

FAIRFIELD AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

MENTAL HEALTH

7280

TARGETS TEAM

7280.1

Intervention

The purpose of the referral procedure is to enable at risk mental health adolescents to receive counseling services. The TARGETS Team may assist in the intervention process.

The steps in a procedure may include:

1. Report of at risk students to administrators or student services personnel.
2. Utilization of the screening instruments when appropriate.
3. A meeting of the referring person, appropriate teachers, administrators, school nurse and/or guidance counselor.
4. The student services professional, e.g., counselor, psychologist, or social worker should interview the student and determine the level of risk.
5. If it is determined the student is at risk, a meeting with the family should be strongly considered.
6. The family and/or the student should be advised of appropriate community services and mental health professionals.
7. The family and/or the student should be given help and assistance in scheduling an appointment with the selected agency or professional.
8. The guidance counselor, school nurse and/or TARGETS Team should monitor the student's progress and continue to follow the student until the student is no longer considered at risk.

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7280.2 Suicide Prevention

It is the intent of the school district to provide each staff member with specific procedures to follow when he/she determines that a student is seriously planning suicide. The steps outlined shall be followed in sequence.

- A) The staff members shall report any potential suicide to a guidance counselor, nurse or school administrator.
- B) The guidance counselor, nurse or school administrator shall be responsible for determining, based on the seriousness of the threat, if there is a need for other resources.
- C) The following procedures are used to determine the criticalness of the threat.
 - 1. Question the person about any feelings of hopelessness and the length of time of such feelings.
 - 2. Question the person about any thoughts about killing himself/herself and how persistent and strong the thoughts are.
 - 3. Question the person whether any plans have been made, how detailed the plans are and whether any preliminary actions have been taken.

NOTE: If suicidal behavior is suspected, do not mince words but directly question the person about his/her thoughts, intent, and/or plan.

- D. If the seriousness of the threat is judged to be life threatening, the student involved must understand that the issue of confidentiality shall no longer apply.
- E. The individual who determined the seriousness of the threat shall specify if there is a high, medium or low risk for a life threatening situation.

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- F. The following are risk indicators.
1. High risk indicators are feelings of hopelessness, a detailed suicide plan, written statements, history or a previous attempt, chronically self-destructive lifestyle combined with severe loss or threat of loss, anniversary of a loss, inability to accept help, paucity of resources and/or method of suicide available.
 2. Medium risk indicators are some threats of ending it all through explicit statements, no concrete plan, does not have a method of completing an attempt, probably lacking any support from a professional or significant others, and/or has not exhibited any radical changes.
 3. Low risk indicators are vague feelings of hopelessness, no suicidal plans, no explicit written or verbal threat and/or supportive help available.
- G. The procedures are as follows:
1. If a student is at high risk:
 - a. Do not let the student out of your sight.
 - b. Immediately contact the high school principal, school nurse or guidance counselor who may contact MH/MR - 988-4200 or 24 Hour Emergency TAP line 1-800-222-9016.
 - c. The parent must be notified immediately.
 - d. The TARGETS Team* will convene to assist in the intervention process.
 2. If a student is at medium risk:
 - a. Contact the high school principal, school nurse or guidance counselor.

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- b. Parent will be notified.
 - c. The TARGETS Team* will convene to assist in the intervention process.
 3. If the student is considered low risk:
 - a. Refer to appropriate counselor.
 - b. Counselor shall determine appropriate action to be taken.

* The TARGETS Team is composed of school personnel (teachers, staff, administrators, nurses, counselors) trained to understand and work with at-risk students and will play a primary role in the intervention process.

7280.3 Suicide Post-Vention Directives

Despite the best prevention and early identification methods utilized by a school, it is possible that a student may attempt to kill him or herself. If a suicide does occur, it is the intent of the Fairfield Area School District to provide support for the student body, the parents, and the teachers. It is, therefore, appropriate to establish procedures to act as a deterrent to future suicides and to help everyone react in a positive fashion.

- A. In the event that the school is contacted by the media, the principal or a central office administrator shall make a public statement. The response shall be brief with all attempts to protect the rights of the student and the family to privacy.
- B. The principal will inform the counseling staff, the school nurse, and the TARGETS Team members immediately. The principal will inform all staff members as soon as possible. The principal will emphasize that all school personnel shall observe the close friends of the deceased who may also be at risk. (See "Suicide Prevention Procedures" for at risk indicators.) When needed, teachers may want to take time with their students to briefly dispel rumors, calm fears, and to inform students of supportive services from the counselors.

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- C. All school personnel shall inform the counseling office of the suspected at risk students. The counselors will immediately contact these students. The counselors will seek out other troubled students to provide individual as well as small group counseling.
- D. Suicide notes found within the school should be sent to the student's counselor who will talk with the identified student. The extent of risk will be evaluated and, if appropriate, the counselor will take further preventative actions.
- E. The principal shall contact the deceased's family to offer supportive counseling and, if appropriate, referral to appropriate outside agencies. The principal will also contact the families of the at risk students to alert them to their concerns and to offer supportive counseling and/or referrals to outside agencies.
- F. Individual professionals or outside agencies may be used as consultants to the school staff if severe trauma to the students, their families or the faculty is evident.

Revised June 17, 1996