



Policy: Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention Policy UPDATED August, 2022

Purpose	MRCS is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and the MRCS community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; establish methods of prevention, intervention and response to suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.
Authority	In compliance with state law and regulations as required by Act 71, and in support of MRCS' suicide prevention measures, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the CEO or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.
Guidelines	<p>MRCS shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports. MRCS shall notify district employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the MRCS website.</p> <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Student Education</u> Students shall receive age-appropriate education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, how to recognize risk factors and warning signs, as well as help-seeking strategies for self or others including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help. Lessons shall contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotion, behavioral and social skills development.</p> <p><u>Protocols for Administration of Employee Education</u> All MRCS employees shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention. As part of MRCS' professional educators in school buildings serving students in grades 6 through 8 shall participate in four hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five years. Additional professional development in risk assessment and crisis intervention shall be provided to members of the identified Crisis Team.</p> <p><u>Resources for Parents/Guardians</u> MRCS may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs; and information about local behavioral/mental health resources.</p>

Methods of Prevention	<p>The methods of prevention utilized by MRCS include, but are not limited to, early identification and support for students at risk; education for students, staff and parents/guardians; and delegation of responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.</p> <p><u>Early Identification Procedures</u></p> <p>Early identification of individuals with one (1) or more suicidal risk factors or of individuals exhibiting warning signs is crucial to MRCS' suicide prevention efforts. To promote awareness, MRCS employees, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicidal risk factors and warning signs.</p> <p>Risk factors refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Behavioral Health Issues/Disorders:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Depression- Substance abuse or dependence- Previous suicide attempts- Self-injury- Stressful Life Circumstances:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interpersonal difficulties or losses- Disciplinary or legal problems- Bullying (victim or perpetrator)- School or work issues- Physical, sexual or psychological abuse- Exposure to peer suicide- Personal Characteristics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hopelessness/low self-esteem- Loneliness/social alienation/isolation/lack of belonging- Poor problem-solving or coping skills- Impulsivity/risk-taking/recklessness- Family Characteristics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior- Family mental health problems- Divorce/Death of parent/guardian- Parental-Child relationship
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	<p>Warning signs are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expressions such as hopelessness, rage, anger, seeking revenge, feeling trapped, anxiety, agitation, no reason to live or sense of purpose - Recklessness or risky behavior - Increased alcohol or drug use - Withdrawal from friends, family or society - Dramatic mood changes <p><u>Referral Procedures</u></p> <p>Any MRCS employee who has identified a student with one (1) or more risk factors or who has an indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for further assessment and intervention.</p> <p><u>Documentation</u></p> <p>MRCS shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk.</p>
<p>Methods of Intervention</p>	<p>The methods of intervention utilized by MRCS include, but are not limited to, responding to suicide threats, suicide attempts in school, suicide attempts outside of school, and completed suicide. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.</p> <p><u>Procedures for Students at Risk</u></p> <p>MRCS Employees will make personal contact with (in order) the CEO, Mental Health Therapist, Administrator of Academics and Behavior, Student Data and Assessment Analyst or School Nurse.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at risk of suicide shall be notified by the school. If the school suspects that the student’s risk status is the result of abuse or neglect, school staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth Services.</p> <p>MRCS shall identify mental health service providers to whom students can be referred for further assessment and assistance. Mental health service providers may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency departments, psychiatric hospitals, community mental health centers, and primary care providers.</p>

MRCS shall create an emotional or mental health safety plan to support a student and the student's family if the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

Following a safety assessment and necessary emergency procedures, student will be referred to SAP. Parental consent will be requested during administrator contact with parent/guardian allowing the SAP team the ability to expediate the SAP process and provide necessary supports.

Students who are returning from psychiatric hospitalizations pertaining to suicide or have attempted suicide will be referred to SAP for services. Parental consent will be requested prior to student's return or upon first day of re-entry.

Students with Disabilities

For students with disabilities who are identified as being at risk for suicide or who attempts suicide, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

If a student is identified as being at risk for suicide or attempts suicide and the student may require special education services or accommodations, the CEO or designee shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

Documentation

MRCS shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the intervention and assessment process including verbal and written communications with students, parents/guardians and mental health service providers. The CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.

<p>Methods of Response to Suicide or Suicide Attempt</p>	<p>The methods of response to a suicide or suicide attempt utilized by MRCS include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identifying and training the school crisis response/crisis intervention team2. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member3. Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians4. Working with families5. Responding appropriately to the media6. Collaborating with community providers <p>The CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations with recommended guidelines for responding to a suicidal act or attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event.</p> <p><u>Re-Entry Procedures</u></p> <p>A student's excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student's return to school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.</p> <p>The CEO or designee shall meet with the parents/guardians of a student returning to school after a mental health crisis, and, if appropriate, meet with the student to discuss re-entry and applicable next steps to ensure the student's readiness to return to the school.</p> <p>When authorized by the student's parent/guardian, the student will be referred and screened by SAP team and coordinate with SAP mental health liaison and/or community-based treatment providers for appropriate mental health treatment. SAP team will engage in check ins, as needed with the student facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.</p>
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Report Procedures	<p>Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication among school staff, parents/guardians and mental health service providers.</p> <p>When a MRCS employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or hearsay.</p> <p>As stated in this policy, MRCS employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response.</p> <p>The Suicide Prevention coordinator shall provide the CEO with a copy of all reports and documentation regarding the at-risk student. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to CEO designee or school nurse.</p>
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Suicide Awareness and Prevention Resources	A listing of resources regarding suicide awareness and prevention shall be attached to this policy.
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