo County for ages 5-14 was 3.4, compared to 2.8 statewide and 11.6 for youth ages 15-19 compared to a rate of 9.8 statewide.<sup>1</sup>

In Fall 2019, San Mateo County school districts reported assessing more than 415 students for risk of suicide using this protocol. More than 150 of those students, including students as young as 5-6 years old, were transported to a psychiatric emergency room for further assessment.

Furthermore, San Mateo County's 2017-2019 California Healthy Kids Survey results indicated that 23 percent of middle school age youth and between 30 percent and 35 percent of high school age youth reported chronic feelings of sadness or hopelessness over the past year and between 14 and 18 percent of students seriously considered attempting suicide. Forty-five percent of youth identifying as Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and thirty-four percent of youth questioning their sexual orientation seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months.<sup>2</sup>

Suicide is not the result of one issue. It is a manifestation of multiple, complex problems of child/adolescent development and adjustment. School personnel are instrumental in helping to save lives by identifying students at risk and linking them to essential school and community mental health resources.

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1 California Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development special tabulation; California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (May 2020).

2 San Mateo County. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2017-2019: Main Report. San Francisco: WestEd Health and Justice Program for the California Department of Education.

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

Suicide poses a public health risk for people of all ages, demographics, ethnicities, and cultures. Few events are more painful or potentially disruptive than the suicide of a young person, regardless of the community they come from. The likelihood of students, faculty, or staff encountering a student at risk of suicide is real, even in the elementary grades. There is evidence that suicide is preventable in many cases. Contrary to popular belief, talking about suicide or asking someone if they are feeling suicidal will NOT create thoughts of suicide or cause people to kill themselves.

Appropriate and timely prevention, intervention, and post-vention (after suicide) can help school administrators maintain control in a crisis, and it may help prevent copycat attempts by others.

In September 2016, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 2246 into law. AB 2246 (O'Donnell) required local education agencies (LEAs) to adopt suicide prevention policies before the beginning of the 2017–18 school year. Chaptered as California Education Code (EC) Section 215, AB 2246 mandates that the governing board of any Local Education Agency that serves pupils in grades seven to twelve adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention. The policy shall specifically address the needs of students who are at risk of suicide and include annual and as needed suicide prevention and awareness training for school staff.

As of July 1, 2019, any school that serves pupils in grades 7 to 12 shall have printed on either side of the pupil identification cards the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255; the Crisis Text Line, which can be accessed by texting HOME to 741741; or a local suicide prevention hotline telephone number.

In October 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 1767 into law. AB 1767 extends AB2246 to include schools that serve pupils grades Kindergarten to sixth grade. AB 1767 mandates that at the start of the 2021-2022 school year, the governing board of any Local Education Agency that serves pupils in grades Kindergarten to sixth adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention. The policy shall specifically address the needs of students who are higher risk, be delivered and discussed in a developmentally appropriate way, and include annual and as-needed suicide prevention and awareness training for school staff. This is particularly important because suicide is now the second leading cause of death for youths ages thirteen to eighteen; suicide is also a leading cause of death for youths age ten to twelve.

The board policies must be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts. At a minimum, the board policy must address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention. See Attachment L for the San Mateo County Board of Education Sample Policy.

### **About These Guidelines**

These prevention and intervention guidelines are designed for schools to assist students who are at risk and intervene appropriately in a suicide-related crisis. School boards and school personnel may choose to implement additional supportive measures to meet the specific needs of individual school communities. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist school administrators in their planning. These guidelines meet the legal mandate set forth by AB 2246 and are updated annually to include current practices and resources on suicide prevention, intervention, and post-vention. The guidelines do not constitute legal advice nor are they intended as such.

## **SECTION 2: POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE**

The words “mental health” or “mental illness” often come attached with stigma and negative connotations, especially in a middle or high school setting. Mental health is a state of mental and emotional being that can impact choices and actions that affect wellness.

Mental illness is defined as a collection of disorders and alterations in mood, thinking, or behavior. When we address school climate, we look to increase the amount of social, emotional, and behavioral supports on campus, reduce the stigma attached to getting help with a mental illness, and increase the student’s mental health and well-being.

### **What is School Climate?**

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of school life for all stakeholders, including students, parents, and staff. A school’s climate reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

A positive school climate fosters positive youth development and supports a high-quality learning environment that provides young people with the foundation to pursue productive and rewarding lives. Evidence of a positive school climate includes the following:<sup>3</sup>

- Norms, values, and expectations that support social, emotional, and physical safety
- Respectful and engaging interactions and relationships
- A shared school vision that includes students, families, and educators working together
- Educators who lead by example and nurture positive attitudes
- Meaningful participation in the operations of the school and care of the physical environment by all stakeholders

### **Best Practices for Safe and Supportive Schools**

1. Fully integrate learning supports (e.g., behavioral, mental health, and social services), instruction, and school management within a comprehensive, cohesive approach that facilitates multidisciplinary collaboration.
2. Implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that encompasses prevention, wellness promotion, and interventions that increase in intensity based on student need and that promote school and community collaboration.
3. Improve access to school-based mental health supports by hiring an adequate number of school-employed mental health professionals who are trained to infuse prevention and intervention services into the learning process and can help integrate services provided through school/community partnerships into existing school initiatives.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from materials developed by the National School Climate Council

4. Integrate ongoing positive climate and safety efforts with crisis prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery to ensure that crisis training and plans (a) are relevant to the school context, (b) reinforce learning, (c) make maximum use of existing staff resources, (d) facilitate effective threat assessment, and (e) are consistently reviewed and practiced.
5. Balance physical and psychological safety to avoid overly restrictive measures (e.g. armed guards and metal detectors) that can undermine the learning environment. Instead, combine reasonable physical security measures (e.g., locked doors and monitored public spaces) with efforts to enhance school climate, build trusting relationships, and encourage students and adults to report potential threats.
6. Employ effective positive school discipline that (a) functions in concert with efforts to address school safety and climate; (b) is not simply punitive (e.g., zero tolerance); (c) is clear, consistent, and equitable; and (d) reinforces positive behaviors.
7. Consider the context of each school and district and provide services that are most needed, appropriate, and culturally sensitive to a school's unique student populations and learning communities.
8. Acknowledge that sustainable and effective change takes time, and that individual schools will vary in their readiness to implement improvements. Schools should be afforded the resources they need to sustain change over time.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Cowan, K. C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., & Pollitt, K. (2013). A framework for safe and successful schools [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

## **SECTION 3: SUICIDE PREVENTION THROUGH TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

Suicide prevention involves school-wide activities and programs that enhance connectedness, contribute to a safe and nurturing environment, and strengthen protective factors that reduce risk for students. Prevention includes:

- Promoting and reinforcing the development of desirable behavior, such as help-seeking behaviors and healthy problem-solving skills
- Increasing staff, student, and parent/guardian knowledge and awareness of risk factors and warning signs of youth suicide and self-injury
- Monitoring and involvement in young people's lives by providing structure, guidance, and consistent and fair discipline
- Modeling and teaching desirable skills and behavior
- Promoting access to school and community resources

### **Kognito – At-Risk Suite; County-wide Educator Training**

Kognito is an interactive role-play simulation for educators that builds awareness, knowledge, and skills about mental health and suicide prevention and prepares users to lead real-life conversations with students that build resilience, strengthen relationships, and connect them with support. The County Office of Education has partnered with Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Peninsula Health Care District, and Sequoia Health Care District to offer this training to all public-school staff in San Mateo County.

This training meets the state-mandated requirement detailed in AB 2246 and AB 1767.

The foci of this training are to:

- Increase knowledge and awareness about teen mental health and suicide
- Identify warning signs of psychological distress, including verbal, behavioral, and situational clues
- Lead conversations with students to discuss concerns, build resilience, and increase connectedness
- Assess the need for referral, motivate the student to seek help, and make a warm hand-off to support

[Learn more about Kognito](#) and the other interactive role-play simulation training they offer.

### **Suicide Prevention Poster**

The Suicide Prevention poster is a tool that can be used to help faculty and staff remember risk factors and warning signs of students who are at risk of committing suicide. These posters are available from the County Office of Education free of charge and can be

presented to faculty and staff along with a brief training about how to identify students who are at risk of suicide and what to do when they have been identified. Posters are available to print on the [County Office of Education website](#).

### **The Directing Change Program & Film Contest**

The Directing Change Program prepares young people to recognize signs of distress and how to seek help for themselves or a friend; provides suicide prevention curriculums and trainings to educators and school administrators to impact school climates, policies, and practices; facilitates parent suicide prevention workshops; and offers 24/7 crisis support to schools after a student suicide. The program invites students grades 5 through 12 to learn about mental health, suicide prevention, and other critical health topics by creating film and art projects. Students are eligible to win cash prizes and schools can apply for mini grants to bring the program to their school. The program was established in 2012, is free to youth and schools, supported by the California Department of Education and has been evaluated to meet learning objectives. To get started visit the [Directing Change Program's website](#).

### **Youth Mental Health First Aid**

The Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) course is a 6-hour public education training program designed for any adult working with or assisting young people, ages 12-24. The course focuses on how to help a young person who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.

San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Office of Diversity and Equity offers free YMHFA certification training to all schools throughout the county. Through YMHFA training, campus communities can help bridge a student in crisis to the appropriate help they need. Learn more on [San Mateo County Health's website](#).



# SUICIDE **is** PREVENTABLE

## Help Save a Life

### Did You Know?

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth.
- Most youth who are suicidal don't want to die; they are in pain and see no way out.
- A previous suicide attempt is the largest predictor of suicidal behavior.
- LGB youth are five times more likely to attempt suicide.
- 30-50% of transgender youth have made a serious attempt at suicide.

### Risk Factors - Factors that increase a student's risk for suicide. They **DO NOT** cause suicide.

- One or more suicide attempts
- Loss of any kind
- Mental illness
- Alcohol or substance use
- Bullying or harassment
- Friend or family completed suicide
- History of abuse/trauma
- Access to guns or lethal weapons
- Lack of coping or problem solving skills
- Not getting needed services



### Warning Signs - What you might see or hear that indicates a student **MAY** be suicidal **TODAY**

#### Makes a statement

"I wish I were dead," "If such and such doesn't happen, I'll kill myself," "What's the point in living?"

#### Talking/writing about death or suicide

In text messages, on social media/chat rooms, in school assignments, poems, or music.

#### Looking for a way to attempt suicide

Looking for a gun, pills, or other means. Having a realistic plan about where to get the means.

#### Giving their possessions away

#### Rapid shift in mood/affect

From sullen or depressed to being happy or "at peace."

#### Other behaviors

- Signs of depression or anxiety
- Feeling like a burden
- Feeling trapped—no way out
- Drug/alcohol use increases or is excessive
- Neglecting appearance
- Drop in grades
- Increased absences

### What to Do

- **Listen to your Student.** Allow them to express their feelings and listen for warning signs.
- **Ask Direct Questions.** Talking about suicide or asking a student if they feel suicidal does not plant the idea in their head.
  - Are you thinking about suicide?
  - Do you have a plan?
  - Do you have access to the means?
- **Keep Student Safe.** Stay with them until someone else arrives. Ask the student if they have any weapons or objects that could harm them. If so, remove them.
- **Immediately Notify** your administrative team, mental health professional on campus, or school resource officer to assess the student for suicidality.



#### 24 Hour Crisis Line

Suicide/Crisis Hotline:

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**Text "START" to 741741**

#### Important Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

- My local Police Department: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### LEARN MORE WAYS TO HELP

Sign up for Youth Mental Health First Aid, a 6-hour public education training program designed for any adult working with or assisting young people, ages 12-24. The course focuses on how to help a young person who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis and is offered at all schools. Visit: [www.smchealth.org/YMHFA](http://www.smchealth.org/YMHFA).



## SECTION 4: FORMING A CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

Every school has different resources and services available on campus. Each district and/or school is encouraged to create and sustain a Crisis Response Team. The Crisis Response Team is a multidisciplinary team of administrators, mental health and safety professionals, and support staff whose primary focus is to address crisis prevention, provide intervention/response to crisis situations, and implement post-crisis response plans. These professionals should be specifically trained in the recommended trainings listed in Section 3 of this protocol.

### Potential Crisis Response Team Members

Each school site and/or district's Crisis Response Team will be comprised differently based on resources available. Potential Crisis Response Team members can be found below.

**Administrative/guidance personnel:** Superintendent, principal, assistant principal, curriculum director, dean of students, school counselors, or others administrators on campus or within the district.

**Mental health professionals:** School social workers, school psychologists, school-based mental health providers, wellness coordinators, or any licensed or licensed-eligible mental health providers on campus. (For smaller districts/school sites without mental health professionals available, plan to collaborate with community-based organizations such as Star Vista during a crisis.)

**Health professionals:** Health educators, school nurses, school-based health center staff, health coordinators, or any health professionals on campus.

**Safety professionals:** Campus aides, school security officers, school resource officers, or members of the local law enforcement agency.

**Support staff:** Special education staff, teachers, technology staff, athletic staff, or other supportive staff on campus.

While all school/district personnel are required to respond appropriately to a crisis situation, it is the role of the Crisis Response Team to guide the faculty and staff in their response. The Crisis Response Team ensures that appropriate levels of training and education around crisis response, including suicide prevention and intervention, has been offered and completed by faculty and staff. They will most likely be participants at a student's return to school meeting after a suicide attempt or psychiatric hospitalization and will lead the post-vention actions in the event of a completed suicide.

## **SECTION 5: IDENTIFYING STUDENTS AT RISK OF SUICIDE AND/OR SELF-INJURY**

A student who is defined as high risk or at risk of suicide is one who has made a suicide attempt, has the intent to end their life by suicide, has chronic suicidal thoughts, or has displayed a significant change in behavior that suggests the onset or further development of a mental health disorder. Suicidal ideation is defined as thinking about, considering, OR planning for self-injurious behavior that may result in death. The student may have suicidal ideations including thoughts regarding potential means of death and/or a plan. However, a student who has a desire to be dead without a clear plan or intent to end one's life should still be considered at risk of suicide. Treat all suicidal ideation seriously.

### **Risk Factors**

Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely an individual will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. School personnel should be aware of the common risk factors and address any concerns appropriately. Common risk factors include:

- One or more attempts of suicide
- Family member or friend completed suicide
- Loss of any kind
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse
- Trauma or abuse of any kind
- Lacking coping or problem-solving skills
- Being bullied or harassed
- Barriers to accessing appropriate mental health treatment
- Having access to guns or lethal weapons
- Local cluster of suicide

### **Protective Factors**

Protective factors are characteristics that make it less likely individuals will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. Common protective factors include:

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance use disorders
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions
- Restricted access to guns and lethal weapons/means
- Strong connections to family and community support
- Support through ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and handling problems in a non-violent way
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation

## Warning Signs

Warning signs are behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. These might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” Warning signs indicate the need to inquire directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide or self-injury immediately. Common warning signs include but are not limited to:

- Student makes statements such as: “I wish I were dead,” “If such and such doesn’t happen, I will kill myself,” or “What is the point in living?”
- Talking or writing about suicide in text messages, on social media, in chat rooms, or in school assignments, poems, or music lyrics
- Looking for a way to attempt suicide, including trying to buy a gun, researching ways to die, or seeking/buying pills
- Rapid shift in mood (e.g., from sullen or depressed to feeling “at peace”)
- Giving away prized possessions and/or saying final goodbyes
- Increased or recent signs of depression or anxiety
- Making comments or off-hand remarks that the person feels like a burden
- Feeling trapped and unable to see a way out
- Increased and/or excessive drug and alcohol use
- Neglecting personal appearance
- A drop in grades
- Increased absences

## What is Self-Injury

Self-injury or self-harm is the act of deliberately harming one’s own body. Although self-injury often lacks suicidal intent, youth who self-injure are more likely to attempt suicide.

Self-injury is an unhealthy way to cope with emotional pain, intense anger, and/or frustration. Self-injurious behavior includes anything a person might do to intentionally injure one’s self. Some common actions that indicate self-injury include:

- Cutting or severely scratching the skin
- Burning or scalding
- Hitting or banging the head
- Punching things or throwing one’s body against walls and hard objects
- Sticking objects into the skin
- Intentionally preventing wounds from healing
- Swallowing poisonous substances or inappropriate objects

Self-injury or self-harm can also include less obvious ways of hurting one’s self. Driving recklessly, binge drinking, taking too many drugs, and having unsafe sex are all examples of self-injurious behaviors.

## **Identifying Self-Injurious Behavior**

Because clothing can hide physical injuries, self-injury can be hard to detect. However, there are red flags such as:

- Unexplained wounds or scars from cuts, bruises, or burns, usually on the wrists, arms, thighs, or chest
- Blood stains on clothing, towels, or bedding; blood-soaked tissues
- Sharp objects or cutting instruments, such as razors, knives, needles, glass shards, or bottle caps, as part of the person's belongings
- Frequent "accidents;" someone who self-harms may claim to be clumsy or have frequent mishaps in order to explain away injuries
- Covering up; a person who self-injures may insist on wearing long sleeves or long pants, even in hot weather
- Needing to be alone for long periods of time, especially in the bedroom or bathroom
- Isolation and irritability

## **Responding to Students Who are Self-Injuring**

- Respond immediately or as soon as possible; never leave the student alone
- Remove all objects that may be used as a weapon or tool to self-injure
- Assess for suicide risk using the protocol to determine if there is suicidal ideation along with self-injury
- Encourage appropriate coping and problem-solving skills; do not discourage self-injury. Focus on the emotional distress causing the student to self-injure, not the act of self-injury itself
- Listen calmly and with care; reacting in an angry or shocked manner or using punishment may inadvertently increase self-injurious behaviors
- Provide resources: Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Identify a support system at home and school
- Communicate with and involve the parent/guardian as long as it will not exacerbate the situation. Even if the student is not suicidal, the behavior must be addressed as soon as possible. Encourage student and parents/guardian to access resources for counseling.

## **Self-Injury and Contagion**

- Self-injurious behaviors may be imitated by other students and can spread across grade levels, peer groups, and schools

- Respond immediately or as soon as possible
- Respond individually to students, but try to identify peers and friends who may also be engaging in self-injurious behaviors
- As students are identified, they should be supervised in separate locations
- Each student should be assessed for suicide risk individually using the protocol
- If the self-injurious behavior involves a group of students, the assessment of each student individually will often identify a student whose behaviors have encouraged the behaviors of others. This behavior may indicate more complex mental health issues.
- If the self-injurious behavior is involving a large group of students at one school, administrators should contact Star Vista, which can hold age-appropriate small groups/presentations geared towards students who may be involved in the behavior.
- When self-injurious behaviors are impacting the larger school community, schools may respond by inviting parent(s)/guardian(s) to an information parent meeting at the school. Star Vista can assist in facilitating a parent/guardian group as well.

When the risk is raised, the student should be brought by school personnel to the designated school site crisis team member to be assessed for the level of risk. The student should be supervised at all times and asked if they have any weapons or anything that could be used to carry out self-harm. Remove any potentially dangerous objects.

