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SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE
BOARD ADOPTED MARCH 18, 2019

819 SUICIDE AWARENESS, PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

A. PURPOSE

1. The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports the provision of a comprehensive program designed to promote behavioral health and prevent suicide.

B. AUTHORITY

1. In compliance with state law and regulations, and in support of the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit's (CLIU) suicide prevention mission, information received in confidence from a student may be revealed to the student's parents/guardians, the building administrator or program supervisor or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other person is deemed to be at risk.

C. GUIDELINES

1. The CLIU shall utilize a multifaceted approach to suicide prevention which integrates school and community-based supports.
2. The CLIU shall provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention, establish methods of prevention, intervention and response to suicide attempt or suicide death and promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources.
3. The CLIU shall notify CLIU employees, students and parents/guardians of this policy and shall post the policy on the CLIU's website.

D. DEFINITION

1. Behavioral Health – the promotion of emotional health, the prevention of mental illnesses and substance use disorders, and treatment and services for substance abuse, addiction, substance use disorders, mental illnesses and/or mental disorders.

E. SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION EDUCATION

1. Protocols for Administration of Student Education
 - a. 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.

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- 36 2. Protocols for Administration of Employee Education
- 37 a. All CLIU employees, including, but not limited to, administrators, teachers, school behavioral
- 38 health professionals, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school
- 39 nurses, paraprofessionals, secretaries, coaches, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers shall
- 40 receive information regarding risk factors, warning signs, response procedures, referrals and
- 41 resources regarding youth suicide awareness and prevention.
- 42 b. As part of the CLIU’s professional development plan, professional educators in school buildings
- 43 serving students in grades six (6) through twelve (12) shall participate in a minimum of four (4)
- 44 hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training every five (5) years.
- 45 c. The CLIU’s professional development plan may include similar training for professional
- 46 educators in grades K-5.
- 47 3. Resources for Parents/Guardians
- 48 a. The CLIU may provide parents/guardians with resources including, but not limited to, health
- 49 promotion and suicide risk, including characteristics and warning signs, and information about
- 50 local behavioral health resources.

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52 **F. METHODS OF PREVENTION**

- 53 1. The methods of prevention utilized by the CLIU include, but are not limited to, early identification
- 54 and support for students at risk, education for students, staff and parents/guardians and delegation of
- 55 responsibility for planning and coordination of suicide prevention efforts.
- 56 2. In support of the CLIU’s suicide prevention mission, information received in confidence from a
- 57 student may be revealed to the student’s parents/guardians, the building administrator or program
- 58 supervisor or other appropriate authority when the health, welfare or safety of the student or any other
- 59 person is clearly in jeopardy.
- 60 3. Suicide Prevention Coordinators
- 61 a. CLIU-Wide – The Director of Special Programs and Services or designee shall be responsible for
- 62 planning and coordinating implementation of this policy.
- 63 4. Program Level – Each building administrator or program supervisor or designee shall act as a point of
- 64 contact in each school for issues relating to suicide prevention and policy implementation.
- 65 5. Early Identification Procedures
- 66 a. Early identification of individuals with one (1) or more suicidal risk factors, or individuals
- 67 exhibiting warning signs, is crucial to the CLIU’s suicide prevention efforts. To promote
- 68 awareness, CLIU employees, students and parents/guardians should be educated about suicidal
- 69 risk factors and warning signs. The CLIU-wide Suicide Prevention Coordinator shall develop and
- 70 implement explicit procedures for promoting awareness of suicidal risk factors and warning

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- 71 signs, a referral, assessment and documentation process for students with one (1) or more risk
72 factors or indications that a student may be contemplating suicide.
- 73 b. Suicide risk factors refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with
74 suicide.
- 75 c. Warning signs are evidence-based indicators that someone may be in danger of suicide, either
76 immediately or in the near future.
- 77 6. Referral Procedures
- 78 a. Any CLIU employee who observes a student exhibiting a warning sign for suicide, or has
79 another indication that a student may be contemplating suicide, shall refer the student to the
80 CLIU program supervisor and/or CLIU school psychologist or social worker for suicide risk
81 screening and/or assessment and intervention.
- 82 b. In the absence of a warning sign for suicide, students demonstrating suicide risk factors that
83 appear to be adversely impacting the student should be referred to the CLIU program supervisor
84 and/or CLIU school psychologist or social worker for support and follow-up.

