

**GOFFSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Goffstown School District Suicide Prevention and Response Plan**

**PURPOSE**

The Goffstown School District is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This plan supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education to create youth suicide awareness and establishes methods of response to suicide including prevention, intervention and postvention (response to completion of suicide).

**PUBLICATION AND DISTRIBUTION**

The School District Suicide Prevention and Response Plan will be made available on the District’s and each school’s respective websites. Individual school websites will be updated each year with the contact information for the Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons. Links to state and community crisis or intervention referral intervention resources will also be updated annually. Each school handbook will contain the most updated “Safety Plan and Guidelines for Safety Intervention Procedures”.

**SCHOOL DISTRICT SUICIDE PREVENTION COORDINATOR**

The Director of School Counseling at Goffstown High School shall serve as the appointed school district-level suicide prevention coordinator, who along with the Assistant Superintendent, under direction of the Superintendent is responsible for planning and coordinating the implementation of the District Suicide Prevention Plan (per School Board Policy JLDBB).

**BUILDING SUICIDE PREVENTION LIAISONS**

The School Principal, or designee, shall serve as the Building Suicide Prevention Liaison and will be the school contact person when a student is believed to be at risk for suicide. Employees who have reason to believe a student is at risk of suicide, or is exhibiting risk factors for suicide, shall report that information to the Building Liaison, who shall implement the SAU 19 response plan in conjunction with the Mental Health Team, using the Suicide Intervention Manual as a resource.

**MENTAL HEALTH TEAM**

A multi-disciplinary team consisting of school administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, and mental health counselors. The Mental Health Team provides mental health services for effective crisis interventions and recovery supports. This team collaborates to reduce barriers and identify interventions and supports to ensure the physical, social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of all students and members of our school community. Each building will outline responsibilities in the Crisis Response Flow Chart.

**PREVENTION**

Staff Development

Per RSA 193-J:2 and per School Board Policy JLDBB, all employees of the school district, including designated volunteers, contracted personnel or third-party employees, long-term substitute teachers, coaches, custodians, food service workers, and any other personnel with regular student contact, shall complete two-hours of SAU 19’s designated SEL-Suicide Prevention Training in suicide awareness

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and prevention. This training may include matters such as youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, intervention, response procedures, referrals, postvention and local resources.

Counseling professionals will engage in specialized professional development in risk-assessment, crisis intervention, and postvention, using nationally recognized and evidence-based practices including, but not limited to NH DOE Office of Social and Emotional Wellness Training Partners.

#### Student Suicide Prevention Training

Students will be provided with education regarding safe and healthy choices and coping strategies, recognition of risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others, and providing help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help. These topics will be integrated into the curriculum and educational programming of all PreK-12 Health, School Counseling, and other classes as age/developmentally appropriate.

#### **INTERVENTION**

##### Safety Concerns, Safety Assessment and Crisis Intervention

All threats to harm or kill oneself shall be taken seriously and reported immediately to the Building Suicide Prevention Liaison (School Principal and/or designee) in accordance with the school's Crisis Response Flowchart. Safety concerns may include any threat to harm or kill oneself, actions or behavior that threaten self with harm, any expressed desire to die (whether verbally, written, or in art), and behaviors that indicate self-harm. Significant changes in behavior or other risk factors may contribute to concern and will be reported. Reports of safety concerns may result in a safety assessment.

An initial safety assessment will be conducted by a member of the Mental Health Team using the SAU 19 Suicide Intervention Manual as a resource. A parent/guardian will be notified if a safety assessment is conducted. This assessment will be used to determine if a student is considered at risk. A student may be referred for further assessment with a community mental health professional. If a student is not referred for additional assessment, the Mental Health Team will work with the family to determine if additional supports are needed.

When an expressed suicidal thought or intention is made known after school hours at a school sponsored activity, it is imperative that an adult stay with a student until contact is made with an administrator and/or parent/guardian and next steps are determined. In the event that neither can be reached, it is expected that a call to 911 or local police will occur.

School personnel who become aware of suicidal thought or intent when the student is not at school will contact local police by calling 911, or the Goffstown Police Department at (603) 497-4858, or New Boston Police at (603) 487-2433 to request a welfare check. Prompt follow-up will be made with the Principal or other designated administrator to inform of the situation. The administrator will call to inform the parent/guardian of the incident and the action taken.

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Students referred by the school to have a safety assessment conducted by a mental health professional, will provide documentation of safety from a medical professional to the school counselor upon return to school. When a parent or guardian initiates a safety assessment for their student by a mental health professional, the family is urged to provide documentation of safety to the school counselor upon return to school.

### In School Suicide Attempt

In the case of any suicide attempt, the physical, mental health, and safety of the student are paramount. If this situation occurs on school property or at a school event, the following additional responses are required:

- In the event of an active overdose or injury requiring medical attention, call EMS (911) and stay with the student.
- Notify administration and school nurses.
- If the attempt threatens the safety of others, the school emergency response plan will be followed.
- Initial responder will stay to provide context and details to the Administration and Mental Health Team.
- Initial responders and witnesses will engage in a debrief process with a counseling professional.

### **RE-ENTRY PROCEDURE**

If a student has been hospitalized for being a risk to themselves or others, the parent or guardian is urged to share any pertinent information and/or a discharge summary with the school counselor. The information provided shall be deemed confidential. A re-entry meeting will be held before the student returns to school.

Re-entry meetings for students who are transitioning back to school from hospitalization, may involve the student (as developmentally appropriate), a parent/guardian, an administrator, and a member of the Mental Health Team. The goal of the re-entry meeting is to create a plan that supports the academic, social-emotional, physical, and medical needs of the student. The Mental Health Team will utilize the “Re-Entry and Follow-Up Meeting Checklist” from the Suicide Intervention Manual as a guide for planning.

### **AFTER A SUICIDE DEATH**

The Mental Health Team will meet to get the facts, assess the situation, and determine a communication plan that includes messaging for faculty, students, and community. The Mental Health Team will develop a support plan that includes mitigation of suicide contagion by actively triaging particular risk factors and following safe messaging guidelines.

The Mental Health Team shall coordinate support services for students and staff in need of mental health first aid, as appropriate. Support from other SAU #19 schools (school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists), community partners, and NH Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (DBHRT), may be initiated.

Reference: Policy JLDDBB – Suicide Prevention and Response  
Goffstown School Board Adopted: June 7, 2021