The mental health professional on campus or designated crisis team member should gather essential background information that will help with assessing the student's risk for suicide (e.g., what the student said or did, information that prompted concern or suspicion, copies of any concerning writings or drawings).

Phone calls for consultation should be made in a confidential setting and not in the presence of the student of concern.

The mental health professional on campus or the designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team trained in suicide assessment should meet with the student to complete the Suicide Risk Assessment (Attachment A).

Parents should be notified when there appears to be any risk of self-harm, unless it is apparent that such notification will exacerbate the situation (see Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect section on p. 28). The mental health professional on campus or the designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team will determine the next steps depending on the level of risk presented by the student.

## SECTION 6: ASSESSING STUDENTS AT RISK OF SUICIDE AND/OR SELF-INJURY

The level of suicidal risk will determine the steps the Crisis Response Team will take to keep the student(s) safe. Take the threat of self-harm seriously.

The mental health professional on campus or the designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team trained in suicide assessment should complete the Suicide Risk Assessment (Attachment A). The questions should be used as a guide while assessing the student and should not be read directly to them.

Star Vista operates the Crisis Hotline and Youth Stabilization, Opportunity, & Support (SOS) Team, which can provide consultation and assessment over the phone or in-person if the mental health professional on campus or the designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team is unavailable or seeks consultation with a particular student. **The Star Vista Crisis Hotline is 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

The Suicide Risk Assessment (Attachment A) will help determine the level of risk that the student presents and determine the action plan and steps needed to keep the student safe.

**Table 1: Levels of Suicide Risk**

Risk Levels	Definition	Indicators
<b>Low Risk</b>	Does not pose imminent danger to self; insufficient evidence for suicide potential. The student appears to be at low risk for harming themselves.  The student is in distress but has positive supports. The student's concerns and needs may be readily addressed. The student does not appear serious about completing self-harm right now.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing thoughts of suicide (found in notebooks, internet postings, drawings)</li> <li>• No plan; no previous suicide attempts</li> <li>• No access to weapons or means</li> <li>• No recent losses</li> <li>• Support system is in place</li> <li>• No alcohol/substance abuse</li> <li>• Some depressed mood/affect</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Risk</b>	May pose imminent danger to self, but there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a viable plan of action to do harm right now. Other risk factors exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughts of suicide</li> <li>• Plan with some specifics; unsure of intent</li> <li>• Previous attempts and/or hospitalization</li> <li>• Difficulty naming future plans</li> <li>• Past history of substance use</li> <li>• Recent trauma (e.g., loss, victimization)</li> </ul>

Risk Levels	Definition	Indicators
<b>High Risk</b>	Poses imminent danger to self with a viable plan to do harm; exhibits extreme and/or persistent inappropriate behaviors; sufficient evidence for violence potential. There is a need for immediate intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current thoughts of suicide</li> <li>• Plan with specifics, indicating when, where, and how</li> <li>• Access to weapons or means</li> <li>• Finalizing arrangements</li> <li>• Isolated and withdrawn</li> <li>• Previous attempts</li> <li>• Currently abusing alcohol/ substances</li> <li>• Mental health history</li> <li>• Precipitating events, such as loss of loved one, traumatic event, or bullying</li> </ul>



## **SECTION 7: ASSESSING STUDENTS DURING DISTANCE LEARNING/SCHOOL CLOSURES/ WHEN STUDENT IS NOT ON CAMPUS**

There are many different reasons a school staff would need to be prepared to assess for signs of suicide or self-harm outside a school setting. Whether it is due to a pandemic like COVID-19, power outages, or a student who has school refusal, there are a number of different ways in which school staff interact with students while not on campus. It is important that all staff who are engaged with students on independent study know how to identify risk factors and warning signs that a student may be considering suicide, understand the district process and policy for getting the student assessed, and have access to these resources easily.

When virtually assessing a student for risk of suicide, it is important to determine the location of the student and if there is anyone else with the student. The same questions on the Suicide Risk Assessment can be asked to a student outside of the school setting. The biggest difference is in the intervention.

Star Vista can assess the student over the phone or dispatch a team to the student's location. You can contact Star Vista by calling the Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to determine if the Star Vista Youth S.O.S. Team would be an appropriate response for the situation.

### ***Low Risk- Low Moderate Risk***

If the student is determined to be low – low moderate risk, and is capable and willing to develop a safety plan with you, follow these steps.

- Explain to the student that their parent/guardian has to be notified and participate in creating the safety plan.
- Contact the parent/guardian, notify them of the current situation, and encourage them to take part in the safety planning meeting with you and their student.
- Complete the questions on the safety plan and develop ways for the student to access needed resources.
- Communicate concerns and make recommendations for safety in the home (e.g., securing firearms and medications, cleaning supplies, cutlery, and razor blades).
- Send a copy of General Guidelines for Parents (Elementary), General Guidelines for Parents (Secondary), and Self-Injury Guidelines (Attachments H, I, and J).
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.

- Encourage the parent/guardian to sign a release of information for certain school site staff to speak with community-based agencies serving the student.
- Let the student know that the mental health professional or another identified support person on campus will check in with the student regularly until the student no longer poses a risk.
- Document everything. Complete a DORA to document the assessment and outcome.

### ***High Moderate - High Risk***

#### **PARENT/GUARDIAN TRANSPORT**

If the mental health professional or designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team has determined that the student's parent/guardian can transport the student safely to either Edgewood Crisis Stabilization Unit (San Francisco), Mills Peninsula Emergency Department (Burlingame), or San Mateo Medical Center Psychiatric Emergency Services (San Mateo), follow these steps to initiate the action plan:

- Explain to the student their parent/guardian has to be notified to ensure their safety.
- Contact the parent/guardian and notify them of the current situation, unless unsafe to do so.
- Explain to the parent/guardian the concerns you have regarding their child.
- Ask the parent/guardian to immediately take their child to the nearest Psychiatric Emergency Room.
- Explain to the parent/guardian the importance of having a return to school meeting (in person or virtual) following the outcome of the psychiatric assessment and send the parent/guardian the Return to School Information Packet.
- Encourage parents to sign a release of information form at the emergency room so that the mental health professional or the designated member for the school site Crisis Response Team can communicate with the hospital.
- Call ahead to the hospital to let them know a student is being transported.
- Follow up with the hospital and the parent/guardian later that day.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Document the situation and complete the Documentation of Risk Assessment (DORA). The mental health professional or designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team should keep in regular communication with the parent/guardian and the receiving hospital.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT TRANSPORT

If the mental health professional or designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team has determined the student's parent/guardian should not or cannot transport the student safely to a hospital, follow these steps to initiate the action plan:

- If you are on the phone or computer with the student, remain on with them.
- Let the student know that you need to contact local police to do a risk assessment.
- Call 911 and follow the script and steps below. Call from a landline whenever possible.
- "My name is [name]."
- "I am calling from [name of school], I am the [role/title at the school], [state whether you are working remotely]."
- "I am calling because I have a student who is reporting thoughts of suicide/reporting they have a plan for suicide/at high risk of suicide."
- Describe in detail what is going on and/or what the student told you.
- Let the dispatcher know the location of your student and that the student is alone in the home, or with parent/guardian that is unsafe.
- Let the dispatcher know who else may be present in the home.
- Request that the officer arrive without lights and siren.
- Request to speak with the officer when law enforcement arrives. Let them know you are affiliated with the school and to contact you when a determination has been made.
- Follow up with the hospital and the parent/guardian later that day or the following morning.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Document everything. Complete a DORA to document the assessment and outcome.

## **SECTION 8: LOCAL RESOURCES TO ASSIST SCHOOLS DURING A CRISIS**

**The Edgewood Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU)** is a 24-hour unlocked, mental health specialty service designed to assess and stabilize youth ages 5 to 17 experiencing acute psychiatric symptoms or a mental health crisis. This unit acts as an alternative to the traditional Psychiatric Emergency Services or Emergency Departments usually attached to large hospitals. The Edgewood CSU is located at 2681 28th Avenue in San Francisco and available to youth who have private insurance, including Kaiser Permanente. **Call the CSU at (415) 682-3278 prior to sending a student.**

- Crisis stabilization and prevention
- Comprehensive mental health evaluation and risk assessment
- Medical screening
- Collaborative treatment planning with an individualized strength-based focus
- Providing therapeutic interventions and activities
- Building coping skills and safety planning
- Discharge planning including linkage with community supports and services
- Connection with youth's school to support re-entry process
- Parent and guardian support and education together with a parent partner

Each CSU team is comprised of clinicians, counselors, nurses, a parent partner and clinical administrators with a psychiatrist available 24 hours a day.

Upon discharge, youth and their caregivers are referred to their health network providers and/or other appropriate specialized community providers for follow-up services. If during the assessment and after thorough discussion with the CSU clinical team it is apparent that the client could benefit from a higher level of care, a referral could then be made to Edgewood's Acute Intensive Services (AIS). Because Edgewood's AIS team is located on the same campus as the CSU, the clients in need benefit from minimal disruption in continued stabilization and a seamless continuum of care.

**Care Solace** is a mental health and substance use treatment coordination agency that helps link students, families and school staff to treatment providers. The County Office of Education has partnered with the Peninsula Health Care District and the Sequoia Health Care District to provide Care Solace services free of charge to all public and charter schools in San Mateo County. School staff can help students and their families connect to Care Solace via a "warm-handoff" over the phone, video chat, or via email. Students, families, and school staff can also access Care Solace anonymously using the [Care Solace website](#) or by calling **1-855-515-0595**. Care Solace provides:

- 24/7/365 support: Services are available during normal business hours as well as nights, weekends, holidays, and breaks

- Fast connection to care: Users receive a call back within the hour
- Anonymous path to care – Users can call 1 (855) 515-0595 directly to remain anonymous
- Culturally and gender appropriate care: Users are matched to specific needs, including LGBT, sexual violence and trauma, and faith-based support
- 200+ languages: Care Solace provides multilingual live translators on demand
- Care regardless of insurance plan: Care Solace provides support to those with private insurance plans, coverage by Kaiser Permanente and other health providers, Medi-Cal, on a sliding scale, and even no coverage.
- Support for all: Care Solace provides help for the entire school community including students, staff, and family members.

**Star Vista’s Youth Stabilization, Opportunity & Support (S.O.S.) Team** is 24-hour service designed to respond over the phone or in-person to San Mateo County youth (ages 0 to 25) who may be in a mental health crisis (suicidal ideation, self-harming behaviors, acute mental health, etc.). It provides priority access to current and former youth in foster care. The team is comprised of clinicians and family partners who support the identified student and their family in determining next steps to secure safety. The team will be able to provide on-site crisis intervention and assessment, short term case management, and clinical services, as well as resource sharing to connect clients to long-term care. They will also build community awareness and provide education about behavioral health crisis, suicide prevention, and response services. **The S.O.S. Team can be accessed by the public and school sites through the Crisis Center hotline at (650) 579-0350.**

## SECTION 9: ACTION PLAN

Once the mental health professional at the school site or the designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team has completed the Suicide Risk Assessment, the action plan will depend on the level of risk presented by the student.

Risk Levels	Definition	Indicators	Actions
<b>Low Risk</b>	The student appears to be at low risk for harming themselves. The student's concerns and needs may be readily addressed. The student does not appear serious about harming themselves right now. The student is able to complete a safety plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing thoughts of suicide (found in notebooks, internet postings, drawings)</li> <li>• No plan; no previous suicide attempts</li> <li>• No access to weapons or means</li> <li>• No recent losses</li> <li>• Support system is in place</li> <li>• No alcohol/substance abuse</li> <li>• Some depressed mood/affect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassure and supervise student</li> <li>• Communicate concerns with parent/guardian, if appropriate/safe</li> <li>• Assist in connecting to resources, including crisis lines</li> <li>• Mobilize a support system</li> <li>• Develop a safety plan that identifies caring adults and appropriate coping skills</li> <li>• Establish a follow-up plan</li> <li>• Monitor as needed</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate Risk</b>	The student may pose imminent danger to self. There is insufficient evidence to demonstrate a viable plan of action to do harm right now but other risk factors exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoughts of suicide</li> <li>• Plan with some specifics; unsure of intent</li> <li>• Previous attempts and/or hospitalization</li> <li>• Difficulty naming future plans</li> <li>• Past history of substance use</li> <li>• Recent trauma (e.g., loss, victimization)</li> </ul>	<p>SEE HIGH RISK</p> <p>*Document all actions as specified in documentation section.</p>

Risk Levels	Definition	Indicators	Actions
<b>High Risk</b>	Poses imminent danger to self with a viable plan to do harm. There is clear suicidal thinking and warning signs are present. There is a need for immediate intervention and probably hospitalization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current thoughts of suicide</li> <li>• Plan with specifics, indicating when, where, and how</li> <li>• Access to weapons or means</li> <li>• Finalizing arrangements</li> <li>• Isolated and withdrawn</li> <li>• Previous attempts</li> <li>• Currently abusing alcohol/substances</li> <li>• Mental health history</li> <li>• Precipitating events, such as loss of loved one, traumatic event, or bullying</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervise student at all times (including restrooms)</li> <li>• Follow Moderate to High Risk Situation Guidelines found below</li> <li>• Document all actions and outcomes as specified in documentation section</li> <li>• Establish a follow-up and/or return to school plan</li> <li>• Monitor as needed</li> </ul>

### **Guidelines for Moderate- to High-Risk Situations**

Based on the suicide assessment, the student has been identified as being at moderate to high risk of suicide. Further assessment by law enforcement or hospital staff may be needed to determine next steps. If the student and student's family can assist in the safety plan (Attachment B), further assessment may not be needed.

If the student is in possession of lethal means, secure the area and prevent other students from accessing this area. Lethal means should be removed whenever possible. It is best to call a trained law enforcement officer to remove lethal means.

#### **NO STUDENT SHOULD BE SENT HOME ALONE OR TO AN EMPTY HOUSE!**

Determining who will transport the student to the hospital for further assessment will depend on the student's age, developmental phase, level of risk, parent/guardian's responsiveness to the situation, and parent/guardian's ability to keep their child safe during transport. All of the factors should be carefully considered.

### **Parent/Guardian Transport**

If the mental health professional or designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team has determined that the student's parent/guardian can transport the student safely to either Edgewood's Crisis Stabilization Unit, Mills Peninsula Emergency Department or San Mateo Medical Center Psychiatric Emergency Services, follow these steps to initiate the action plan. [Note: In all instances, the immediate safety and security of the student,

the student population, faculty, and staff are of paramount concern. When an immediate threat is posed, immediately contact law enforcement.]

- Contact the parent/guardian and notify them of the current situation, unless unsafe to do so.
- Ask the parent/guardian to immediately come to the school. If the parent/guardian cannot report to the school, immediately follow steps to have law enforcement transport the student.
- Explain to the student their parent/guardian has been notified and is on their way. Describe what will happen next (using age-appropriate language).
- When the parent/guardian arrives at the school site, meet with them separately from their student to discuss the situation and steps needed to ensure safety.
- Have the parent/guardian complete the Released to Parents for Psychiatric Assessment Form.
- Explain to the parent/guardian the importance of having a return to school meeting following the outcome of the psychiatric assessment and give parents the Return to School Information Packet.
- Encourage parents to sign a release of information form so that the mental health professional or the designated member for the school site Crisis Response Team can communicate with the hospital.
- Provide Return to School Information Packet.
- Call ahead to the hospital to let them know a student is being transported.
- Follow up with the hospital and the parent/guardian later that day.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.

The mental health professional or designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team should keep in regular communication with the parent/guardian and the receiving hospital. They should encourage parents/guardians to sign the Release of Information form if the student gets transferred to an inpatient psychiatric hospital so the mental health professional on campus can coordinate support services and a support team upon the student's return to school. This mental health professional will work with the family to organize a return to school meeting and develop a safety plan.

### **Law Enforcement Transport/Emergency Medical Services Transport**

If the mental health professional or designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team has determined the student's parent/guardian should not or cannot transport the student safely, follow these steps to initiate the action plan:

- Make sure someone remains with the student at all times. Make all calls away from the student. Try to use a landline whenever possible.



- Explain to the student that you will be notifying their parent/guardian and describe what will happen next (using age-appropriate language).
- If your school site has a school resource officer, notify them immediately for assistance.
- The school resource officer can request the SMART Car for transport.
- If the school site does not have a school resource officer, notify the school's administrator that a call is being made for a possible 5150 transport.
- Call 911 and follow the script and steps below. Call from a landline whenever possible.
  - "My name is [name]."
  - "I am calling from [name of school and address], I am the [role/title at the school]."
  - "I am calling because I have a student who is at imminent risk of suicide."
  - Describe in detail what is going on and/or what the student told you
  - Let the dispatcher know your location on the campus
  - Request that the officer arrive without lights or a siren
  - Notify the front office/clerk that a police officer will be coming and will need to be directed to the relevant location
- Meet with the student and the officer in a private office or in a confidential setting.
- Give the officer important information about the situation, including the results from the Suicide Risk Assessment.
- If the officer feels the student needs to be transported to a hospital, request that they contact the SMART Car for transport, if appropriate.
- When the student is ready to transport, either via SMART Car or by law enforcement, escort student to the vehicle when other students are not around (avoid passing periods, breaks, lunch, or escort them directly after school is over).
- Find out what hospital the student is being transported to. If the student is 14 years or older, have them sign a Release of Information form so the school site and the receiving hospital can coordinate care and the student's return to school when appropriate.
- Contact the parent/guardian to notify them of the current situation and tell them which facility the student is being transported to as soon as possible.
- Explain to parents the importance of having a return to school meeting following the outcome of the psychiatric assessment.
- Encourage parents to sign a Release of Information form at the hospital so that the mental health professional or the designated member for the school site Crisis Response Team can communicate with the hospital.
- Call ahead to the hospital to let them know a student is being transported by the SMART Car or law enforcement and that the parents have been notified. Ask hospital

staff to secure a release of information form from the parents/guardians in order to communicate with the mental health professional on campus to coordinate the student's return to school.

- Follow up with the hospital and the parent/guardian later that day or the following morning.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Document everything. Complete a DORA to document the assessment and outcome.

### **Guidelines for Low-Risk Situations/Students Not Needing Hospitalization**

Based on the suicide assessment, the student has been identified as being at low risk of suicide at this time. This means the student is struggling with some serious social, emotional, or behavioral issues that have gone unaddressed and can lead to an imminent situation. This is an opportunity to connect the student with on-campus or off-campus supports and resources, identify a support system (including parents/guardian, school staff, community providers, and supportive adults and friends), and formulate a safety plan to help increase the student's ability to cope with the distress they are experiencing.

If the student is in possession of any objects that could be used to self-injure, remove the objects from the student's possession.

