



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Sudden Death or Suicide (Prevention and Response)

The River Valley District is aware that sudden death among adolescents is a growing concern. Because of this fact, the school district has established the following prevention, intervention, and response plan:

- I. **PREVENTION:** The best prevention is a philosophy that reinforces successes and self worth and one that encourages growth when weaknesses are identified. This philosophy should be embraced by the entire district staff and will be reflected in their teaching methods, curriculum, and support programs.
 - A. Staff of the district will develop a greater perception of the dimensions of suicide and become more skilled in recognizing and responding to potential suicidal students. Periodic inservice shall be provided for all staff to include:
 1. Recognizing the warning signs of suicide.
 2. The relationship of alcohol and other drugs, teen pregnancy, abuse, and other youth issues to suicide.
 3. Available resources to help suicidal youth.
 4. How to refer suicidal youth.
 5. The district's intervention and response plan.
 - B. Suicide prevention will be dealt with in the K-12 health/guidance and other curricula through the topics of self-esteem, decision-making, recognizing and coping with depression, the link between alcohol and suicide, and community resources. Guest speakers will be screened by building principals.
 - C. Individual personal counseling shall be an ongoing part of district counseling services.
 - D. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) will be a vehicle to help students develop skills to identify and normalize feelings.
- II. **INTERVENTION:** The district shall develop and implement uniform protocol to assess and respond to potential suicidal students and establish a working referral procedure with local mental health providers and law enforcement (in emergency situations). The protocol is located in the district School Safety Plan.
- III. **RESPONSE:** The district has established a uniform plan of response to a sudden death of a student during the school year to disseminate facts and allow for structured expression of grieving within the daily activity of school. The plan of response will be made part of the district's School Safety Plan maintained by each administrator and pupil services staff member.

Cross Reference: School Safety Plan

APPROVED: January 9, 1992

REVISED: June 8, 2000

APPROVED: July 13, 2000

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APPROVED: June 10, 2004