

PROVIDENT CHARTER SCHOOL

(Adopted May, 2026)

SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POLICY

Purpose

The Board of Trustees of Provident Charter School (Provident) is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school 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 or suicide attempt; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.

Authority

This policy shall apply in any situation where a student is expressing suicidal thoughts or intentions of self-harm on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or on any public vehicle providing transportation to or from a school, or portal to portal, or school-sponsored activity. This policy shall also apply following a suicide threat or attempt that does not occur on school grounds or during a school-sponsored activity, but that is reported to any school personnel.

Publication

Provident will notify its employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and will post the policy on the school entity's website.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Provident shall establish a crisis response team(s). The crisis response team(s) may include, but is not limited to, administrators, school counselors, school psychologists, school nurses, school social workers, school safety and security personnel, and/or teachers and other members of the school's Student Assistance Program team.

The school entity shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide awareness and prevention, which includes the following:

Protocols for Administration of Student Education

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 emotional, behavioral and social skills development.

Protocols for Administration of Employee Education

All Provident employees shall receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.

As part of Provident's professional development plan, professional educators serving students in grades six (6) or above shall participate in four (4) hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.

Methods of Intervention

The methods of intervention utilized by Provident 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 be developed by the Provident CEO or designee and may include the development of an emotional or mental health safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.

The Provident CEO or designee may approve suicide assessment instruments for use by trained mental health staff.

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.

Methods of Response to a Suicide or a Suicide Attempt

The Provident CEO or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide threat.

Any school personnel who observes a student exhibiting a warning sign for suicide, or who has another indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student for risk assessment and intervention in accordance with the school entity's referral procedures. In the absence of an immediate warning sign for suicide, students demonstrating suicide risk factors that appear to be adversely impacting the student should be referred through an appropriate mechanism (e.g., Student Assistance Program) for follow-up.

If the student has been identified as being at increased risk of suicide, the school entity shall create a safety plan to support the student (unless a safety plan was previously developed, in which case the plan may be reviewed and/or revised). The safety plan should be developed collaboratively with input from the student and reviewed with the student's family.

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

The methods of response to a suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by Provident include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying and training the school crisis response/crisis intervention team.
- Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.
- Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians.
- Working with families.
- Responding appropriately to the media.
- Collaborating with community providers.

The Provident 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.

The first school personnel on the scene of a suicide on campus must follow the school entity's crisis response procedures and shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

The school entity will immediately notify the parents or guardians of the affected student(s).

Upon confirmation of death, the school entity will immediately implement established postvention procedures, which shall include methods for informing the school community, identifying and monitoring at risk youth, and providing resources and supports for students, staff, and families. The school will review any requests for memorials in accordance with school policy.

Re-Entry Procedures

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.

A Provident-employed mental health professional, principal or designee, or suicide prevention coordinator 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 school.

When authorized by the student's parent/guardian, the designated Provident employee shall coordinate with the appropriate outside mental health care providers.

The designated Provident employee will periodically check in, as needed, with the student to facilitate the transition back into the school community and address any concerns.

Documentation and Reporting

Provident employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide prevention, intervention and response.

The designated employee shall document the reasons for referral, including specific warning signs and risk factors identified as indications that the student may be at risk. The designated Provident employee shall also document all interventions and services provided.

The Provident CEO or designee shall be notified of at-risk students and provided with documentation prepared by the school.

Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to guidance counselors, Provident mental health professionals and school nurses.

Resources for Youth Suicide Awareness and Prevention

A comprehensive set of resources for youth suicide awareness and prevention is accessible at PDE Suicide Prevention & Awareness:

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/education/programs-and-services/schools/school-climate-wellbeing/laws-and-regulations/act-71-youth-suicide-awareness-and-prevention-and-child-exploitation-awareness-education>