#### **NO STUDENT SHOULD BE SENT HOME ALONE OR TO AN EMPTY HOUSE!**

- Contact the parent/guardian and notify them of the current situation, requesting they come to the school, if possible, for a meeting regarding their student's safety. If they cannot, set up a time that may work in the next few days to meet in person.
- Explain to the student their parent/guardian has been notified.
- Describe what will happen next (using age-appropriate language).
- Either in person or over the phone, communicate concerns and make recommendations for safety in the home (e.g., securing firearms and medications, cleaning supplies, cutlery, and razor blades).
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Provide a copy of General Guidelines for Parents (Elementary), General Guidelines for Parents (Secondary), and Self-Injury Guidelines (Attachments H, I, and J).
- Obtain parent/guardian permission to release and exchange information with community agencies. Document everything. Complete a DORA to document the assessment and outcome.

## **Develop a Safety Plan**

This should be done with the student. Encourage the student to share with their parent/guardian. Use the Student Safety Plan (Attachment B):

- Complete the questions asked in the Safety Plan.
- Identify caring adults in the school, home, and community environment.
- Discuss what information the student would like to share with school employees and others on campus.
- Discuss and identify helpful coping skills for when the student is at school and home.
- Provide after-hours resource numbers.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Let the student know that the mental health professional or another identified support person on campus will check in with the student regularly until the student no longer poses a risk.

## **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect**

If child abuse by a parent/guardian is suspected or there is reasonable suspicion that contacting the parent/guardian may escalate the student's current level of risk, and/or the parents/guardians are contacted and unwilling to respond, report the incident to the appropriate child protective services agency following the district's Child Abuse and Reporting Requirements. This report should include information about the student's suicide risk level and any concerning ideations or behaviors. The reporting party must follow directives as indicated by the child protective services agency personnel.

## **SECTION 10: DOCUMENTATION AND RECORD-KEEPING**

Notes, documents, and records related to the incident are considered confidential information to be accessed only by the mental health professional on campus and members of the Crisis Response Team as needed during a crisis situation. These notes should be kept in a locked confidential file separate and apart from the student's cumulative records. These records would include:

- Student Safety Plan
- Any discharge paperwork provided by the parent/guardian
- Releases of information related to the incident
- Child Abuse Reporting Form (if applicable)
- Released to Parents for Psychiatric Assessment Form
- Documentation of Risk Assessment (DORA) Form

If a student for whom a DORA has been completed transfers to a school within or outside the district, the sending school may contact the receiving school to share information and concerns, as appropriate, to facilitate a successful and supportive transition.

## **SECTION 11: GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER AN EVALUATION/HOSPITALIZATION**

It is highly encouraged that a student's parents/guardians and identified school personnel have a return to school meeting upon the student's discharge from a psychiatric inpatient or upon release from a hospital. This meeting is to facilitate the following:

- Create the Return to School Safety Plan with the student (Attachment K).
  - Identify caring adults in the school, home, and community environment.
  - Discuss what information the student would like to share with school employees and others on campus.
  - Discuss and identify helpful coping skills for at school and home.
  - Provide after-hours resource numbers.
  - Let the student know the mental health professional on campus or another identified support person on campus will be checking in with the student regularly until the student no longer poses a risk.
- Implement or begin to coordinate on-site academic and social, emotional, and behavioral support services.
- Assist in accessing off-site, community-based support services for the student and their family.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to the parent/guardian for linkage to mental health treatment and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.
- Review any concerns the school site, parents/guardians, or student may have related to the incident.

If the student is hospitalized for a length of time and school work is missed, develop a plan with the student, their parent/guardian, and their teachers to ensure the student can get caught up in academic work.

Offer to speak to the student's teacher to explain recent events, what supports are in place, needs in the classroom (if any), and items on the Student Safety Plan that would be important for the teacher to know. Be protective of the student's confidential information while establishing that student's safety net in the greater school community.

Consider an assessment for special education or a 504 plan for a student whose behavioral and emotional needs affect their ability to benefit from their current educational program.

## **SECTION 12: SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While suicide knows no social, economic, or demographic boundaries, specific groups may have an increased risk of suicide. Students in the following high-risk groups, as well as other high-risk groups, should be paid special consideration and cultural appropriateness when assessing for suicide or self-harming behavior.

### **Students with Disabilities, Mental Health Disorders, or Substance Use Disorders**

Students with disabilities and/or medical conditions can be more vulnerable to depression and suicide risk. It could be important to coordinate with parents/guardians, primary care providers, or other treatment providers to determine the level of risk for students with certain disabilities or medical conditions. Not everyone who attempts or considers suicide has a mental health disorder, and not all students with mental health disorders will contemplate suicide or attempt suicide. However, mental health disorders and substance use disorders are risk factors for suicide, and students who have a mental health diagnosis or a substance use disorder diagnosis should be given special considerations when assessing for self-harm and suicide risk. If possible, consultation and collaboration with current treatment providers can help appropriately assess the student for level of risk.

### **Students Who Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ)**

Special consideration and cultural appropriateness is important in assessing the level of risk for students who identify as LGBTQ. Several studies have indicated that LGBTQ youth are up to seven times more likely than other youth to attempt suicide, and that between 41 and 64 percent of transgender or gender non-conforming youth attempt suicide.

- Do not make assumptions about a student's sexual orientation or gender identity. The risk for suicidal ideation is greatest among students who are struggling to hide or suppress their identity.
- Be affirming. Students who are struggling with their identity are on alert for negative or rejecting messages about sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Do not "out" students to anyone, including parents/guardians. Students have the right to privacy about their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- LGBTQ students with rejecting families have an eight-fold increased risk for suicidal ideation than do LGBTQ students with accepting families.
- Provide LGBTQ-affirming resources.

### **Students Bereaved by Suicide**

Students who have lost a loved one, friend, or close community member to suicide are at higher risk of attempting suicide themselves. Special considerations should be taken

when a school community has experienced the loss of a student to suicide. Students at that school or neighboring schools may experience a higher risk of suicide, regardless of the relationship they had with the student who died by suicide. It is necessary to address grief experienced by loss survivors to reduce their risk of suicide.

### **Students Experiencing Homelessness, Foster Care, or Out-of-Home Placement**

Youth experiencing homelessness or living in out-of-home settings often lack the protective factors of youth with a more permanent family life and are at a higher risk of suicide. Care should be taken when assessing these youth and determining their level of risk. Keep in mind that they may not have support outside of school and this could elevate their level of risk due to their inability to maintain safety outside of school.

It may be necessary to coordinate with foster-care liaisons, group home staff, foster parents, or other supportive providers to assist with creating a safety plan for a youth at risk of suicide or returning to school from a hospitalization.

## **SECTION 13: RESPONDING TO A STUDENT DEATH BY SUICIDE**

A post-vention plan should emphasize a single point of contact for information if the school learns of a student death. The school site Crisis Response Team should designate a staff member to be the point of contact with the family of the deceased; this point of contact should be the mental health professional on campus or an administrator. Information regarding the cause of death cannot not be disclosed to the school community until the family has been consulted and has given consent.

Although it may not always be possible to immediately determine all of the details about a death, it is important to confirm as much factual information as possible before communicating with students. Speculation and rumors can exacerbate the emotional upheaval within the school.

Time is also of the essence in confirming factual information, since social media and other forms of communication may be occurring simultaneously and it is possible that others, including students, may already have some information about the death.

It can be challenging for a school to determine how to proceed if the cause of death has not been confirmed to be suicide, if there is an ongoing investigation, or if the family does not want the cause of death disclosed. The school's principal or the superintendent should first check with the family, the coroner, and/or the medical examiner's office (or, if necessary, local law enforcement) to ascertain the official cause of death. Schools should state that the cause of death is still being determined and that additional information will be forthcoming once it has been confirmed.

- Acknowledge that there may be rumors (which are often inaccurate), and remind students that rumors can be deeply hurtful and unfair to the missing/deceased person and their family and friends.
- Given how quickly news and rumors spread (including through media coverage, e-mail, texting, and social media), schools may not be able to wait for a final determination before they need to begin communicating with the students. In those cases, schools can say, "At this time, this is what we know..."
- Although the fact that a student has died may be disclosed immediately, official information about the cause of death should not be disclosed to students until the family has been consulted.
- The need to share information should be carefully balanced with honoring the family's request.

### **When the Family Does Not Give Permission to Disclose Cause of Death**

There may be cases where the death has been declared a suicide but the family does not want this communicated, perhaps due to prejudice, privacy concerns, fear of risking contagion, or because they simply do not (yet) believe or accept that it was suicide.



If this situation occurs, someone from the administration or mental health staff who has a good relationship with the family should be designated to contact them to explain that students are already talking about the death among themselves and that having adults in the school community talk with students about suicide and its causes can help keep students safe.

Schools have a responsibility to balance the need to be truthful with the need to be sensitive to the family. If the family refuses to permit disclosure, schools can state, “The family has requested that information about the cause of death not be shared at this time.” But staff can also use the opportunity to talk with students about the phenomenon of suicide, for example:

“We know there has been a lot of talk about whether this was a suicide death. Since the subject of suicide has been raised, we want to take this opportunity to give you accurate information about suicide in general, ways to prevent it, and how to get help if you or someone you know is feeling depressed or may be suicidal.”

- Establish a plan to notify staff of the death. Notification of staff is recommended as soon as possible (e.g., emergency meeting before or after school).
- Make it clear the family has chosen not to share the cause of death or any details about the death.
- Allow staff to express their reactions and grief. Identify anyone who may need additional support and provide resources.
- Validate the frustration around not being able to have the details about the death and concerns that students will speculate/assume.
- Reiterate that although some students, faculty, and staff may have information about the cause of death, the family has chosen not to share the cause or details and the school must honor the family’s decision not to disclose.
- Establish a plan to notify students of the death in small group settings, such as the classroom. Do not notify students using a public announcement system.
- Provide staff with a scripted notification of death for students, including possible reactions, questions, and activities that students may engage in (e.g., writing, drawing, and referral to crisis counselor).
- Validate students’ emotions around not being told cause of death or details. Encourage students to access support services on campus and in the community.
- Provide clarity around procedures and locations for crisis counseling on campus.
- Establish a plan to notify other parents/guardians of the death. Prepare and disseminate a death notification letter for parents.
- Notify other schools in your district or surrounding cities that may be affected by the loss. Remember to refrain from disclosing the cause of death or details.

## **When the Family Does Give Permission to Disclose Cause of Death**

When the family does give permission to disclose the cause of death and details, make sure the plan for communicating with students is age appropriate. Oftentimes, details can be incredibly difficult to hear and do not need to be shared in order for students, faculty, and staff to process the loss of the student. The following guidelines address how to respond when the cause of death can be disclosed.

- Establish a plan to notify staff of the death. It is recommended to notify staff as soon as possible (e.g., emergency meeting before school or after school).
- To dispel rumors, share accurate information and all known facts about the death. (Be sensitive to giving too much detail.)
- Emphasize that no one person or event is to blame for suicide. Suicide is complex and cannot be simplified by blaming individuals, drugs, music, and/or school.
- Allow staff to express their reactions and grief; identify anyone who may need additional support and provide resources.
- Establish a plan to notify students of the death in small group settings, such as during class. Do not notify students using a public announcement system.
- Provide staff with a scripted notification of death for students, including possible reactions, questions, and activities students may engage in (e.g., writing, drawing, referral to crisis counselor).
- Make sure to clarify procedures and locations for crisis counseling on campus.
- Establish a plan to notify other parents/guardians of the death. Prepare and disseminate a death notification letter for parents.
- Notify other schools in the district or surrounding cities that may be affected by the loss.

## **Providing Support on Campus**

Providing extra support services on campus after a completed suicide (regardless whether the cause of death can be disclosed or not) is extremely important in preventing further tragedy at the school site and in the community. It is important to acknowledge that the school community may experience a heightened sense of loss when significant events transpire that the deceased student would have been a part of, such as culmination, prom, or graduation. Depending on the impact, such triggering events may require planning for additional considerations and resources.

- Identify a member of the school site Crisis Response Team to assist with coordination of crisis counseling and support services.
- Discuss the ability to obtain mental health supports from other school sites or neighboring districts with your district administration.
- Determine the need to call in more support from San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services' Community Response Team or local community-based mental health providers.

- Clarify procedures for students and staff who may need additional support to cope with the death.
- Offer the services of Care Solace for linkage to mental health treatment/grief counseling and parenting support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.

Identify locations on campus to provide crisis counseling to students, staff, and parents as needed. (Consider keeping the staff counseling area separate from the student counseling area.) In some cases, the school district's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can provide a therapist to offer support groups and/or individual sessions for staff at the school site.

- Oftentimes, students prefer to grieve in groups. Provide a space for students to access counseling or grieve with peers, such as a library or multi-purpose room.
- Supply student counseling area with tissue, water, snacks, support resources, and crisis hotline numbers.
- Make coloring paper and color pens or pencils available for students to process their emotions without having to talk.
- Have counselors available to monitor large group supports and be available for one-to-one support if needed.
- Request substitute teachers as needed and, if possible, to serve as "floaters" to provide relief for faculty that may need it.
- Maintain sign-in sheets and documentation on students serviced for follow-up, as needed.
- For faculty and staff, the district might offer free services through an EAP or its employer health care coverage. Community-based mental health providers may be available to meet with faculty and staff. Contact them directly for support.
- Offer the services of Care Solace to faculty and staff for linkage to mental health treatment/grief counseling support if needed. Care Solace can be reached directly at 1-888-515-0595.

## **Suicide Contagion**

Suicide contagion is the process by which one suicide may contribute to another. This is a very real and familiar tragedy on the Peninsula and can be spread out over months between grades and social groups and even across school sites. Although contagion is relatively rare (accounting for between one and five percent of all youth suicide deaths annually), adolescents and teenagers appear to be more susceptible to imitative suicide than adults.

It is also important to recognize the impact of highly publicized suicide deaths, such as those of celebrities, which may contribute to contagion. Identify students who may be at an increased risk for suicide, including those who have a reported history of attempts or other risk factors:

- Have a history of depression, trauma, or loss
- Are dealing with stressful life events, such as a death or divorce in the family
- Were eyewitnesses to the death
- Are family members or close friends of the deceased (including siblings at other schools and teammates, classmates, significant others, and acquaintances of the deceased)
- Received a phone call, text, or other communication from the deceased foretelling the suicide and possibly feel guilty about having missed the warning signs
- Had a last interaction with the deceased that was very negative
- May have fought with or bullied the deceased

Offer continuous crisis counseling at school for several months after a suicide to help reduce the risk of another suicide. It may be helpful to offer services on campus to those students identified as needing more support, such as holding ongoing grief groups during school hours for students impacted by the suicide loss or using community-based organizations.

## **Memorials**

Schools should strive to treat all deaths in the same way. Having one approach for memorializing a student who died of cancer or in a car accident and a different approach for a student who died by suicide reinforces prejudice associated with suicide and may be deeply painful to the student's family and friends.

Students often wish to memorialize a student who has died, reflecting a basic human desire to remember those we have lost. Memorials can be an important way for students to begin to heal and express grief for the passing of a fellow student. If students initiate a memorial, the school mental health professional and/or the designated member of the school site Crisis Response Team should offer guidelines for a meaningful, culturally appropriate way to acknowledge the loss.

- It is important to memorialize the student in a way that does not inadvertently glamorize or romanticize either the student or the death.
- Memorials should not be disruptive to the daily school routine.
- If spontaneous memorials are created on school grounds, school staff should monitor them for messages that may be inappropriate (hostile or inflammatory) or indicate students who may be at risk themselves.
- Set time limits and offer straightforward communication regarding the memorials.
- Schools should discourage requests to create and distribute images of the deceased, such as on T-shirts or buttons.
- It is not recommended that flags be flown at half-staff (a decision generally made by local government authorities rather than the school administration in any event).

- Memorials may be left in place until after the funeral (or for up to approximately five days), after which the tribute objects may be offered to the family.
- Find a way to let the school community know that the posters are going to the family so that people do not think they were disrespectfully removed. For example, post a statement near the memorial on the day it will be taken down.

After approximately five days (or after the funeral), seat assignments may be re-arranged to create a new environment. Teachers should explain in advance that the intention is to strike a balance between compassionately honoring the student who has died while at the same time returning focus back to the classroom curriculum. Students may be involved in planning how to respectfully move or remove the desk; for example, they could read a statement that emphasizes their love for their friend and their commitment to eradicate suicide in their memory.

### **School Newspapers**

Coverage of the student's death in the school newspaper may be seen as a kind of memorial. Articles may also be used to educate students about suicide warning signs and available resources. Having some focus on healthy coping, resilience, and recovery is also helpful.

Any such coverage should be reviewed by an adult to ensure it conforms to the standards set forth in [Recommendations for Reporting on Suicide](#).

### **Funerals/Memorial Services**

Funeral and memorial services should not be held on school grounds. The school should instead focus on maintaining its regular schedule, structure, and routine. Not all students will be impacted by the suicide, and it is important for them to continue their daily routine.

If the family does hold the service during school hours, it is recommended that the school remain open and that school buses are not used to transport students to and from the service.

- Students should be permitted to leave school to attend the service only with appropriate parental permission.
- Coordinate with the family and funeral director to arrange for mental health professionals to attend the service.
- The principal or another senior administrator should attend the funeral.
- Parents should be encouraged to attend the services with their children that wish to attend. This provides not only emotional support but also an opportunity for parents to monitor their children's response and initiate a discussion with their children.
- Provide [grief support and/or suicide prevention material](#) to students and to the parent community.

## **Assemblies/Prevention Events**

Often, the parents of the deceased student express an interest in holding an assembly or other event to address the student body and describe the intense pain the suicide death has caused their family to dissuade other students from taking their own lives.

Schools should explain that presenting this content and holding assemblies or other large events for students is not an effective approach to suicide prevention and may actually be risky. Encourage parents to work with the school to bring in local options around suicide prevention curriculum.

Schools can play an important role in channeling the energy and passion of the students (and greater community) in a positive direction, balancing the community's need to grieve with the impact that the proposed activity will likely have on students, particularly on those who might be vulnerable to contagion.

## **Social Networking After a Suicide**

Students often turn to social networking sites as a way to communicate information about the death. That information may be accurate or rumored. Many also use social networking as an opportunity to express their thoughts, positive and negative, about the death and/or about their own feelings regarding suicide.

Encourage parents to monitor internet postings regarding the death, including the deceased's wall or personal profile pages. Social networking sites may contain rumors, derogatory messages about the deceased, or messages that bully students. Such messages may need to be addressed. In some situations, postings may warrant notification to parents/guardians and/or law enforcement.

The deceased person's social media page often becomes a place where friends and family talk about the suicide and the person who died. Social media provides schools with a powerful set of tools:

- Disseminate important and accurate information to the school community
- Identify students who may need additional support or further intervention
- Share resources for grief support and mental health care
- Promote safe messages that emphasize suicide prevention
- Minimize the risk of suicide contagion by not glorifying suicide or describing the means used

## **Working with the Media**

A death of a school-age student by suicide can attract a lot of media attention. It is important for a school to develop safe messages in order to avoid contagion. The school should appoint a media spokesperson. Schools should strongly encourage the media to adhere to the recommendations for safe reporting.

