

Background:

Diboll ISD recognizes that depression and self-destruction are problems of increasing severity among children and adolescents. A student who suffers the psychological disability of depression cannot benefit fully from the educational program of the schools, and a student who has attempted self-destruction poses a danger both to himself and to other students.

Diboll ISD directs all school personnel to be alert to the student who exhibits signs of unusual depression or who threatens or attempts suicide. Any such signs or the report of such signs from another student or staff member should be taken with the utmost seriousness.

The Superintendent has developed and implements administrative guidelines whereby members of the professional staff understand how to use an intervention procedure which includes the following:

- Step 1 – Stabilization
- Step 2 – Assessment of the Risk
- Step 3 – Use of Appropriate Risk Procedure
- Step 4 – Communication with Appropriate Parties
- Step 5 – Follow up

Throughout any intervention, it is essential that Board policies and District guidelines **regarding confidentiality be observed at all times.**

In compliance with Diboll ISD policy, any time a staff member encounters a student who appears to be contemplating suicide; the following process should be followed carefully.

Step One – Stabilize the Situation

1. Under NO circumstances should a potentially suicidal youth be left alone.
2. Calmly talk to the student to determine if the student has any life-threatening instruments or substances on or near his/her person. (i.e. gun, knife, drugs, etc.)
3. If possible, calmly remove any such devices from the student and the immediate environment. Do NOT struggle with the student if you meet resistance.

4. **Inform school administration** and the closest Crisis Management Team member of the situation and your location.
5. Calmly move students where there will be a Crisis Management Team member and a telephone close by.

At this point the Crisis Management Team member should assume responsibility for the crisis interview. If the teacher or other staff member who began the process is needed or wishes to remain with the situation, this should be allowed, if appropriate. The staff member should proceed to Step Two without delay.

Step Two – Assess the Risk

- A. Stay relaxed and talk calmly to the student to assess the risk of the student harming himself/herself. Listen intently to what the student is saying and avoid giving advice. Keep questions nonjudgmental.

Step Three – Take Appropriate Action:

EXTREME RISK PROCEDURE

1. Contact Police
2. Keep the student engaged in conversation as well as reassuring him/her until the police arrive.
3. After police arrive, and if good rapport has been established with the student, remain present to provide continuity and support as the police attempt to get the student to relinquish the dangerous instrumentality.
4. **Contact the student's parents and inform** them of what has transpired and of the actions being taken.

SEVERE RISK PROCEDURE:

1. Determine if the student's distress appears to be the result of parent or caretaker abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Determine if further internal referral is necessary before proceeding with interview. (i.e., does school social worker or counselor need to come into check out allegations of abuse or neglect?) If allegations warrant, school social worker, counselor, principal or designee, should refer to DFCS according to normal procedure.
2. If distress is apparently not related to abuse, neglect or exploitation, referral should be made to parents. The parents should be strongly encouraged to have the child evaluated. A list of referral sources and telephone numbers will be provided for this purpose.
3. If neither parents, Child Protective Services, nor police can/will intervene before the end of the school day, the student should be taken to the nearest hospital emergency room.

4. In all of these considerations, attention should be focused upon the safety and best interests of the child.
5. **Parents/caretakers should be contacted** and notified of school actions at the earliest possible time.

MODERATE RISK PROCEDURE:

1. Determine if the student's distress appears to be the result of parent or caretaker abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Determine if further internal referral is necessary before proceeding with interview. (i.e., does school social worker or counselor need to come into check out allegations of abuse or neglect?). If allegations warrant, school social worker, counselor, principal or designee, should refer to DFCS according to normal procedure.
2. If distress is apparently not related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation, parent or caretaker should be called, advised of the situation, and asked to take the student to a hospital or other appropriate agency (with phone numbers provided). If they refuse, call in a social worker or counselor for consideration of DFCS or Mental Health referral.
3. **Call parents/caretakers** and inform them of the actions taken.

Step Four – Communicate

- A. Inform the appropriate members of the District staff such as the school psychologist, the student's teachers, and/or school social worker of the facts and the actions being taken. Alert them that the need to observe the District's confidentiality requirements, although the occurrence was not something that developed during counseling.
- B. **If the parents request**, inform others outside of the district of the facts and the actions being taken. (Example: Pastor, mentors)

Step Five – Follow-Up

- A. Determine the extent to which emergency or short-term procedures were completed properly.
- B. Find out if arrangements have been made for long-term clinical and/or support services.
- C. If neither short-term procedures nor long-term services were properly conducted or pursued, consult with the Superintendent to determine appropriate action.