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86 **G. METHODS OF INTERVENTION**

- 87 1. The methods of intervention utilized by the CLIU include, but are not limited to, responding to
88 suicide threats, suicide attempts in school or in CLIU programs, suicide attempts outside of school or
89 CLIU programs and suicide death. Suicide intervention procedures shall address the development of a
90 safety plan for students identified as being at increased risk of suicide.
- 91 2. Procedures for Students At-Risk
- 92 a. A CLIU approved suicide risk screening or assessment tool may be used by trained behavioral
93 health staff, such as school counselors, psychologists and social workers.
- 94 b. Parents/Guardians of a student identified as being at-risk of suicide shall be notified by the CLIU
95 and informed of crisis and community resources. If the CLIU suspects that the student's risk
96 status is the result of abuse or neglect, CLIU staff shall immediately notify Children and Youth
97 Services.
- 98 c. The CLIU shall identify behavioral health service providers to whom students can be
99 referred for further suicide risk screening and/or assessment and assistance. Behavioral
100 health service providers may include, but not be limited to, hospital emergency
101 departments, psychiatric hospitals, community behavioral health centers, psychiatrists,
102 psychologists, social workers and primary care providers.
- 103 d. If the student is identified as being at an increased risk of suicide, the CLIU shall create a new, or
104 updated, safety plan to support the student and the student's family. The safety plan should be
105 developed collaboratively with input from the student and reviewed with the student's family.

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106 e. The CLIU shall document observations, recommendations and actions conducted throughout the
107 course of intervention, suicide risk screening and/or assessment and follow-up, including verbal
108 and written communications with students, parents/guardians and behavioral health service
109 providers.

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111 **H. METHODS OF RESPONSE TO SUICIDE OR SUICIDE ATTEMPT**

112 1. The CLIU shall maintain trained professionals in crisis response/crisis intervention, which may
113 include, but not be limited to, designated administrators, school counselors, school nurse, school
114 psychologist, social worker, School Police Officers, members of the Student Assistance Program
115 Team and others as designated by the CLIU, such as community behavioral health agency resources.

116 2. Response to Suicide Attempt

- 117 a. The methods of response to a suicide or a suicide attempt utilized by the CLIU include, but are
118 not limited to:
 - 119 i. Identifying and training the school crisis response/crisis intervention team.
 - 120 ii. Determining the roles and responsibilities of each crisis response team member.
 - 121 iii. Notifying students, employees and parents/guardians.
 - 122 iv. Working with families.
 - 123 v. Responding appropriately to the media.
 - 124 vi. Collaborating with community providers.
- 125 b. The CLIU shall follow its Crisis Response Plan in responding to a suicide threat or suicidal act or
126 attempt on school grounds or during a school-sponsored event.

127 3. Re-Entry Procedures

- 128 a. A student’s excusal from school attendance after a mental health crisis and the student’s return to
129 school shall be consistent with state and federal laws and regulations.
- 130 b. Prior to a student returning to school or CLIU programs after a behavioral health crisis, a
131 CLIU-employed behavioral health professional, the building administrator or program
132 supervisor shall meet with the parents/guardians of the student and, if appropriate, meet with
133 the student to ensure the student’s readiness to return to school and CLIU programs.
- 134 b. When authorized by the student’s parent/guardian, the designated CLIU employee shall
135 coordinate with the appropriate outside behavioral health care providers and request written
136 documentation from the treating facility to assist with program planning.
- 137 c. The school psychologist and/or social worker will periodically check in with the student, as
138 needed, to monitor the student’s progress, facilitate the transition back into the school
139 community and address any concerns.

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- 140 4. Response to Suicide (Postvention)
- 141 a. Upon confirmation of a suicide death, the CLIU shall immediately implement established
- 142 postvention procedures, which shall include methods for informing the school community,
- 143 identifying and monitoring at-risk youth and providing resources and supports for students, staff
- 144 and families. The CLIU shall review any requests for memorials in accordance with CLIU
- 145 procedures.
- 146 b. The Executive Director or designee shall develop administrative regulations providing
- 147 recommended guidelines for responding to a suicide death.

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149 **I. REPORT PROCEDURES**

- 150 1. Effective documentation assists in preserving the safety of the student and ensuring communication
- 151 among school staff, parents/guardians and behavioral health service providers.
- 152 2. When a CLIU employee takes notes on any conversations or situations involving or relating to an at-
- 153 risk student, the notes should contain only factual or directly observed information, not opinions or
- 154 hearsay.
- 155 3. CLIU employees shall be responsible for effective documentation of incidents involving suicide
- 156 prevention, intervention and response.
- 157 4. Information and reports shall be provided, as appropriate, to those with a right to know, including, but
- 158 not limited to, guidance counselors, CLIU behavioral health professionals, building administrators
- 159 and school nurses.

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161 **J. SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION RESOURCES**

- 162 1. A listing of resources regarding suicide awareness and prevention shall be made available.