- Do not glamorize or romanticize the victim or the suicide.
- Do not oversimplify the causes of suicide.
- Do not describe the details of the method.
- Do not include photographs of the death scene or of devastated mourners.
- Use preferred language, such as “died by suicide.”
- Include messages of hope and recovery.
- Include a list of warning signs, since most (but not all) people who die by suicide show warning signs.
- List the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (800-273-8255) and include information on local mental health resources in each article.
- For more information go to [Reporting on Suicide](#).

# Forms



## SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT

This Suicide Risk Assessment will guide school staff in the evaluation process to determine the risk level and help staff develop a student safety plan.

Student:

School:

Date of Birth:

Age:

Gender:

Grade:

Name of Staff Member Completing Assessment:

### Assessing for Level of Risk

- Use professional judgment and training to conduct a comprehensive and sensitive interview with the student.
- The following questions are intentionally designed as yes/no questions to help determine the level of risk.
- Ask clarifying questions to help gain a better understanding of what is going on with the student.
- The prompts below are examples of how to ask the question. Make sure the questions you ask and the way you go about asking them are appropriate for the student's level of development and cognitive ability.

Category	Assessment Questions	Yes	No
<b>Intent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you currently thinking about suicide?</li> <li>• Have you been thinking of taking your own life?</li> <li>• Sometimes, people who have experienced/been through what you have been through have a wish to go to sleep and never wake up. Do you wish that?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
<b>Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you thought about how to make yourself die?</li> <li>• Do you have a plan for how to complete suicide?</li> <li>• Have you thought about what you would do to fall asleep forever?</li> <li>• Have you taken any steps to make this plan happen?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		

Category	Assessment Questions	Yes	No
<b>Means</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have access to weapons or pills?</li> <li>• Do you have what you would need to carry out your plan?</li> <li>• Where would you get what you need to carry out your plan?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
<b>Past Ideation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long have you had these thoughts?</li> <li>• Have you previously had thoughts of suicide?</li> <li>• Is suicide something you have thought of before?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
<b>Previous Attempts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you attempted suicide before?</li> <li>• Have you ever tried to kill yourself?</li> <li>• Do you have a previous suicide attempt?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
<b>Changes in Mood/ Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the past year, have you ever felt so sad that you stopped doing regular activities (sports, dance, art, hanging out with friends, school)?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you or anyone else noticed or commented on your behavior being really different lately?</li> <li>• Have you been really angry/agitated lately?</li> <li>• Have you felt like you aren't in touch with reality? Feel disconnected from the real world?</li> <li>• Increased anxiety? Difficulty sleeping? Difficulty concentrating?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you been using drugs or alcohol lately?</li> <li>• More than you previously used to?</li> <li>• Have you been doing anything to help yourself feel better in the moment, like marijuana, alcohol, eating lots of junk food?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		

Category	Assessment Questions	Yes	No
<b>Trauma or Stressors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever lost someone to suicide?</li> <li>• Have you had a recent death of a family member or loved one? Have you experienced a recent loss, a relationship break-up, parents' separation/divorce?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you recently had a traumatic or stressful experience?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you being bullied/harassed or discriminated against here at school, at home, or in your community?</li> </ul> <p>Details:</p>		
<b>Buffers or Protective Factors</b> <i>(These questions help the student and assessor determine strength and supports to put in the safety plan)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you feel like you have support at home? Or within your family?</li> <li>• Who would that be?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have supportive people you trust at school?</li> <li>• Who would that be?</li> <li>• What about in the community? (church, sports, neighborhood)?</li> <li>• Who would that be?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have support elsewhere? Via social media? Friends from other schools?</li> <li>• Who would that be?</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some of your reasons for wanting to live/ reason to not die?</li> <li>• What would be something you would miss if you went away forever?</li> <li>• If everything was better tomorrow, what would that look like?</li> <li>• If you could become anything or go anywhere in the future, what would that look like?</li> </ul>		

Based on the student's responses to the above answers, determine if the level of risk is low, moderate, or high. If unsure of level of risk, consult with other members of your Crisis Response Team or contact Star Vista's Crisis Hotline at **650-579-0350** for assistance determining next steps.

## STUDENT SAFETY PLAN

Student Name:

Date:

Name of Staff Member Completing the Safety Plan:

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**If harm to the student or others is happening now, or if the student is not able to participate in the safety planning or refuses to, please send the student to the psychiatric hospital.**

This should be developed by the student with assistance from the members of the school support team.

With younger students, parents/guardians play a larger role in helping formulate and implement the safety plan. Regardless of age, if safe to do so, the parent/guardian should be made aware of the plan so they can help implement it when the student is not at school.

Consider this as a working document to help maintain the student's safety and feeling of support.

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The goal is to keep you safe. What do you think will help you stay safe?

What can be done to stop your plan, if you have one? Who can help you?

If you have been using drugs/alcohol to cope, would you be able to not use?

What needs to be done for you to not use? Who can help you?

When can this happen and how?

Have you had any prior suicide ideation or had previous attempts?

What happened? Did anything in particular stop you from acting on your thoughts?

What could be done now? Who can help you? When can this happen and how?

Are there circumstances you can change right now that would help?

What are your strengths? Which ones will help you right now?

What supports do you have right now? Who is available? Who could you go to?

What are some things you are looking forward to, tomorrow, in a month, a year, 5 years, 10 years?

Important people you can reach out to at school or outside of school:

Support Team Members	Contact Information

Things I can do to help make myself feel better in the moment (think of things that make you happy or bring you joy. This might be a pet, art, reading, listening to music, working out, spending time in nature):

At School	At Home/Community

Other interventions at school to keep me safe (i.e., regular meetings with a counselor):

If I begin to feel overwhelmed or unsafe at any time during the school day, I will  
immediately ask to see \_\_\_\_\_ to assess my level of risk  
and keep me safe.

**24/7 Suicide/Crisis Hotline:**  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
**TEXT “HOME” to 741741**

## SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOLS SUICIDE PREVENTION PROTOCOL DOCUMENTATION OF RISK ASSESSMENT (DORA)

### Demographic Information (Match Educational Records)

School Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ IEP:    Y    N

Name of Staff Member Completing This Form: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reason for Referral

Self-Referred	Signs of Self-Injury	Discipline Referral
Changes in Mood	Changes in Behavior	Social Media Post
Verbal Expression of Intent	Written Expression of Intent	
Other:		

### Assessment Information

Was the student assessed using the Suicide Risk Assessment?    Y    N

If no, please explain:

Level of risk identified:    Low    Moderate    High

Was the student taken to the hospital?    Y    N

If yes, which hospital?    Mills-Peninsula PES    SMMC PES  
    Edgewood CSU    Unknown

How was the student transported?    Parent/guardian transport    SMART Car  
    Law enforcement    Ambulance

## RELEASED TO PARENTS FOR PSYCHIATRIC ASSESSMENT FORM

I have been notified by

that my child,

Expressed intent to self-harm;

Engaged in self-injurious behaviors; and/or

Verbalized and/or manifested the dangers of possible suicide.

I acknowledge that staff explained the incident that led to this notification and recommended that I seek an immediate psychiatric assessment for my child. I will follow up with the school if I have further concerns about this.

Resources for obtaining a psychiatric assessment can be found at

- **Edgewood: Crisis Stabilization Unit** *(For Kaiser/Private Insurance Students)*  
2681 28th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116  
Phone: (415) 682-3278
- **Mills-Peninsula Medical Center, Emergency Department** *(Any Insurance)*  
1501 Trousdale Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010  
Phone: (650) 696-5915
- **San Mateo Medical Center, Psychiatric Emergency Services** *(Any Insurance)*  
222 West 39th Ave., San Mateo, CA, 94403  
Phone: (650) 573-2662

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

## **SAMPLE STUDENT ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEATH (UNKNOWN AND SUICIDE)**

Faculty should be informed of the suicide first and given time to express their emotions and concerns before informing their students. These announcements should be presented in a small group, such as a classroom, as soon as possible following the death. Initial announcements should never be made over the loud speaker or in a large assembly.

### **Sample announcement for when a suicide death has occurred (with parent/guardian consent to disclose cause of death)**

“This morning, we heard the extremely sad news that [student name] died by suicide last night. I know we are all saddened by [their] death and send our condolences to [their] family and friends. Stations will be located throughout the school today for students who wish to talk to a counselor.

Information about the funeral will be provided when it is available, and students may attend with parental permission.”

### **Sample announcement for a suspicious death not declared a suicide (when parental consent to disclose is not obtained)**

“This morning, we heard the extremely sad news that [student name] died last night. This is the only information we have officially received on the circumstances surrounding the event. I know we are all saddened by [their] death and send our condolences to [their] family and friends. Stations will be located throughout the school today for students who wish to talk to a counselor. Information about the funeral will be provided when it is available, and students may attend with parental permission.”

### **Sample announcement for elementary or middle school (cause of death not disclosed)**

“We want to take some time to talk about something very sad. [Student name], a [grade level] grader, died unexpectedly last night. At this point, we do not officially know the cause of [their] death. Death is a difficult issue for anyone to deal with. Even if you didn’t know [student name], you might still have some emotional reactions to hearing about this. It is very important to be able to express our feelings about [student name]’s death, especially our loss and sadness. We want you to know that there are teachers and counselors available at [location] all through the day to talk with you about your reaction to [student name]’s death. If you want to talk with somebody, you will be given a pass to go to [location] where we have people who will help us through this difficult time.”

At the end of the first day, another announcement to the whole school prior to dismissal can serve to join the whole school in their grieving in a simple, non-sensationalized way. In this case, it is appropriate to make an announcement similar to the following over the loud speaker:



“Today has been a sad day for all of us. We encourage you to talk about [student name]’s death with your friends, your family, and whoever else gives you support. We will have special staff here for you tomorrow to help in dealing with our loss. Let us end the day by having the whole school offer a moment of silence for [student name].”

On the second day following the death, many schools have found it helpful to start the day with another announcement by each teacher in their homeroom or first period.

**Parent/guardian consents to disclose cause of death and invitation to funeral from family**

“We now know that [student name]’s death has been declared a suicide. Even though we might try to understand the reasons for [their] doing this, we can never really know what was going on that made [them] take [their] life. One thing that’s important to remember is that there is never just one reason for a suicide. There are always many reasons or causes, and we will never be able to figure them all out. Today, we begin the process of returning to a normal schedule in school. This may be hard for some of us to do. Counselors are still available in school to help us deal with our feelings. If you feel the need to speak to a counselor, either alone or with a friend, tell a teacher, the principal, or the school nurse and they will help make the arrangements.

We also have information about the visitation and funeral. The visitation will be held tomorrow evening at [location] at [time].

There will be a funeral service at [time] at [location]. In order to be excused from school to attend the funeral, you will need to be accompanied by a parent or relative or have your parent’s permission to attend. We also encourage you to ask your parents to go with you to the funeral home.”

**Parent/guardian does not consent to disclose cause of death**

“I understand that many of you may have upsetting feelings and questions about [student name]’s death. I will try to answer any questions that I can. It is okay to cry. Together, we can talk about whatever you may be feeling or want to talk about. Today, we begin the process of returning to a normal schedule in school. This may be hard for some of us to do. Counselors are still available in school to help us deal with our feelings. If you feel the need to speak to a counselor, either alone or with a friend, tell a teacher, the principal, or the school nurse, and they will help make the arrangements. There are support rooms now available at [location]. Anyone who would like to go to talk to someone in the support rooms may do so now. I will give you a pass.”

If there is not lengthy discussion, consider quiet seat work rather than lesson plans as usual.

## Sample Letter to Staff

Date:

To: All Staff

From: [Name of school] Crisis Team

Re: [Name of deceased]

The recent death of [student name] [has had/is expected to have] a significant impact on our entire school community. Our crisis team has been mobilized to respond to this tragic event.

On [date], [student name] [insert brief facts about the death depending on parent/guardian consent]. We expect a variety of reactions to this loss from our students, parents, and members of our staff. Some of these reactions may be mild while others may be more intense.

To effectively assist all members of our school community, an emergency staff meeting will be held at [time] on [date] in the [location]. At that time, our crisis team will provide further details and answer questions. We will also discuss how to present the information to our students. In the meantime, please refer all inquiries from outside sources to [name of media or communications coordinator].

With students, you can acknowledge that this death has occurred. However, please avoid discussion of any details. Simply tell students that the school staff will provide information to everyone shortly. Please refer any student who appears to be in crisis or having significant difficulty to [name of counseling services coordinator]. As this tragedy has also affected our staff, we encourage you to also seek assistance from [name of counseling services coordinator], if desired.

### Emergency Staff Meeting

Time:

Date:

Location:

If you have any questions or concerns before the meeting, please contact [name of crisis team coordinator].

## **HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD AFTER A SUICIDE**

### **Deal with your own reactions**

When a young person makes the devastating choice to commit suicide, we can be overwhelmed by our personal sense of shock and confusion. If you knew the deceased personally, you may feel a jumble of emotions. Give yourself some time to let the news settle. Expect shock to mix with sadness and helplessness. It is critical for you to take time to deal with your own feelings before you approach your child.

### **Avoid gossip about the causes**

We may never know all the reasons for any suicide, and within this vacuum of complete and accurate information we are often presented with half-facts and speculation. So don't give in to random conversations about the reasons for death.

### **Remain nonjudgmental about the deceased**

While it's true that understanding the risk factors and warning signs of suicide can be very helpful, we don't want to make judgments or assumptions about any particular death.

### **Share your reactions with your child**

Start by expressing your own sadness and confusion about the death, and then ask your child to share their reactions.

### **Ask for your child's response, and validate it**

Validate whatever you hear: "I can appreciate your sadness/confusion/anger/lack of understanding." Be prepared for the classic response of "I don't know," and validate that too: "I understand when something like this happens, it can be hard to know how you feel."

If your child had a personal relationship with the deceased, your child's grief should be your first priority. Grief in childhood looks differently than it does in adulthood. Children tend to experience intense feelings, such as those that accompany a significant loss, in short bursts. Such feelings normally pass quickly, which is why it's important to seize those "teachable moments" when the door to conversation about the death may be open.

### **Acknowledge rumors, and put them into context**

If you've been hearing rumors about the death, the chances are your child has heard them too. Address the rumors with your child: "There are a lot of rumors floating around about what happened. Have you heard anything?" Explain that, although some of the rumors may be true, they are only part of the story, and we have to be careful not to make judgments based on limited information. Emphasize that the most important piece of the story is the fact that the deceased felt so terrible or was thinking so unclearly that they did not realize the consequences of what they were doing.

### **Introduce the topic of seeking help**

Emphasize that nothing in life is ever so terrible or devastating that it should be handled by suicide. Ask your child who they would turn to for help with a serious problem. Hopefully, your name will be on the top of the list, but don't be upset if it isn't. Depending on your child's age, their allegiance may have shifted to peers. Agree that friends are a great resource but that when a problem is so big that suicide is being considered as a solution, it's essential to get help from an adult, too. Ask which adults your child views as helpful, especially with difficult problems. If the list is short or nonexistent, make some suggestions. Good choices can include other adult family members; school staff, such as teachers, counselors, coaches, or the school nurse; clergy or youth ministers; a friend's parent; older siblings; or even neighbors.

You may also want to recognize that your child may be concerned about the well-being of a friend or classmate. Mention that these same adults are a great resource in those situations, too. It's never good to keep worries about a friend to one's self, especially if the worries are about something as serious as suicide.

### **Keep channels of communication open**

Revisit these messages about seeking help in other conversations. Unanswered questions and complicated feelings about a suicide linger, even if they are unspoken, and ignoring them does not make them go away. Talking about suicide can't plant the idea in your child's head. Creating an open forum for discussion of difficult subjects, like suicide, can give your child the opportunity to recognize you as one of their trusted adults and will offer the chance to practice help-seeking skills.

### **Resources**

The **24 Hour Crisis Line:** Suicide/Crisis Hotline:  
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

**Care Solace: 1-888-515-0595**

[www.star-vista.org](http://www.star-vista.org)

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

## **SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS REGARDING THE DEATH OF A STUDENT**

Dear [school name] Families:

It is with sadness that I inform you of the death of [student's name], one of our [grade] students. [Insert appropriate details about the death that have been approved by the family for release to community.]

For those of you who knew [student's name], we ask that you remember and celebrate [their] [insert some of the student's positive character traits]. For those of you who did not know [student's name], we ask that you respect our sadness and support us with your understanding.

It is very difficult for all of us to face the death of a young person. Today, a support team of counselors, psychologists, and community mental health partners worked with our staff members to provide counseling and support to students. Students who need additional support should contact their school counselor.

Your child may be coming home with questions and worries about this loss. We have enclosed some suggestions that may prove helpful to you as you discuss [student's name]'s death. Please feel free to contact the school if you have an issue you would like to discuss.

I know you join me in extending our heartfelt sympathy to [student's name]'s family. When we receive word regarding funeral arrangements, I will share the information with you.

Again, please do not hesitate to contact the school at [telephone number] if you have any concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

[signature]

Principal

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS (ELEMENTARY)

### Suicide is Preventable

- **Talk** to your child about suicide. Don't be afraid; you will not be "putting ideas into their head." **Asking for help** is the single skill that will protect your student. **Help your child** to identify and **connect** to caring adults to talk to when they need guidance and support.
- **Know** the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.
- **Remain calm.** Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.
- **Listen** to your child's feelings. Don't minimize what your child says about what is upsetting them. Put yourself in your child's place; don't attempt to provide simple solutions.
- **Be honest.** If you are concerned, do not pretend the problem is a minor one. Assure the child there are people who can help. State you will be with them to provide comfort and love.
- **Be supportive.** Children look for help and support from parents and older siblings. Talk about ways of dealing with problems and reassure your child that you care. Let children know their bad feelings will not last forever.
- **Take action.** It is crucial to get professional help for your child and the entire family. When you are close to a situation it is often hard to see it clearly. You may not be able to solve the problem yourself.
  - Help may be found at a suicide prevention center or local mental health agency or through clergy or other community supports.
  - Become familiar with the support services at your child's school. Contact the appropriate person(s) at the school, for example, the school social worker, psychologist, counselor, or nurse.
- **Get support.** Providing support for a child at risk of suicide can be emotionally and physically draining. Reach out for personal adult supports within your community (e.g., friends, family, clergy, mental health professionals).
- **Access important numbers/websites.** *In an emergency, call 911.*

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Care Solace: 1-888-515-0595

[www.star-vista.org](http://www.star-vista.org)

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

## **Youth Suicide Risk Factors**

While the path that leads to suicidal behavior is long and complex and there is no “profile” that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty, there are certain factors that make it more likely a student will consider suicide. In isolation, these factors are not signs of suicidal thinking. However, when present, they signal the need to be vigilant and alert for the warning signs of suicide. The behaviors listed below may indicate that a child is emotionally distressed and may begin to think and act in self-destructive ways. If you are concerned about one or more of the following behaviors, please seek assistance at your child’s school or at your local mental health service agency.

