

Policy

SUICIDE AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

The Alloway Township Board of Education believes the physical and mental well-being of all students must be maintained as a prerequisite to achievement through the formal educational process. The board recognizes that depression, self-destructive behavior and suicide are problems of increasing severity among children and adolescents. Students who experience severe family crises; drug and alcohol abuse (see board policy 5131.6 Substance Abuse and 5131.7 Weapons and Dangerous Instruments); suicide ideations, gestures, and attempts; and severe emotional traumas are at-risk. A student under severe stress cannot benefit fully from the educational program and may pose a threat to him or herself or others.

The board directs all school personnel to be alert to students who exhibit signs of potential self-destructive behavior or who threaten or attempt suicide. The child study team shall provide training to staff for the identification of the signs/symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation; the connection of depression and suicidal behavior to harassment, intimidation and bullying; and school reporting procedures. The goal of training shall be to instruct school staff, parents/guardians, and students to:

- A. Understand the causes of self-destructive behavior and suicide;
- B. Recognize the early warning signs of self-destructive and suicidal behavior;
- C. Learn how to help in a suicidal crisis;
- D. Identify community resources and procedures that can help a self-destructive or suicidal person;
- E. Cope with the aftermath of such a tragedy.

Any suspicion of the signs/symptoms and the report of signs/symptoms from another student or staff member should be taken with the utmost seriousness and reported immediately to the school administrator and the child study team, who will determine further action.

The student's parents/guardians shall be notified immediately when a student exhibits potential self-destructive behavior and their cooperation shall be sought for immediate intervention. If the parent is unwilling to cooperate, the school administration and/or child study team shall contact appropriate agencies to request intervention on the student's behalf. In cases of child abuse or neglect, school personnel are required to contact the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P).

The superintendent or his or her designee shall ensure that a continuing cooperative affiliation is made with local community mental health agencies to assist in following the procedures in the event the necessary professional expertise is not adequately available within the school district during an emergency of this nature.

The child study team will be consulted for appropriate evaluation and/or recommendation for independent medical or psychiatric services for a potentially at-risk student. In the event that the parent or guardian objects to the recommended evaluation or indicates an unwillingness to cooperate in the best interests of the student, school personnel should contact the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency to request that the agency intervene on the student's behalf.

The superintendent will, in consultation with appropriate teaching staff members and mental health organizations, develop and implement a program as necessary for students exhibiting self-destructive behaviors in grades K through 8. The program will address problems of depression, help students toward alternative ways of resolving stressful situations, and encourage students to help one another.

SUICIDE AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR (continued)Suicide Awareness

Students at all grade levels shall receive instruction in suicide prevention as part of the district health and physical education curriculum and consistent with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

Every teaching staff member shall complete at least two hours of instruction in suicide prevention as part of the required professional development. The instruction shall be provided by a licensed health care professional with experience in mental health issues, in each professional development period. The instruction in suicide prevention shall include information on the relationship between the risk of suicide and incidents of harassment, intimidation, and bullying and information on reducing the risk of suicide in students who are members of communities identified as having members at high risk of suicide.

Suicide Reporting

In compliance with law (N.J.S.A. 30:-9A-24 and N.J.A.C. 6A:11-1) school district employees, volunteers, or interns with reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a student has attempted or completed suicide, shall report the information to the Department of Children and Families. The information shall be reported in the form and manner prescribed by the Department of Children and Families.

The information contained in the report to the Department of Children and Families shall not be considered a public record, but the division may aggregate the data for the purpose of preparing an annual report. The reporter shall not be required to identify the student or youth by name or other unique identifier, but may be required to supply non-identifying demographic information about the student or youth, other attempts made by the student or youth and the response or referral made to deal with the incident.

Any person who reports an attempted or completed suicide shall have immunity from any civil or criminal liability on account of that report, unless the person has acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose.

Adopted: September 8, 1988
 Revised: October 22, 2002, January 22, 2013
 NJSBA Review/Update: January 2020, April 2025
 Readopted:

Key Words

Crisis, Self-Mutilation, Self Destructive, Suicide, Depression, Cutting

<u>Legal References:</u>	<u>N.J.S.A. 2A:62A-23 to 26</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:6-111 et seq.</u> <u>See particularly:</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:6-113</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:16-6, -6.1</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.6 et seq.</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:40-1</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:40-3</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:40-5</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:40-6</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-1 et seq.</u> <u>N.J.S.A. 44:6-2</u> <u>N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1 et seq.</u> <u>See particularly:</u> <u>N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1, -1.3,</u>	AED emergency medical services, 1999 statute Instruction in Suicide Prevention Instruction in suicide prevention in public school curriculum Indemnity of officers and employees against civil actions <u>Parents Right to Conscience Act of 1979</u> Employment of medical inspectors, optometrists and nurses; salaries; terms; rules Lectures to teachers Method of examination; notice to parent or guardian In general Substance Abuse Maintenance by boards of education of clinics for indigent children Programs to Support Student Development
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SUICIDE AND SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR (continued)

-1.4, -2.1, -2.3, -2.4
N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.1 et seq. Operation and Maintenance of School
See particularly: Facilities
N.J.A.C. 6A:26-12.3

Possible**Cross References:**

*1410	Local units
*3510	Operation and maintenance of plant
*3516	Safety
*4112.4/4212.4	Employee health
*4131/4131.1	Staff development; inservice education/visitations/conferences
*5125	Student records
*5131	Conduct/discipline
*5131.1	Harassment, intimidation and bullying
*5131.6	Substance abuse
*5131.7	Weapons and dangerous instruments
*5141.1	Accidents
*5141.2	Illness
*5141.21	Administering medication
*5142	Student safety
*5145.11	Questioning and apprehension
*5145.12	Search and seizure
*6142.4	Physical education and health

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.