- D. Maintain continuing contact with the student to communicate interest in his/her welfare and support of the long-term services being provided.
- E. Remain alert to the possibility of “copy-cat” suicide attempts by other students.
- F. Evaluate Steps A – E.

**SUICIDE
POSTVENTION PROCEDURE:**

If, in spite of all intervention efforts, a suicide should occur, implement the District’s Crisis Management Plan.

If additional guidance is needed, contact the American Association of Suicidology, 4201 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20008. (202) 237-2280.

SUICIDE PREVENTION GUIDELINES:

DOs:

- Learn to recognize the clues to suicide: depression, helplessness, threats or words of warning, withdrawal, isolation, excessive stress, giving away possessions, etc.
- Advise parent of your concern and maintain records of interaction when talking with a troubled student and parent.
- Trust your own judgment
- Listen and understand the feelings behind the words. Take every feeling the student expresses seriously.
- Tell other, immediately refer all students you feel are suicidal to the principal, counselor, and/or crisis team member.
- Remind the student that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
- Ask the student to postpone the decision for awhile; in return, you might offer to accompany them to find support or help.
- Accept the fact that in some cases you may not be able to keep a student from committing suicide.

DON'Ts:

- Don’t worry about breaking the confidence if someone reveals suicidal plans to you. You may need to tell a secret to save a life.
- Don’t try to win arguments about suicide. They might not be able to be won.
- Don’t moralize or preach to the student.
- Don’t dismiss a suicide threat or challenge a student to do it.
- Don’t leave a suicidal student alone if you think there is immediate danger.
- Don’t attempt to rescue the suicidal student by yourself.
- Don’t ignore signs. Ignoring confirms to the student that he/she is unloved or misunderstood.
- Don’t give false assurances that “everything will be fine”.
- Don’t be misled by the student’s comments that the emotional crisis has ended.

- Don't assume the aggressive child may commit suicide over the "good", "quiet", or "obedient" child.

The suicide intervention plan is designed to be a guideline for school staff who encounters students in need of crisis services. Every situation cannot be addressed or anticipated, but this plan can provide direction formulation a personalized plan of action.

In many crisis situations, the sequence of events may vary according to need and several steps may occur simultaneously. **Important:** In all of these considerations, attention should be focused upon the safety and best interests of the student.

School staff that has reasonable cause to believe that a student is suicidal should begin the intervention process immediately. Parents must always be contacted. Some important points to remember when talking with parents:

- The goal of parental notification is to safeguard the welfare of the student.
- School personnel should do their best to elicit a supportive and proactive reaction from the parents.
- Discuss the need for increased supervision of the student.
- Discuss the need to remove lethal weapons such as guns.
- Parents who refuse to acknowledge the seriousness of the suicidal emergency should be encouraged to sign a form indicating that they have been notified and informed of the emergency.

DIBOLL ISD SUICIDE REPORT FORM

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Name of Person Making Initial Report: _____

Name/Position of Person Handling Case:

Student Interviewed by: _____

Comments:

Parent/Responsible Person Contacted: _____
(Name)

Parent Contact Made By: _____ Date: _____

Parent Contact Witnessed By: _____

Follow-up Taken:

Follow-up Done By: _____

Comments:

Other People/Organizations Contacted:

This form is to be filed in the student's confidential file separate from the student's curriculum folder.

NO-HARM CONTRACT

I, _____, agree to make social/family contact with the following individuals:

I agree to rid my presence of all things I could use to harm myself. I agree that, if I am having a rough time and come to a point where I may break any of these promises, I will call and make significant contact with any of the following individuals:

_____ at: # _____

_____ at: # _____

Or, if I cannot contact these individuals, I will immediately call the

Suicide Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

I agree that these conditions are important, worth doing, and that this is a contract I am willing to make and keep. By my word and honor, I intend to keep this contract.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Witnessed by _____ **Date** _____

Parent Acknowledgement of Suicide Emergency

I, _____, parent/legal guardian of

_____:(Student's Name) have been informed by a

member of the Diboll Campus Crisis Management Team of the seriousness

of my child's suicide attempt/or threat of suicide. I understand that once I

leave with my child that I am solely responsible for his/her well-being and

do not hold Diboll ISD liable for any harm once I remove him/her from the

campus. I acknowledge that I have been given a list of mental health care

professional's phone numbers and the suicide crisis hot line in the event of

an emergency.

Parent Signature

Date

Member of CMT Signature

Date