### **Home Problems**

- Running away from home
- Arguments with parents/caregivers

### **Behavior Problems**

- Temper tantrums
- Thumb sucking or bed wetting/soiling
- Acting out or violent, impulsive behavior
- Bullying
- Accident proneness
- Sudden change in activity level or behavior
- Hyperactivity or withdrawal

### **Physical Problems**

- Frequent stomachaches or headaches for no apparent reason
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Nightmares or night terrors

### **School Problems**

- Chronic truancy or tardiness
- Decline in academic performance
- Fears associated with school

### **Serious Warning Signs**

- Severe physical cruelty towards people or pets
- Scratching, cutting, or marking the body
- Thinking, talking, or drawing about suicide
- Previous suicide attempts
- Risk-taking, such as intentionally running in front of cars or jumping from high places
- Intense or excessive preoccupation with death

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS (SECONDARY)

### Suicide is Preventable

- **Talk** to your child about suicide. Don't be afraid; you will not be "putting ideas into their head." **Asking for help** is the single skill that will protect your student. **Help your child** to identify and **connect** to caring adults to talk to when they need guidance and support.
- **Know** the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.
- **Remain calm.** Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.
- **Listen** to your child's feelings. Don't minimize what your child says about what is upsetting them. Put yourself in your child's place; don't attempt to provide simple solutions.
- **Be honest.** If you are concerned, do not pretend the problem is a minor one. Assure the child there are people who can help. State you will be with them to provide comfort and love.
- **Be supportive.** Children look for help and support from parents and older siblings. Talk about ways of dealing with problems and reassure your child that you care. Let children know their bad feelings will not last forever.
- **Take action.** It is crucial to get professional help for your child and the entire family. When you are close to a situation it is often hard to see it clearly. You may not be able to solve the problem yourself.
  - Help may be found at a suicide prevention center or local mental health agency or through clergy or other community supports.
  - Become familiar with the support services at your child's school. Contact the appropriate person(s) at the school, for example, the school social worker, school psychologist, school counselor, or school nurse.
- **Get support.** Providing support for a child at risk of suicide can be emotionally and physically draining. Reach out for personal adult supports within your community (e.g., friends, family, clergy, mental health professionals).
- **Access important numbers/websites.** *In an emergency, call 911.*

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## Youth Suicide Risk Factors

While the path that leads to suicidal behavior is long and complex and there is no “profile” that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty, there are certain factors that make it more likely a student will consider suicide. In isolation, these factors are not signs of suicidal thinking. However, when present, they signal the need to be vigilant for the warning signs of suicide. Specifically, these risk factors include the following:

- History of depression, mental illness, or substance/alcohol abuse disorders
- Family history of suicide or suicide in community
- Presence of a firearm or rope
- Hopelessness
- Isolation or lack of social support
- Impulsivity
- Situational crises
- Incarceration

## Suicide Warning Signs

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” These warning signs signal the need to inquire directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide.

If such thinking is acknowledged, then intervention is required. Warning signs include the following:

- **Suicide threats.** It has been estimated that up to 80 percent of all suicide victims have given some clues regarding their intentions. Both direct (“I want to kill myself”) and indirect (“I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up”) threats need to be taken seriously.
- **Suicide notes and plans.** The presence of a suicide note is a significant sign of danger. Youth are at greater risk if they reveal a more detailed plan.
- **Prior suicidal behavior.** Prior behavior is a powerful predictor of future behavior. Therefore, anyone with a history of suicidal behavior should be carefully observed for future suicidal behavior.
- **Making final arrangements.** Giving away prized possessions, writing a will, and/or making funeral arrangements may be warning signs of impending suicidal behavior.
- **Preoccupation with death.** Excessive talking, drawing, reading, and/or writing about death may suggest suicidal thinking.
- **Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings.** Depression (especially when combined with hopelessness), sudden happiness (especially when preceded by significant depression), a move toward social isolation, giving away personal possessions, and declining interest in previously important activities are all considered warning signs of suicide.

## SELF-INJURY: GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

### General Information

- Self-injury (SI) is a complex behavior that is separate and distinct from suicide.
- SI provides a way to manage overwhelming feelings and can be a way to bond with peers (rite of togetherness).
- SI is defined as intentional tissue damage that can include cutting, severe scratching, pinching, stabbing, puncturing, ripping, pulling skin or hair, and/or burning.
- The majority of students who engage in SI are adolescent females, though research indicates there are minimal gender differences. Students of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds engage in SI behavior. SI is commonly mentioned in media, social networks, and other means of communication.
- Individual mental health services can be effective in addressing SI when focused on reducing the negative thoughts and environmental factors that trigger it.

### Signs of Self-Injury

- Frequent or unexplained bruises, scars, cuts, or burns
- Frequent inappropriate use of clothing designed to conceal wounds (often found on the arms, thighs, or abdomen)
- Unwillingness to participate in activities that require less body coverage (swimming, physical education class)
- Secretive behaviors, spending unusual amounts of time in the bedroom, bathroom or isolated areas
- Bruises on the neck, headaches, red eyes, ropes/clothing/belts tied in knots
- General signs of depression, social-emotional isolation, and disconnectedness
- Possession of sharp implements (razor blades, shards of glass, thumbtacks)
- Evidence of self-injury in drawings, journals, pictures, texts, and social networking sites
- Risk-taking behaviors such as gun play, sexual acting out, jumping from high places, or running into traffic

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Care Solace: 1-888-515-0595

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## Youth Suicide Risk Factors

While the path that leads to suicidal behavior is long and complex and there is no “profile” that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty, there are certain factors that make it more likely a student will consider suicide. In isolation, these factors are not signs of suicidal thinking. However, when present, they signal the need to be vigilant for the warning signs of suicide. Specifically, these risk factors include the following:

- History of depression, mental illness, or substance/alcohol abuse disorders
- Family history of suicide or suicide in community
- Presence of a firearm or rope
- Hopelessness
- Isolation or lack of social support
- Impulsivity
- Situational crises
- Incarceration

## Suicide Warning Signs

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” These warning signs signal the need to inquire directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide. If such thinking is acknowledged, then intervention is required. Warning signs include the following:

- **Suicide threats.** It has been estimated that up to 80 percent of all suicide victims have given some clues regarding their intentions. Both direct (“I want to kill myself”) and indirect (“I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up”) threats need to be taken seriously.
- **Suicide notes and plans.** The presence of a suicide note is a significant sign of danger. Youth are at greater risk if they reveal a more detailed plan.
- **Prior suicidal behavior.** Prior behavior is a powerful predictor of future behavior. Therefore, anyone with a history of suicidal behavior should be carefully observed for future suicidal behavior.
- **Making final arrangements.** Giving away prized possessions, writing a will, and/or making funeral arrangements may be warning signs of impending suicidal behavior.
- **Preoccupation with death.** Excessive talking, drawing, reading, and/or writing about death may suggest suicidal thinking.
- **Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings.** Depression (especially when combined with hopelessness), sudden happiness (especially when preceded by significant depression), a move toward social isolation, giving away personal possessions, and declining interest in previously important activities are all considered warning signs of suicide.

## RETURN TO SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

This form should be used when a student returns from a Psychiatric Assessment or a psychiatric hospitalization. Complete this form in the return to school meeting, with the student and the parent or guardian. Provide a copy for the student and a copy for the parent/guardian so that the plan can also be implemented when the student is at home or in the community.

---

What are some types of situations, images, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors which might precede or accompany suicidal urges for you? What are events, thoughts, activities that make you sad?

---

What are some activities you can do that help you relax, feel less anxious, cheer up or be soothed you when you are upset? What are things that make you happy?

---

What are your reasons for living? When you are feeling suicidal, it is very easy to get caught up in the pain you are feeling and forget the positives in your life.

Your list will help you refocus your attention on the reasons to keep going until your suicidal thoughts and feelings pass.

Who can you talk to about how you are feeling? (*School Counselor, Teacher, Friend, Sibling, Parent, Neighbor, Pastor, Coach, etc.*)

**At School**

Name	Contact Information

**At Home**

Name	Contact Information

**In the Community**

Name	Contact Information

Are there situations at school that can change to help support you and keep you safe?

Are there situations at home that can change to help support you and keep you safe?

**24/7 Suicide/Crisis Hotline:**  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
**TEXT “HOME” to 741741**

## San Mateo County Board of Education Policy

**Students****BP 5141.52**

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**Suicide Prevention**

The Governing Board recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that school personnel who regularly interact with students are often in a position to recognize the warning signs of suicide and to offer appropriate referral and/or assistance. To attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Superintendent or designee shall develop measures and strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

In developing measures and strategies the Superintendent or designee may consult with school health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administrators, other staff, parents/guardians, students, local health agencies, mental health professionals, and community organizations.

(cf. 1020 - Youth Services)

(cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

(cf. 1400 - Relations Between Other Governmental Agencies and the Schools)

Such measures and strategies shall include, but are not limited to:

1. The strategies and measures described in the San Mateo County Schools Suicide Prevention toolkit
2. Staff development on suicide awareness and prevention for teachers, school counselors, and other district employees who interact with students in the secondary grades

(cf. 4131 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4231 - Staff Development)

(cf. 4331 - Staff Development)

3. Instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being, as well as instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to warning signs of suicidal intent in others

(cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

**Students**

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**Suicide Prevention**

4. Methods for promoting a positive school climate that enhance students' feelings of connectedness with the school and that are characterized by caring staff and harmonious interrelationships among students

cf. 5131 - Conduct)

(cf. 5131.2 - Bullying)

(cf. 5137 - Positive School Climate)

(cf. 5145.3 - Nondiscrimination/Harassment) (cf. 5145.7 - Sexual Harassment)

(cf. 5145.9 - Hate-Motivated Behavior)

5. The provision of information to parents/guardians regarding risk factors and warning signs of suicide, the severity of the youth suicide problem, the Office suicide prevention curriculum, basic steps for helping suicidal youth, and/or school and community resources that can help youth in crisis
6. Encouragement for students to notify appropriate school personnel or other adults when they are experiencing thoughts of suicide or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's suicidal intentions
7. Crisis intervention procedures for addressing suicide threats or attempts
8. Counseling and other postvention strategies for helping students, staff, and others cope in the aftermath of a student's suicide

As appropriate, these measures and strategies shall specifically address the needs of students who are at high risk of suicide, including, but not limited to, students who are bereaved by suicide; students with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders; students who are experiencing homelessness or who are in out-of-home settings such as foster care; and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth. (Education Code 215)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

215 Student suicide prevention policies

32280-32289 Comprehensive safety plan

49060-49079 Student records

49602 Confidentiality of student information

49604 Suicide prevention training for school counselors GOVERNMENT CODE

810-996.6 Government Claims Act

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**Students**

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**Suicide Prevention**

**PENAL CODE**

11164-11174.3 Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act

**WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE**

5698 Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent

5850-5883 Mental Health Services Act

**COURT DECISIONS**

Corales v. Bennett (Ontario-Montclair School District), (2009) 567 F.3d 554

**Management Resources:**

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS**

Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008

Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve,

2003 **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS**

School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS PUBLICATIONS**

Preventing Suicide, Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams, 2015

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES PUBLICATIONS**

Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools, 2012

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action, rev. 2012

**WEB SITES**

American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <http://afsp.org>

American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>

American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>

California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh>

California Department of Health Care Services, Suicide Prevention Program:

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/SuicidePrevention.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth> National Association of School Psychologists:

<http://www.nasponline.org>

National Institute for Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>

Trevor Project: <http://thetrevorproject.org>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>

Adopted: 06/21/17



FINAL DRAFT

**STUDENT SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE GUIDELINES  
FOR SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOLS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

2018

**STUDENT SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE GUIDELINES  
FOR SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOLS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

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## **STUDENT SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE GUIDELINES FOR SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOLS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Investigations into child sex abuse allegations are complex, sensitive, and often involve multiple agencies including Law Enforcement, Children and Family Services (CFS), the Health System, and the District Attorney's Office. To coordinate investigative efforts, minimize trauma for the victim and ensure forensic reliability these agencies and county service providers have created the San Mateo County Child's Sexual Abuse Response Protocol.

While the Child's Sexual Abuse Protocol clarifies the process for investigating allegations of child sexual abuse in many circumstances, it does not specifically address a school's independent responsibility to investigate and respond promptly and effectively to suspicions and allegations of sexual violence or misconduct against students. The Student Sexual Abuse Response Guidelines clarifies the process for reporting and investigating student sexual abuse cases in a multidisciplinary context that includes schools.

**These Guidelines apply to suspicions and allegations of student-student or school personnel-student sexual abuse and assault.** For direction on handling allegations of non-school based sexual assault, school personnel should refer to internal mandated reporter policies. For direction on handling allegations of non-school based sexual assault, law enforcement should refer to the Child's Sexual Abuse Protocol.

### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of these Guidelines is to promote cooperation between all agencies responding to allegations of student sexual abuse. The goal is to minimize trauma to an alleged victim while promoting the timely, reliable, and collaborative completion of necessary investigations by multiple agencies, including schools.

Adherence to these Guidelines will allow schools to effectively fulfill their responsibilities, including those set forth in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), while minimizing negative impact to the victim and criminal or child welfare investigations. Adherence to these Guidelines will also foster mutual trust and a productive working relationship between school personnel and law enforcement as they fulfill their respective investigative mandates.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of these Guidelines:

- "Child" means a person under the age of 18 years.
- "Child Abuse" means sexual abuse, willful harming or injuring of a child or the endangering of the person or health of a child, or unlawful corporal injury.
- "Sexual Abuse" means any sexual touching or annoying of a student under age 18 as described in the mandatory reporting law PC § 11165.1 (a), (b), (c), (d).
- "Student Sexual Abuse" includes but is not limited to: (1) sexual abuse of a student while on school grounds, while going to or coming from school, during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus, during, going to, or coming from a school sponsored activity; (2) off-campus sexual abuse of a student by a school or district staff member; and (3) off-campus sexual abuse of a student by another student where such conduct constitutes discriminatory harassment or bullying pursuant to state law, federal law, or school policy, or where such conduct may have a direct and detrimental effect on or seriously threaten the discipline, educational environment, safety or general welfare of students, faculty, staff, and/or administrators.

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- This definition is intended to describe those circumstances, and only those circumstances, where a local educational agency is under a legal mandate to investigate and respond to sexual abuse or misconduct. School personnel should contact legal counsel in the event they are unclear whether specific alleged conduct may constitute student sexual abuse as defined in this policy.
- “Reasonable Suspicion” means that it is objectively reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect.
- “Complainant” means the party who alleges that specific conduct was carried out against him/her. For the purposes of this document, this term may be used interchangeably with the term “victim”.
- “Victim” means one who was injured or subjected to mistreatment. For the purposes of this document, the term victim may be used interchangeably with the term “alleged victim” or “complainant”.

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**IV. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

There are many reasons why school personnel may become concerned that a student has been or may be subjected to student sexual abuse. School personnel may notice physical, emotional, or behavioral indicators, a third party may report concerns, or a student or staff member may make a concerning statement or disclosure. Whatever the origin of the concern, there are certain steps that school personnel should take in response to a concern, as initial actions can be critically important to the outcome of any investigation and the appropriate resolution of the case. Specifically, delays in reporting to law enforcement could result in the loss or contamination of forensic and biological evidence.

**Step 1. Report and attend to immediate health and/or safety concerns.**

In all circumstances, school staff should immediately address urgent health and safety concerns. Where warranted, they should call 911, request immediate assistance, interrupt presently occurring inappropriate behavior, and/or take other necessary and reasonable steps.

**Step 2. Determine if the concern constitutes reasonable suspicion of abuse**

1. School personnel who develop a concern, but not a reasonable suspicion, that a student(s) has been or may be subjected to student sexual abuse, based upon non-specific behavioral indicators from a possible suspect or victim, should address this concern consistent with District policies and practices.
  - Practices may include reporting and discussing the concern with site administrators, executive staff, counsel, and/or assigned school resource officers and documenting the concern and the reasons for it.
  - **School personnel should not discuss the concern with the suspect student or staff member, or otherwise alert them to the existence of the concern,** until it has been determined that no report is required or will be made to law enforcement.
2. School personnel who develop a concern, but not a reasonable suspicion, that a student(s) may have been subjected to student sexual abuse, based upon unclear statements of a possible victim, may ask open ended questions of the possible victim for clarification only if necessary.
  - For example, if a student indicates they felt uncomfortable with an interaction with a staff member, an appropriate follow up question is “What happened?” It is generally **not** appropriate to ask leading questions such as “Did he touch you?” or “You’re not saying he touched you?” or to try to elicit time frames or frequency.
  - A reasonable suspicion does not require certainty or a detailed understanding of the circumstances. Development of these details and the weighing of evidence should be left for the investigative phase of the process, which should be initially conducted exclusively by law enforcement, child protection staff and others who have specialized knowledge, training, and experience in conducting forensically sound inquiries.
3. If at any point in time, whether through discussion with school personnel or through responses to clarifying questions, a mandated reporter develops a reasonable suspicion that student sexual abuse has occurred, all questioning regarding the alleged incident should cease and the matter should be reported as in Step 3.

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**Step 3. Mandatory reporting of reasonable suspicion of abuse**

1. School personnel who have a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, including student sexual abuse as defined herein, should immediately report that suspicion per PC § 11165.7.
  - The obligation to report exists regardless of the identity of the suspect. A report must be made whether the suspect is a school staff member, a student, or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party.
  - While mandatory reporting laws allow for a report to be made to either CFS or law enforcement, **these Guidelines encourage school personnel to report matters of student sexual abuse directly to law enforcement.** The location where the incident occurred will determine the appropriate police agency to contact and contact information for each agency is included in the appendix of this document. When contacting law enforcement, school personnel should indicate that this is a school/student sexual abuse case and should be handled in conformity with these Guidelines. A report to law enforcement should include the information requested on the Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) form to be filled out by the mandatory reporter. This includes name, business address, and telephone number; the capacity that makes the reporter a mandated reporter; and the information that gave rise to the reasonable suspicion of student sexual abuse and the sources of that information. If known, the report should include the child's name, address, present location, and the name and contact information of the child's parents or guardians; and the name, address, telephone number and other relevant personal information about the person or persons who are suspected of having abused the child. **The report should be made even if some information is unknown or uncertain.**
2. In addition to making a report, school personnel **SHOULD DO** each of the following:
  - Maintain the victim's confidentiality within the school environment;
  - Document the circumstances of the disclosure including the exact words of the child and any questions asked;
  - Secure any physical or documentary evidence provided by the child;
  - Secure the area where student sexual abuse occurred;
  - Keep the child in a confidential and safe location while awaiting law enforcement response;
  - Inform law enforcement of any urgencies and remind them that student sexual abuse matters must receive prompt response per these Guidelines;
  - Inform law enforcement of any information that bears on the suspect's contact with other children (e.g., access to children through other venues); and
  - Inform the Superintendent or his/her designee of the circumstances providing all known facts and evidence as well as the contact information for any law enforcement or CFS investigator handling the matter.
3. School personnel **SHOULD NOT**:
  - Notify parents. Law enforcement will be responsible for notifying the parent/guardians of victims;
  - Interview the victim(s), witnesses, or the suspect regarding the abuse;
  - Inform the suspect or persons who may be aligned with the suspect of a pending investigation into the abuse;
  - Attempt to determine the credibility of a report of student sexual abuse;
  - Conduct outreach to gather physical or documentary evidence;
  - Request that the child or a witness provide written statements; or

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- Remove or arrange clothing to provide a visual inspection of the underclothing, breast, buttocks, or genitalia of the child victim.

**Step 4. Following up after a report has been made**

1. School personnel should cooperate with law enforcement, to the extent authorized by law. This may include locating evidence that may implicate or exonerate the suspect or, upon request of and provided to the school by law enforcement, deliver notification letters to parent/guardians of students who were interviewed by law enforcement. School personnel should be aware that student records are afforded protections under state and federal law, but can be accessed by law enforcement through proper channels and procedures.
2. School personnel should keep all proceedings and discussions confidential, to the extent possible. As discussed below, notifications to the school community may be appropriate, but the decision to notify should only be made by the Superintendent or his/her designee after consideration of the impact of the notification on the investigation and the privacy rights of the victim(s) and the suspect. All inquiries by uninvolved parties regarding the circumstances should be referred to the Superintendent's Office unless instructed otherwise. Additional disclosures made by a victim or witness should be treated the same as an initial disclosure and routed to law enforcement.
3. The Superintendent or his/her designee should share information known to them about the suspect-employee's current or past employment history at other schools and child venues. If the Superintendent or his/her designee has knowledge that the suspect-employee is currently employed by another school district/school or other child venue, they will share this information with the investigating law enforcement agency as soon as practically possible.

**Step 5. Consider Interim Measures**

1. Where an employee is a suspect and could constitute a danger to others or should not be authorized to remain on school grounds, school personnel should contact the Superintendent or his/her designee and District counsel to determine whether the suspect-employee should be placed on paid or unpaid administrative leave and/or subject to disciplinary action or dismissal.
2. Where a student is the suspect and if there is sufficient information available to support a suspension or expulsion, school personnel should contact the Superintendent or his/her designee and District counsel to determine whether the student should be subject to discipline and begin that process.
3. Prior to placing an employee on administrative leave or initiating disciplinary action against a student, school personnel are strongly encouraged to coordinate with law enforcement and the investigating agency to determine what, if any, impact such actions would have on the investigation and whether there are alternatives.
4. Other interim measures should be considered immediately and on an ongoing basis and should consider both the suspect's and the victim's rights and the safety of the student-victim. Appropriate measures to consider include physically separating the victim and suspect, offering medical counseling or supportive services (see section B of the appendix), no contact orders, and any other measures requested by victim, suspect or investigating agencies.
5. San Mateo County has two primary victim service providers (VSP's); Rape Trauma Services (RTS) and the District Attorney's Office Victim Services Division (VSD). Review appendix B of this document to learn more about what services are available.

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**Step 6. Determine when and how to initiate a Title IX Investigation**

1. Title IX prohibits any educational program that receives federal funding from discriminating against any person on the basis of sex. Title IX defines sexual discrimination to include sexual misconduct including the forms of sexual violence defined herein as student sexual abuse. Title IX requires that when a school knows or reasonably should know of an incident of sexual misconduct, it must take steps to understand what has occurred and to respond appropriately. Among other requirements, a school's Title IX coordinator must conduct and complete an investigation in a timely fashion. Title IX requires that a school must offer appropriate protective interim measures pending completion of an investigation.
2. Pursuant to previous guidance from the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR), even if a criminal investigation is ongoing, a school must conduct its own Title IX investigation. However, **OCR has previously explicitly recognized that a school may need to temporarily delay the fact-finding portion of a Title IX investigation while law enforcement is gathering evidence.** It is contemplated that this delay would typically be brief, approximately 3-10 calendar days, though OCR has recognized that the evidence gathering process may be longer.
3. Title IX requires that when a school initiates an investigation, it must make initial disclosures to the suspect in writing regarding allegations of sexual misconduct, identifying the parties involved and the precise conduct allegedly involved. It further provides that during the investigation, a school must provide both parties with an equal opportunity to present evidence, and then issue investigative findings. **It is recommended that a school temporarily delay the initiation of its investigation to allow law enforcement to engage in the evidence gathering process of their criminal investigation.** Schools should work closely with legal counsel to determine when to initiate the investigation.
4. The school's Title IX coordinator and legal counsel for the school should collaborate with law enforcement to determine the status of the criminal investigation and to inform law enforcement of the District's need to obtain information to maintain the safety and security of the school site and to fulfill state and federal mandates. In the event law enforcement will be conducting investigative interviews, legal counsel for the school, and/or the school's Title IX coordinator may request authorization to observe the recorded interview and to receive access to reports and other relevant evidence gathered by law enforcement.
5. The school should conduct its Title IX or other investigation in accordance with state and federal law and school policy. Questions regarding the process and requirements for such an investigation should be directed to legal counsel for the school.

**Step 7. Notifications to the school community**

1. **Determine if a school notification should be made.** It is the responsibility of the Superintendent or his/her designee to decide when and how to notify the school community upon learning that a school employee is suspected of child sexual abuse and/or other inappropriate behavior with a child. Prior to any notifications being made, the Superintendent or his/her designee should confer with the Chief of Police, or their designee, from the investigating law enforcement agency, who will confer with the District Attorney or his/her designee, to minimize the impact on the ongoing criminal investigation. The School District and law enforcement should make all determinations about school and community notifications with the presumption that the case will be covered by the media. **It is critical that any outward communication to the school or greater community be discussed by those within the school district or law enforcement agency with the authority to make such decisions such as a high ranking executive officer or middle manager depending on the organization.**



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2. The method of notification should be timely and trauma informed. The following are considerations when determining whether notifications should be made:
  - There is a likelihood that the information is going to be disclosed by other means and/or there is potential for misinformation being spread;
  - Potential exists that the suspect is either already contacting or will attempt to contact victims or other students on or off campus;
  - There is a likelihood of other unidentified past or present victims;
  - For a trauma informed approach, the victim(s) should be given the courtesy of an advanced notice prior to a public notification being released. Law enforcement and schools should use VSP's to assist in communicating with the victim(s) and their families throughout the process, especially when information will be released to the public.
  
3. Types of communications to consider
  - Letter(s): The initial communication to the school community is an important source of information to victims, their families and the community as a whole. To ensure that victims and their families know about Victim Service Providers (VSP's) and where supportive services within San Mateo County are available, information about services of and contact information for Rape Trauma Services (RTS) and the Victim Services Division (VSD) should be included in the letter. A sample letter is located in the appendix of this document.
    - If the Chief of Police, or their designee, from the investigating law enforcement agency believes that a press release or other public statement is advisable for investigatory purposes, they should confer with the Superintendent or his/her designee prior to the release to minimize the disruption to school community.
  
  - Community town-hall meeting(s): In certain cases, community/town-hall meetings may afford an opportunity to provide case information (if the investigation warrants), dispel myths and assuage fears within an affected community, and to discuss community resources, as appropriate. Suggested parties for such an event include, but are not limited to: school designee, law enforcement, District Attorney's Office and the VSP's. Ideally, the VSP's should be provided a few minutes to discuss supportive services and to offer assistance to victims and their families. Sample handouts for community town-hall meetings are located in the appendix of this document.

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**V. LAW ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURE**

Child Sexual Abuse investigations are unique and complex. The typical roles and responsibilities, particularly of first responders, are different and may even seem counterintuitive. For this reason, every law enforcement agency in San Mateo County has agreed to abide by the San Mateo County Child's Sexual Abuse Protocol and Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Guidelines (Protocol). The primary purpose of that Protocol is to clarify the ideal process for investigating, within a multidisciplinary framework, allegations of child sexual abuse within San Mateo County. That Protocol assures a cooperative and coordinated effort between county law enforcement agencies and other county partners. The mission statement of the MDT is to reduce the ongoing trauma experienced by victims of sexual abuse and their families, while gathering evidence to bring the perpetrator to justice. **These Student Sexual Abuse Response Guidelines are intended to be utilized in conjunction with that Protocol whenever there is a reasonable suspicion that student sexual abuse has occurred.**

When a case involves allegations of child sexual abuse, an ideal investigation includes a joint initial response conducted by law enforcement and Child and Family Services (CFS). Since school personnel are mandated reporters for child sexual abuse, it is incumbent upon school personnel to report such abuse by telephone *immediately or as soon as practically possible* to law enforcement or CFS. **Although the law permits that the allegations be reported to either law enforcement or CFS, this Guideline encourages school personnel to report matters of student sexual abuse directly to law enforcement.** While CFS may determine that non-familial student sexual abuse does not warrant a CFS investigation, Law enforcement should always cross-report to CFS, per PC 11165. Patrol officers and/or social workers are ordinarily the first to respond to reports of child sexual abuse. The first contact with the children, family, and/or reporting parties, and the first steps taken in the investigation are critically important to the outcome of the investigation.

Child sexual abuse cases present unique investigative challenges. Delayed disclosures are common; consequently, the child's statement is often the primary piece of evidence. The manner in which the initial statement is obtained and preserved is paramount. For this reason, **the Protocol states that, whenever possible, first responders should NOT interview alleged victims. Instead, the first responder should gather details from the person to whom the child disclosed, deferring all interviewing of the child to a trained Forensic Interviewer at the Keller Center (San Mateo County's Child Advocacy Center).**

**A. Initial law enforcement response to a report of student sexual abuse**

The law enforcement first responder's primary responsibilities are to preserve and document any evidence and to assess the immediate safety needs of the victim. **Student sexual abuse cases should be considered exigent; a same-day response is ideal for the child, the school community, and for the expediency of the investigation.**

**Step 1. Take statement from the reporting party and/or adult to whom child disclosed.** Information to be gathered includes:

- Circumstances of the disclosure
- Response of/steps taken by disclosure recipient
- Other known victims or witnesses
- Location of reported offense/jurisdiction
- Identity or description of the suspect(s)
- Last contact between child and suspect, if known

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1. If the information listed above can be ascertained from speaking with the reporting party/adult, **do not interview the student**, defer all questioning of the student to a Keller Center interviewer and see Step 4 of this section.
2. If the first responder cannot ascertain the facts needed in Step 1 through interviewing the adult/reporting party and/or to assess the student's immediate safety, conduct a brief Minimal Facts First Responder Field Interview utilizing the **Suggested Outline for Minimal Facts First Responder Field Interviews** (contained in the San Mateo County Child Sexual Abuse Protocol). Note the following:
  - **The field interview should be recorded.**
  - Children under 10 years of age should not be asked about time frames or frequency. However, this information is critical in determining whether an acute medical-legal exam for evidence collection is needed and this exam is time sensitive. Whenever possible, ascertain from an adult source when the last contact may have occurred. If there is uncertainty as to whether the last episode occurred within an acute time frame, consult with the on-call Keller Center forensic medical provider about whether to schedule an acute medical exam.
  - If the last contact occurred within an acute exam window, call the Keller Center/SMMC Emergency Department to schedule an acute forensic medical exam.
  - No effort should be made to establish the child's competence as a witness (e.g. DO NOT ask about truth/lie definitions or comprehension).
  - Pursuant to PC § 11167(d)(1), the identity of the reporting party may not be disclosed.
  - If the field interview establishes a suspicion of student sexual abuse, defer further questioning of the student to a Keller Center interviewer and see Step 4 of this section.

**Step 2. Cross-report to Child and Family Services (CFS)**

1. Although student sexual abuse will rarely involve a caretaker or family member as the suspected abuser, a cross-report to CFS is still required by law, immediately or as soon as practically possible per PC § 11166(k). Ideally, mandated reporters will report suspicions of student sexual abuse to law enforcement. If law enforcement is the initial recipient of the mandated report, law enforcement agency should **cross report to CFS by telephone immediately**. CFS hotline workers have been trained that student sexual abuse cases are considered an exigency and will make an immediate determination as to whether or not the current report is a matter that CFS will investigate. If there are any questions or concerns regarding CFS's determination, law enforcement may ask to speak with the on-duty screening/hotline supervisor. If CFS will be investigating, a joint investigative response is ideal. While this protocol encourages schools to report Student Sexual Abuse to Law Enforcement, if CFS is the initial recipient of a mandated report, the CFS staff member that receives the report will immediately cross report to the appropriate law enforcement agency by telephone and in writing, regardless of the CFS response determination so that the appropriate law enforcement agency is able to respond with the exigency required by student sexual abuse cases.
2. If the referral meets criteria for a CFS response in addition to law enforcement, a joint response is strongly recommended in order to minimize duplicative interviewing of the victim.
3. Regardless of the CFS disposition, law enforcement will respond to the school on the same day that the abuse is reported.

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- If the suspect has children, a separate report to CFS is required. This report is separate and distinct from the initial cross-report.

**Step 3. Notification of parent/guardians of the victim(s)**

It is the responsibility of the investigating law enforcement agency to separately notify the parent/guardian of the victim(s). Whenever practical, the Chief of Police, or their designee, from the investigating law enforcement agency will confer with the Superintendent or his/her designee prior to making any such notifications to minimize the impact on the orderly educational functioning of the school.

**Step 4. Schedule Keller Center forensic interview(s)**

All forensic interviews of students who have disclosed, or for whom law enforcement has a strong suspicion that they may have been a victim of student sexual abuse, shall be conducted at the Keller Center by a Forensic Interview Specialist, in accordance with practices established by the San Mateo County Child Sexual Abuse Protocol. **Student sexual abuse is considered an exigency and the forensic interview(s) should be scheduled at the earliest possible date.** Law enforcement officers are responsible for scheduling forensic interviews at the Keller Center and notifying Keller Center personnel that this is a school sexual abuse case.

**B. Contacting other potential victim(s) and witness(es)**

School sexual abuse cases often involve law enforcement outreach to potential victims and witnesses. For example, reporting victims may provide information about other students who have not made a disclosure but to whom a suspect has had access or interactions, and/or to whom the reporting victim disclosed. Or in response to a press release, families may come forward because a suspect had access to or interactions with their child.

**Step 1. Planning screening interviews of witnesses or potential victim(s)**

While all disclosing victims shall be interviewed at the Keller Center screening interviews of potential victims, note:

- The primary investigator(s) should inform Keller Center forensic interview personnel about the existence of a case involving Student Sexual Abuse in order to anticipate staffing needs.
- Keller Center Forensic Interviewers will interview any potential victim or witnesses in a student sexual abuse investigation upon law enforcement request.
- If law enforcement opts to conduct initial screening interviews of witnesses or potential victims at a venue outside the Keller Center, the primary investigator should, whenever possible, consult with a Keller Center Forensic Interviewer prior to commencing screening interviews.
  - The physical and psychosocial safety, including the privacy and confidentiality of an environment, impacts a child witness' comfort and completeness. While often private, interviews in a principal's office may connote to the student that he/she is in trouble. Law enforcement officers are encouraged to find an optimal venue for a private and neutral conversation.
  - It is imperative that screening interviews of potential victims be conducted in a developmentally and forensically appropriate manner to minimize concerns about suggestibility. Questions that may be appropriate for adolescents may be inappropriate for use with preschoolers or school-age children. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that standardized forensically appropriate screening interview questions be developed in consultation with the Keller Center Forensic Interviewers.
- If law enforcement needs to conduct screening interviews on school grounds they should coordinate with the School District.

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**Step 2. Conduct screening interview(s)**

If, during a screening interview, a witness provides information that indicates that he/she has been a victim of abuse, the law enforcement officer should obtain minimal facts only utilizing the Minimal Facts Field Interview Outline (contained in the Protocol) and should schedule a Keller Center forensic interview for that disclosing victim(s). **All screening interviews should be recorded.**

Similar principles apply if a student/parents report directly to a police station; law enforcement should interview adults and follow the steps outlined above to determine if the child requires a Minimal Facts First Responder Field Interview to address immediate safety and health concerns, or if the child should be directly scheduled for a Keller Center interview.

**Step 3. Law enforcement notifications**

Law enforcement should make all determinations about school and community notifications with the presumption that the case will be covered by the media.

**1. Notification to parent/guardian of potential victim(s)/witness(es)**

Law enforcement will provide a notification letter to the parent of any child who participated in a screening interview and was determined not to be a victim. The school will deliver this letter to the appropriate parent/guardian. See Appendix C for a sample of this letter.

**2. Notifications to the community**

In cooperation with the VSP's, law enforcement should notify affected families before the distribution of any community notification. Law enforcement should coordinate with the school and the VSP before releasing. If law enforcement believes that a press release or other public statement is advisable for investigatory purposes, they should confer with the affected victims/families and the Superintendent or their designee prior to the release to minimize the disruption to school community.

**3. Notification of other venues**

If the suspect is currently employed at another child venue: The Superintendent or his/her designee should share information known to them about the suspect-employee's employment history at other schools and child venues with the investigating law enforcement agency. If the Superintendent or their designee has knowledge that the suspect-employee is currently employed by another school district/school or other child venue, they will share this information with the investigating law enforcement agency as soon as practically possible.

It is the responsibility of the Chief of Police, or their designee, from the investigating law enforcement agency to notify other law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over the other school districts/schools where the suspect-employee is currently or was previously employed as soon as reasonably possible. This notification should be made prior to the investigating agency contacting the respective institution as part of their investigation. The Chief of Police, or their designee, should make necessary notifications to the respective law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over the respective institutions. The affected law enforcement agencies will coordinate with the institution on when and how to notify the suspect-employee as to minimize the impact on the ongoing investigation.

Upon completion of the investigation and/or post-conviction if case was filed criminally, the Superintendent or their designee will confer with County Counsel to advise the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing of the findings pertaining to the suspect-employee if they serve in a teaching capacity.

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If the suspect is known to have previous employment in a child venue: If it is determined the suspect-employee has worked in other child venues in the past, it is appropriate for the investigating law enforcement agency to notify the law enforcement agency where the suspect-employee was formerly employed. The Chief of Police, or their designee, from the investigating law enforcement agency will coordinate with the affected jurisdictions prior to contacting the institutions in question. The investigating law enforcement agency will coordinate with the affected law enforcement agencies on when, how, and if further investigation related to the child venues where the suspect worked in the past is appropriate and whom shall be responsible.

**C. Cooperation with Title IX investigation**

In the interest of trauma-informed practice and to minimize duplicative interviewing, if a Title IX investigation commences, the investigating law enforcement agency will share relevant products of the investigations including the results of the Keller Center forensic interview upon approval of legal counsel.

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**VI. VICTIM SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY**

As identified in this Protocol, a victim service provider (VSP) is a victim advocacy agency that provides support and services to victims of crime. For the purpose of this policy, a victim service provider may either be a Sexual Assault Counselor (SAC) from Rape Trauma Services or a Victim Advocate from the District Attorney's Victim Services Division. Both agencies provide many of the same services, but there are important distinctions. Rape Trauma Services (RTS) provides confidential services to victims of sexual abuse, including clinical services. The Victim Services Division (VSD) is not a confidential service agency but provides supportive services throughout the criminal justice process and can assist victims of crime with a California Victim Compensation Application. In addition to supportive and clinical services, victim service providers can assist victims and their families with regular updates, expectation management and long term supportive services. In accordance with the Child Sexual Abuse Protocol and PC 679.04, all law enforcement interviews<sup>1</sup> and Medical-Legal exams will be attended by a victim services provider (regardless of their location).

**1. Keeping affected family(ies) informed**

As the investigations are occurring and throughout the criminal justice process, keeping the victims and families informed of the status of the investigation and case is essential. Affected victims and families may feel left out or frustrated by a perceived lack of information coming from multi-disciplinary partners. Victims/families who are accompanied and continue a relationship with a victim services provider are more likely to participate in law enforcement investigations and the criminal court process.

Alongside school designee(s) and law enforcement, the victim service providers will keep victims and families updated on the progress of the case to the extent possible. Some common concerns that can be addressed by a victim service provider include:

- Who is assigned to the case (name(s) of patrol officer/1<sup>st</sup> responder, name of Detective)
- Status of investigation (have any investigative steps been taken)
- Filing decision by the District Attorney
- Contact information for the assigned Deputy District Attorney
- Information about the criminal justice process and victim's rights
- Upcoming court dates

**2. Managing Expectations**

An important role of the victim service provider is to help manage a family's expectations from the investigation through the criminal justice process. A victim service provider can educate victims and families about the pace and length of an investigation and support the victim and family as they process their feelings about the experience by providing crisis intervention and clinical services as necessary. All investigative parties will collaborate with a VSP to provide a consistent point of contact and services.

**3. Support services offered to school personnel**

Staff debriefs can be an important avenue for school personnel to access support and services. A victim services provider can offer debriefs to staff as needed.

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<sup>1</sup> An initial investigation by law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed and the identity of any suspects shall not constitute a law enforcement interview for purposes of this section.

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**VII. CONCLUSION**

The discovery of student sexual abuse within a school community is a disturbing event that occurs all too frequently. Student sexual abuse can be distressing for the victim(s), the involved families, school personnel, and the community at large. The discovery and subsequent investigation can be disruptive to the school community. It is critical that law enforcement, schools and victim service providers work together to reveal evidence of student sexual abuse and, when appropriate, remove suspicion from innocent parties. The ultimate goal is that by working together, the students will be protected, the offender will be brought to justice, and the sanctity of the school environment will be preserved.



## Contact Phone Numbers

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### Victim Service Providers

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#### Rape Trauma Services

1860 El Camino Real #406

Burlingame, CA 94010

Main: 650.652.0598

*Request Program Director or Executive Director*

Hotline: 650.692.7273

[info@rapetraumaservices.org](mailto:info@rapetraumaservices.org)

#### Victim Services Division

##### San Mateo County District Attorney's Office

400 County Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl.

Redwood City, CA 94063

Main: 650.599.7479

*Request Program Manager*

[victimservices@smcgov.org](mailto:victimservices@smcgov.org)

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### County Agencies

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#### Keller Center

San Mateo Medical Center

222 West 39<sup>th</sup> Ave

San Mateo, CA 94403

650.573.2623

#### San Mateo County District Attorney's Office

400 County Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl.

Redwood City, CA 94063

650.363.4636

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### Law Enforcement

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#### Atherton Police Department

83 Ashfield Road

Atherton, CA 94027

Main: 650.688.6500

Emergency: 650.323.6131

Non-Emergency (8am - 5pm): 650.363.8471

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#### Belmont Police Department

1 Twin Pines Ln. Ste. 160

Belmont, CA 94002

Emergency: 650.593.2122 (Dispatch)

*Request a watch commander*

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#### Brisbane Police Department

50 Park Place

Brisbane, CA 94005

Emergency: 415.467.1212

Non-Emergency (7am – 7pm): 415-508-2180

*Request a Sergeant*

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#### Broadmoor Police Department

388 88<sup>th</sup> St.

Broadmoor, CA 94015

Emergency (Dispatch): 650.755.3838

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.755.3840

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#### Burlingame Police Department

1111 Trousdale Avenue

Burlingame, CA 94010

Main: 650.777.4100

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.692.8440

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#### Colma Police Department

1199 El Camino Real

Colma, CA 94014

Emergency: 650.997.8320

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.997.8321

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#### Daly City Police Department

333 90<sup>th</sup> Street

Daly City, CA 94015

Emergency/Dispatch: 650.992.1225

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.991.8119

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#### East Palo Alto Police Department

141 Demeter Street

East Palo Alto, CA 94303

Emergency: 650.321.1112

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.853.3160

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#### Foster City Police Department

1030 E. Hillsdale Blvd.

Foster City, CA 94404

Emergency: 650.573.3333

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.286.3300

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#### Hillsborough Police Department

1600 Floribunda Avenue

Hillsborough, CA 94010

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.375.7470

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#### Menlo Park Police Department

701 Laurel Street

Menlo Park, CA 94025

Main: 650.858.3328

Emergency: 650.858.3317

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.858.3300

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#### Pacifica Police Department

2075 Coast Hwy.

Pacifica, CA 94044

Emergency: 650.738.7314

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#### Redwood City Police Department

1301 Maple Street

Redwood City, CA 94063

Emergency: 650.780.7100

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**San Bruno Police Department**

1177 Huntington Ave.

San Bruno, CA 94066

Emergency: 650.877.8965

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.616.7107

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**San Mateo Police Department**

200 Franklin Parkway

San Mateo, CA 94403

Emergency: 650.522.7700

Non-Emergency (8am – 5pm): 650.522.7650

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**South San Francisco Police Department**

33 Arroyo Drive, Ste. C

So. San Francisco, CA 94080

Emergency: 650.873.3333

Non-Emergency: 650.877.8900, Investigations

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**San Mateo County Children & Family Services (CFS)**

1 Davis Drive

Belmont, CA 94002

Hotline: 800.632.4615

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**San Mateo County Sheriff**

400 County Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl.

Redwood City, CA 94063

Emergency: 650.363.4911

Areas covered: Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, San Carlos, Eichler Highlands, Portola Valley, Woodside, and Unincorporated San Mateo County.

Unincorporated San Mateo County includes: North Fair Oaks, Belmont/Harbor Industrial Area, Redwood City, Menlo Oaks, West Menlo, Stanford Lands, Ladera Oaks, Los Trancos Woods, South San Francisco, San Bruno Mountain, Burlingame Hill, Colma/Broadmoor Area, North Coast, Mid-Coast, South Coast, and Skyline/La Honda Area



**Overview:** Rape Trauma Services (RTS) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization founded in 1995. RTS is the only Rape Crisis Center serving all of San Mateo County.

**Mission Statement:** Rape Trauma Services of San Mateo County strives to eliminate all forms of violence, with a special focus on sexual assault and abuse. Informed by our understanding of traumatic experiences and cycles of violence, we facilitate healing and the prevention of violence through the provision of counseling, advocacy, and education. We promote and adopt policies, practices, and social values rooted in fairness, equity, and inclusiveness.

**Philosophy:** RTS was founded on the belief that there is a relationship between all forms of violence, cruelty, exploitation and institutional oppression (e.g. sexism, racism, heterosexism, among others). We believe that healing from trauma resulting from violence, cruelty or abuse inflicted by persons (individual or collective) is a life-long process, key to individual well-being, effective relationships and, thus, meaningful social and political change.

**Programs:**

- **24-Hour Crisis Line:** (650) 692-RAPE (7273) – RTS provides a free, 24-hour, confidential hotline for anyone who has been hurt directly or indirectly by sexual violence.
- **Accompaniment and Advocacy** – Counselors are available to support and accompany survivors through dealing with hospital medical legal exams, law enforcement, and the judicial system. Anyone in San Mateo County who seeks medical care related to a sexual assault, reports an assault to law enforcement, or has to go to court is entitled to an advocate from Rape Trauma Services. Advocates are available to provide emotional support and answer questions. If a survivor decides to have a medical exam following a sexual assault, advocates can meet her or him at the hospital and stay throughout the procedure. Advocates will also meet with survivors at any law enforcement agency.
- **Counseling Services** – RTS aims to help survivors learn the skills they need to heal from sexual trauma and develop the tools to be supportive of their own healing and the healing of others. Our sexual assault counselors are trained in dealing with all aspects of sexual abuse, its impact and the healing process. RTS provides individual, family and group counseling.
- **Prevention & Education Programs** – RTS addresses prevention at several socio-cultural levels; by engaging members of the community in dialogue and activism. RTS hopes to strengthen social norms that reject violence and foster a community that challenges belief systems that condone it. RTS works in schools and in the community to interrupt the cycle of violence and engage community members in the work of RTS. Educators focus on preventing violence throughout San Mateo County through educational workshops in schools and community settings. Services include: (a) Prevention Education; (b) Assertiveness Training; (c) Community Education & Outreach; (d) Professional Training.
- **Veteran Services** – Funding provided by *Swords to Plowshares* has given RTS the opportunity to provide trauma-informed sexual assault services to women veterans living in San Mateo County. Our goal at RTS is to successfully address the unique healing needs of female veterans.
- **Programa para Latinos** – RTS provides services with an emphasis on sensitivity to the unique experiences of Latinos in the United States and in our San Mateo County community. Staff and Volunteers strive to provide counseling; advocacy and education services that are linguistically and culturally appropriate for Latinos in our community.



# San Mateo County Victim Services Division

Main: 650-599-7479      email: [victimservices@smcgov.org](mailto:victimservices@smcgov.org)

Since 1975, the San Mateo County Victim Services Division has been assisting victims of crime with addressing their immediate emotional, physical and financial needs in the aftermath of crime. With three locations to serve you, our Victim Advocates provide comprehensive, trauma-informed and compassionate services to victims of violence and their families.

## How do Victim Advocates assist surviving victims of a crime?

- Crisis counseling/intervention and ongoing peer counseling
- Criminal justice assistance
  - Criminal justice education and case status updates
  - Information about Marsy's Law and Victim's Rights
  - Court accompaniment and support during testimony
  - Assistance requesting restitution
- Emergency assistance (relocation, gift cards, etc.)
- Linkage to community resources (for assistance with restraining orders, food, shelter, clothing, rental assistance)

With funds available through the California Victim Compensation Board (CalVCB), our Victim Advocates can offer financial assistance to aid victims in paying for crime-related expenses such as medical, counseling, funeral/burial, housing and relocation.

## What can CalVCB cover?

- Medical/dental related costs
- Mental health counseling
- Income loss
- Support loss
- Relocation
- Funeral/burial costs
- Crime scene cleanup

## Who can qualify for CalVCB?

- Direct victim of crime
- Parents, siblings and children of the victim
- A person living in the same household of the victim at the time of the crime

The Victim Services Division serves all victims of violence and their families, regardless of age, socioeconomic or immigration status. All services are free and walk-ins are welcome.

Hall of Justice  
400 County Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Redwood City, CA 94063

Municipal Court  
1050 Mission Road  
South San Francisco, CA 94080

Juvenile Branch  
222 Paul Scannell Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
San Mateo, CA 94402

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION HERE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s),

A member of our agency was at your child's school today as part of a law enforcement investigation. During this time, a police officer spoke with your child to determine if he/she had any information related to the matter being investigated.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your child did not have information related to the matter.

\_\_\_\_\_ Your child disclosed that he/she may be a witness to the matter.

We want to assure you that your child is NOT in trouble or the subject of our investigation. Should any further contact with your child be required, we will notify you. We very much appreciate your child's assistance. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the individual below.

Thank you,

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Badge #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

INSERT SCHOOL NAME  
**COMMUNITY INFORMATIONAL MEETING**  
DATE

In response to a number of phone calls from concerned parents, we have created this information sheet to address some of the common questions we have been asked about the investigation.

\*\*\*\*\*

**My child (or siblings) has heard bits and pieces of information about the investigation and is asking me questions. How can I best respond?**

*While we do not recommend that you initiate direct questioning of your child, we do want to help parents respond to the inquiries of their children. In fact, we believe this circumstance presents parents with organic opportunities and “teachable moments” to educate children about sexual abuse, digital safety, and what children can do if they experience something that makes them uncomfortable or that they don’t understand. \_\_\_\_\_ School personnel has worked closely with the \_\_\_\_\_ Police Department to develop language to explain the situation in an age-appropriate manner. Mirror the language that has been utilized in communications from the school. Encourage children to come to you with questions, rather than to discuss the situation with other children. This also respects the privacy of affected families and children by reducing conversation in the school community.*

*We have also attached a tip sheet from Darkness to Light, a national child sexual abuse prevention program about responding to information that may appear in the media, which also has applicability to information children may hear about at school.*

**How can I support affected families?**

*In a close-knit community, people want to support and help the affected children and families. Because this is an ongoing investigation, the affected families have been asked not to talk about the case or to identify their children in an effort to maintain the integrity of the investigation. In addition, affected families may wish for privacy. For these reasons, the best way to support the families is to respect their privacy and remind others in the school community that speculation and inquiry is not helpful to the investigation or the individuals. Please be assured that part of the response by both the school and the professionals involved in the investigation is to provide resources and referrals to affected families.*

**Should I directly ask my child about whether he/she may have been involved?**

*NO. Best practice guidelines in child abuse investigations and child forensic interviewing caution against having adults directly question children with a focus on specific individuals or acts. Yes/No questions such as “Did (name of an individual) ever do or ask you to do (a specific act) are particularly problematic in a forensic (criminal/legal) context. Instead, we encourage parents (and other adults) to be careful listeners to children. If your child reports something that you think may be of relevance to this case, remain calm. Limit your questioning to “Tell me more about what happened” or “How did you feel when that happened?” Let your child know that it was important that your child told you. Contact Detective \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.*

*HOWEVER... This situation provides an important opportunity to educate children about sexual abuse and the importance of talking with trusted adults when they experience something that makes them uncomfortable or that they don’t understand. Here are a few resources which can help parents begin these important conversations.*

**Resources:**

- Rape Trauma Services: (650) 692-RAPE (7273) – RTS provides a free, 24-hour, confidential hotline for anyone who has been hurt directly or indirectly by sexual violence.
- Victim Services Division: provides free support and information for victims of violent crime. Open Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. (650) 599-7479, [victimservices@dao.sccgov.org](mailto:victimservices@dao.sccgov.org)
- Darkness to Light: A national child sexual abuse prevention organization. Contains many fact sheets and information for parents and educators <http://www.d2l.org/>
- Sexual Development and Behavior in Children: A fact sheet that includes information about educating children about sexual issues at different ages and stages: [http://nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/caring/sexualdevelopmentandbehavior.pdf](http://nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/caring/sexualdevelopmentandbehavior.pdf)
- What Parents Need to Know about Sexual Abuse: A fact sheet about sexual abuse and tips for prevention [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/caring\\_for\\_kids.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/caring_for_kids.pdf)

Appendix D



# TALKING TO YOUNG CHILDREN ABOUT EVENTS IN THE NEWS

**News coverage of a high-profile child sexual abuse case can open the door for parents and caregivers to talk with children about sexual abuse.**

The reality is that our children are exposed to headlines every day, whether on the TV or in the classroom. It's important for parents and caregivers to know the questions to ask to help their children interpret current events. Here are some tips that can help guide the conversation.

## TALKING TIPS: AT A GLANCE

### TIP ONE

Ask open-ended questions to discover children's knowledge about the event, and any opinions that may have already been formed. It will also give you an opportunity to clear up any misinformation.

### TIP TWO

Let children lead the discussion. Listen more than you talk and let them know you value their beliefs and opinions. Ask follow-up questions ("And then?") to keep the conversation going.

### TIP THREE

Keep your tone light and conversational to ensure children feel safe to open up.

## TALKING TO CHILDREN AGE FIVE AND UNDER

Very young children may overhear something about the event and have questions.

They simply need to know that the action is bad and is never the fault of the abused child.

Then, tell them that if anyone ever touches them in a private place or makes them uncomfortable, to tell mommy and daddy immediately.

### Have more questions?

You can reach out to the Darkness to Light Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 866-FOR-LIGHT.

## ALLOW THE CHILD TO DIRECT THE CONVERSATION

Start by asking one of the following questions. Choose one that feels right to you, and then let your child be your guide:

- *What have you heard about this case?*
- *What do you know about child sexual abuse?*

These questions will help you determine your child's depth of knowledge on the subject, as well as clear up any misinformation or gaps in understanding.

- *What would you do if anyone made you uncomfortable or asked you to keep a secret from me?*
- *What would you do if a friend tells you someone touched him or her in a way that felt uncomfortable?*
- *How can kids help other kids who are being bullied or abused?*

## RECOGNIZING TRUSTED ADULTS

Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult and provide them with some examples, such as yourself or the school counselor.

- *Do you know of anything like this happening at your school, or anywhere else?*
- *Is there anything else you want to talk with me about?*

Be prepared in case your child discloses knowledge of abuse. If this does happen, remain calm and report immediately. Visit [www.D2L.org/reporting](http://www.D2L.org/reporting) for information and resources.

Remember to listen more than talk, and keep your tone conversational. This promotes mutual learning and create open dialogue that can continue in the future. One or two questions may be all you need for a robust conversation!



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1064 Gardner Road, Ste. 210 | Charleston, SC 29407 | 1-843-965-5444 | [www.D2L.org](http://www.D2L.org)

This information is intended only as a supplement to Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children® training, which provides in-depth learning, tools, and practical guidelines to help adults prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. For more information on Stewards of Children®, visit [www.D2L.org/Stewards](http://www.D2L.org/Stewards).

# TALKING TO OLDER CHILDREN ABOUT EVENTS IN THE NEWS

News coverage of a high-profile child sexual abuse case can open the door for parents and caregivers to talk with preteens and teens about sexual abuse.

The reality is that our children are exposed to headlines every day, whether on the TV or in the classroom. It's important for parents and caregivers to know the questions to ask to help their children interpret current events. Here are some tips that can help guide the conversation.

## TALKING TIPS: AT A GLANCE

### TIP ONE

Ask open-ended questions to discover children's knowledge about the event, and any opinions that may have already been formed. It will also give you an opportunity to clear up any misinformation.

### TIP TWO

Let children lead the discussion. Listen more than you talk and let them know you value their beliefs and opinions. Ask follow-up questions ("And then?") to keep the conversation going.

### TIP THREE

Keep your tone light and conversational to ensure children feel safe to open up.

A successful conversation promotes mutual learning and future conversation.

### Have more questions?

You can reach out to the Darkness to Light Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 866-FOR-LIGHT.

## ALLOW THE YOUTH TO DIRECT THE CONVERSATION

Start by asking one of the following questions. Choose one that feels right to you, and then let your child be your guide:

- *What have you heard about this case?*
- *What do you know about child sexual abuse?*

These questions will help you determine your child's depth of knowledge on the subject, as well as clear up any misinformation.

- *How do you feel on behalf of the kids who were abused?*
- *How do you feel about the adults who covered it up?*

## RECOGNIZING TRUSTED ADULTS

Show affirmation for the answers you receive. This will help the child open up and feel comfortable asking questions.

- *What do you think could have been done to prevent it?*
- *What do you think should have been done to protect the abused kids?*

The preteen and teenage years are a great time to start furthering the conversation from protection to prevention.

- *Do you know of anything like this happening at your school, or anywhere else?*
- *Is there anything else you want to talk with me about?*

Be prepared in case your child discloses knowledge of abuse. If this does happen, remain calm and report immediately. Visit [www.D2L.org/reporting](http://www.D2L.org/reporting) for information and resources.

Remember to listen more than you talk and to keep your tone conversational. This will promote mutual learning and create open dialogue that can continue in the future. One or two questions may be all you need for a robust conversation!



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This information is intended only as a supplement to Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children® training, which provides in-depth learning, tools, and practical guidelines to help adults prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. For more information on Stewards of Children®, visit [www.D2L.org/Stewards](http://www.D2L.org/Stewards).



# Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Human Trafficking Protocol for Educators

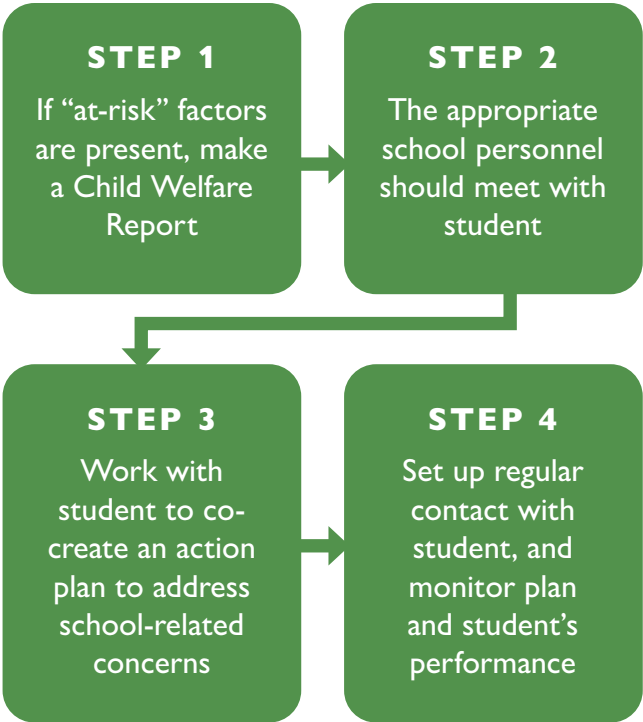
## “At-Risk” Factors

Child meets AT RISK concern if at least **one** of the following factors is present:

- 1. Child/youth exhibits behaviors or otherwise indicates that they are being controlled or groomed by another person.
- 2. Child/youth spends time with people known to be involved in commercial sex.
- 3. Child/youth’s internet, cell phone, or social media use involves social or sexual behavior that is atypical for his/her age.

Child meets AT RISK concern if a minimum of **two** of the following indicators are present:

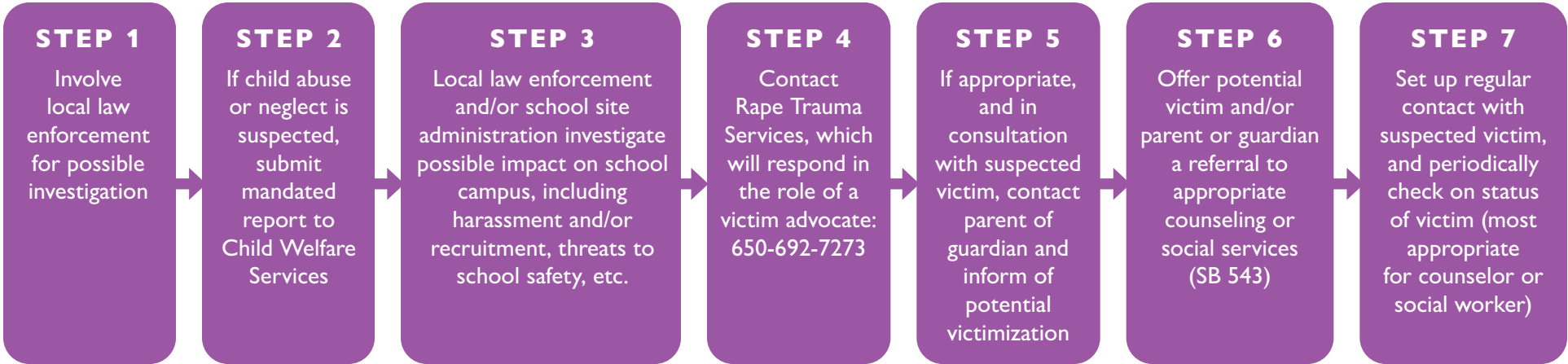
- 1. Child/youth has a history of running away, unstable housing, including multiple foster care placements, or periods of homelessness, including couch surfing.
- 2. Child/youth has had prior involvement with law enforcement or the juvenile justice system.
- 3. Child/youth is frequently truant from school.
- 4. Child/youth’s relationships are of concern, placing them at risk or in danger of exploitation.
- 5. Child/youth has a history of substance abuse, specifically narcotics, opiates, crack/cocaine and amphetamines.



## Suspected Recruitment or Actual Exploitation by Students



## Suspected Victim of CSEC/Human Trafficking



## Confirmed Victim of CSEC/Human Trafficking



**Coalition for Safe Schools  
& Communities**

# **Hazard Responses**



**Coalition for  
Safe Schools &  
Communities**



**SAN MATEO  
COUNTY  
OFFICE OF  
EDUCATION**

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

Knowledge of the location of existing pipelines near or on school property is essential for preparedness in the event of a hazardous chemical or gas leak. Pipeline markers are generally yellow, black, and red and can vary in shape and size. Excavation is a leading cause of pipeline damage, so it is important to follow strict on-site protocol prior to digging on school property. The facilities supervisor should call **811** to confirm the planned dig location is safe.

All school personnel, including cafeteria managers and custodians, shall immediately report any hazardous chemical or gas odor or leak to the School Incident Commander.

Design school bus routes and student pick-up/drop off locations to avoid contact with pipelines and pipeline rights-of-way. This helps to ensure evacuation routes are safe in a pipeline emergency.

## HOW TO DETECT A GAS LEAK:

A gas leak can be detected by a sulfur-like odor, a hissing, whistling, or roaring sound coming from underground or a gas appliance, dirt spraying into the air, or the appearance of dead vegetation in an otherwise moist area.

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS: INSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:

- Assume Incident Command role and call **911** from a safe location. Must be ready to provide location, status of campus, and all available details of the situation
- If a gas leak is discovered inside the building, evacuate the affected building immediately to an area that is upwind of the suspected leak. Follow **EVACUATION** Protocol
  - Do *not* use a telephone of any kind until in a safe area
  - Do *not* take any action to cause heat or sparks
- Consult with emergency personnel and utility company to determine next steps
- When able, alert the Superintendent's Office
- Deploy Incident Command System (ICS) Safety Team to isolate and restrict access to potentially contaminated areas
- A Unified Command Post will be established at a safe location away from the building to determine any further action. The Fire Department Incident Commander or other emergency personnel will assume responsibility of the scene and determine the appropriate actions to further mitigate the emergency. The School Incident Commander will coordinate directly with fire and police commanders and utility company.
- In consultation with the Fire Department Incident Commander and utility company, the School Incident Commander will make a determination to implement procedures to cancel school or resume normal building operations
- In the event of a suspected hazardous chemical or gas odor or leak, immediately notify School Incident Commander
- At the direction of the Incident Commander, evacuate students from immediate vicinity of danger. If odor is severe, leave the area immediately; do not wait for Incident Command
- Follow Evacuation protocol and use designated routes or other alternate safe routes to an assigned Assembly Area located upwind of the affected room or building
- Leave any equipment or machinery "as is"
  - Do *not* switch lights on or off



# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

## SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

### INSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS (*continued*):

- Leave doors open. Do not operate lights or any electrical equipment, including cell phones
- At the designated Assembly Area take student attendance and report any missing students to School Incident Commander
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a brief description of the emergency, the school's response, and what steps are being taken to ensure safety of students and staff

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS: OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:

- Assume Incident Command role and instruct designee to call **911** to provide the exact location and nature of the emergency
- If it is determined that a hazardous chemical or gas leak has occurred away from the school campus, initiate **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** with a public address announcement. Clearly instruct teachers and staff to immediately follow **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** protocol
- Once **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** is implemented, direct Incident Command Safety (ICS) Officer or Security/Utilities Team to turn off fans in the area; close doors and windows; shut down all air handling systems, and turn off sources of ignition
- When able, alert the Superintendent's Office
- In accordance with the **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** protocol, students and staff who are outdoors should proceed immediately to nearby classrooms or buildings (e.g., auditorium, library, cafeteria, gymnasium). Teachers who assemble their classes in a location other than their assigned **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** assembly point should communicate their locations to the School Incident Commander via standard communication channels without leaving the building
- The School Incident Commander will coordinate further action with representatives from fire and police commanders and utility company

# HAZARDS: CHEMICALS AND GAS

## SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

### OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS (*continued*):

- The **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** protocol will remain in effect until the appropriate agency or Site Administrator declares the emergency is resolved
- Through whatever means is most effective, provide parents/guardians with a brief description of the emergency, the school's response, and what steps are being taken to ensure safety of students and staff

## STAFF ACTIONS: OUTSIDE SCHOOL BUILDINGS:

- Initiate **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** immediately by clearing students from the hallways and grounds. Stay away from all doors and windows
- Secure individual classrooms: a) close doors and windows; b) shut down the classroom HVAC system; c) turn off fans; d) seal gaps under doors and windows with wet towels, duct tape, or other materials if instructed by Incident Command
- Keep all students in the classroom until further instructions are received. Support those needing special assistance
- Take attendance and call or email status to School Incident Command staff, according to site protocol
- Wait for another action or, if ALL CLEAR announcement is issued, return to normal class routine

# HAZARDS: FIRE OFF-SITE

A fire in the surrounding community can threaten school buildings and endanger students and staff. Response actions are determined by location and size of the fire, whether it is a wind-driven or chemical-driven fire, and how the surrounding terrain might influence the flames. Responding to a fire in the surrounding community requires “think-on-your-feet” alertness.

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS:

- Assume Incident Command role
- Contact local fire department (call **911**) to determine location of fire and the correct action for school site
- Access the School “Emergency Response Box” (p. 43) that includes site maps, keys, rosters, etc.
- If appropriate, **SHELTER-IN-PLACE** or begin **EVACUATION** to off-site evacuation location according to site emergency plan. If needed, contact bus dispatch for transportation by bus to evacuation location
- In order to ensure that all students and staff have left the building and are free from injury, direct Operations Chief to engage the Search and Rescue team
- Monitor radio stations and other public information sources for current status reports
- Determine if Student Release should be implemented. If so, notify staff, students and parents

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- If students are to be evacuated and it is safe to do so, take attendance prior to leaving the building site
- Remove staff ID placard from emergency packet and put it on
- *Evacuate immediately to assembly area. DO NOT STOP* to collect belongings, but be sure to bring the classroom Go Pack which should include attendance roster and emergency supplies. Leave windows and doors closed, but unlocked.
- Stay calm. Maintain control of the students at a safe distance from the fire and fire fighting equipment

## HAZARDS: FIRE OFF-SITE

- Take attendance at the assembly area. Report any missing students to the School Incident Commander/site administrator and emergency response personnel
- Remain with students until Incident Command has determined it is safe to return
- Follow school emergency protocols for return to school



# HAZARDS: FIRE ON-SITE

An on-site fire necessitates quick and decisive action to prevent injuries and further spread of fire. All doors leading to the fire should be closed. Do not re-enter the area for belongings. If the area is full of smoke, students and staff should be instructed to crawl along the floor close to walls to enable easier breathing and provide direction. Before opening any door, place a hand an inch from the door near the top to see if it is hot. Be prepared to close the door quickly at the first sign of fire. All fires extinguished on-site by school staff, regardless of size, require that the Fire Department be notified.

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: SITE ADMINISTRATOR ACTIONS: FIRE WITHIN SCHOOL BUILDING:

- First, sound the fire alarm to implement **EVACUATION** of the building
- Assume Incident Command role. Put on emergency IC/Admin vest and continue as Incident Commander until relieved by emergency personnel
- Instruct designee to call **911**. Designee must be ready to provide location, status of campus, all available details of situation
- Access the school “Emergency Response Box” (p.43) in order to provide emergency responders with maps, keys, rosters, etc.
- Immediately **EVACUATE** the building or the school using the primary or alternate fire routes
- When able, alert Superintendent’s Office
- To ensure that access roads are kept open for emergency vehicles, direct Safety Officer to open gates and clear pathways
- To ensure that all students and staff have left the building and to locate injured students/staff, direct Operations Chief to engage the Search and Rescue team or communicate to Unified Command
- Have Safety Officer report to Incident Command Post
- To ensure injured students and staff members receive medical attention, direct Operations Chief to engage Medical Team
- If needed, notify bus dispatch for off-site evacuation or communicate with Unified Command to engage SAMTRANS
- Do not allow staff and students to return to the building until the Fire Incident Commander declares that it is safe to do so

# HAZARDS: FIRE ON-SITE

## STAFF ACTIONS: FIRE WITHIN SCHOOL BUILDING:

- *Evacuate immediately to assembly area. DO NOT STOP* to collect belongings, but be sure to bring attendance roster and emergency supplies. Leave the windows and doors closed, but unlocked
- Stay calm; maintain control of the students at the designated assembly area
- Take attendance. Report missing students to the School Incident Commander/Site Administrator and emergency response personnel
- Maintain supervision of students until the Fire Department determines it is safe to return to the school building

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

If strong winds and dry conditions, combined with a heightened fire risk, are forecasted to threaten a portion of the electric system, it may be necessary for Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) to turn off electricity for safety. In the event of a planned or unplanned power outage (due to weather, construction or a downed line), school district and site administrators will need to determine if school closures are necessary.

For residents who live in impacted communities, PG&E will attempt to contact individuals via telephone, text, and email. Outages for a weather event could last longer than 48 hours. PG&E suggests customers prepare for outages that could last several days.

## **SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER: ACTIONS TO TAKE BEFORE A PLANNED POWER OUTAGE**

- PG&E will send out notification for Planned Power Outages when the forecasted conditions threaten the integrity of the electric system. PG&E will notify the assigned account holder/contact name on the PG&E account. Individuals will not automatically receive notifications
- The Account Holder/Contact Name on the Account should continually update their contact information to ensure consistent receipt of emergency notifications
- Site Administrators, Facilities Managers, and key District Staff who are non-account owners are encouraged to register with PG&E to receive notifications of planned power outages 48 hours prior to the outage
- One phone number can be enrolled per call, but an individual may choose to receive alerts for one or more ZIP Codes within PG&E's service territory
- Individuals must re-enroll each year to maintain this service

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

- To sign up to receive Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) ZIP Code Alerts for an area where an individual is not the account holder:  
Call 1-877-900-0743 to enroll or enroll online at: Power Shut-Off Alerts
- How PSPS alerts work for non-account holders:
  - Alerts are sent out according to ZIP Code
  - Contacts are notified in advance at 48 hours, 24 hours, and just before power is shut off for safety in all or part of the ZIP Code(s) selected
  - The message informs the receiver how to get additional information about the potential outage, including specific areas potentially impacted

## **SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER ACTIONS: AT NOTIFICATION OF PLANNED POWER OUTAGE**

- Assume Incident Command role. Continue as Incident Commander until relieved by emergency personnel
- As soon as possible, communicate with the Superintendent's Office
- Determine when Outage might occur and create a timeline for actions
- Work with Site and District Facilities staff regarding need for generator use to keep key equipment operating (student medical equipment, kitchen facilities, science lab equipment, athletic center mechanical equipment)
- If the planned Outage occurs during a school day, determine if Student Release should be implemented. If so, notify staff, students, and parents
- If the planned Outage is scheduled for subsequent days, determine the need for school closure or relocation of services
- Appropriately notify staff, students, and parents

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

## SCHOOL INCIDENT COMMANDER ACTIONS: UNPLANNED POWER OUTAGE

- Assume Incident Command role. Continue as Incident Commander until relieved by emergency personnel
- As soon as possible, communicate with the Superintendent's Office
- Gather information as to the cause of the outage (construction, circuit breaker, downed power line or PG&E Shut-Off)
- Determine the potential timeline for Power Restoration
  - View or Report Outages or call PG&E at 1-800-743-5000
- Appropriately notify staff, students, and parents of the immediate plan regarding school closure
- Work with Site and District Facilities staff regarding need for generator use to keep key equipment operating (student medical equipment, kitchen facilities, science lab equipment, athletic center mechanical equipment)
- If power will not be restored quickly, determine the need to implement STUDENT RELEASE procedures
- Continue to communicate clearly to staff, students, parents, and community members
- If site is designated unsafe to remain open, initiate STUDENT RELEASE procedures

# HAZARDS: POWER OUTAGES

## STAFF ACTIONS:

- In the event of a prolonged power outage, the Incident Commander may implement an early release or school closure. Follow Big Five protocols for EVACUATION and STUDENT RELEASE procedures as directed
- If directed to evacuate, gather emergency supplies/materials (Go Bag) including the student roster for current class and that of “Buddy Teacher”
- Remove staff ID placard from emergency packet and put it on
- Bring all belongings
- Leave windows and doors closed, but unlocked
- Stay calm. Follow the EVACUATION route that keeps students the safest distance from any downed powerlines or PG&E equipment
- According to site protocol, take attendance once class is safely in assembly location
- According to site protocol, report missing students
- If directed by Incident Command, initiate STUDENT RELEASE procedures
- Remain with students until STUDENT RELEASE procedures are complete

# HAZARDS: POOR AIR QUALITY

## DURING A SMOKE EVENT:

If a smoke event occurs, schools should stay informed as conditions can change throughout the day and take steps to minimize the risk to both students and staff.

- Continue to monitor the EPS's AirNow website ([www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)), which reports air quality using the Air Quality Index (AQI). The AQI tells the public how clean or polluted the air is using standard descriptors.
- Stay indoors. However, the usefulness of this strategy depends on how well the building limits smoke from coming in from outdoors.
- If the filter was upgraded, set the central system's circulating fan to operate continuously (set to "ON" rather than "AUTO") to obtain maximum particle removal by the central air handler filter.
- In general, buildings should be operated at slight positive pressure in order to keep contaminants out and to help exhaust air systems function properly.
- Respirators (masks) should only be used after first implementing other, more effective methods of exposure reduction, including staying indoors, reducing activity, and using HEPA air cleaners indoors to reduce overall smoke exposure.
- Refer to the *School Air Quality Activity Recommendations* for guidelines about when and how to modify outdoor physical activity based on the AQI.
- When air quality improves, even temporarily, "air out" buildings to reduce indoor air pollution.
- Damp mop, dust, and clean with a high efficiency particulate air [HEPA] filter-equipped vacuum.