

STUDENT GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING (Referrals)

The Cole County R-I School District is focused on the safety and healthy development of its students. The district cannot address all student needs, but will assist students and their families in seeking outside assistance, particularly in situations where a student's life or health is at risk. Staff members are required to refer students for further assessment in accordance with this procedure.

Definitions

Referral Coordinator – Person or persons in the district with specialized training in the assessment of suicide risk who are responsible for receiving and responding to all reports under this procedure.

Suicidal Behavior – An umbrella term that encompasses any behavior that is symptomatic of suicide.

Suicidal Ideation – Thoughts and ideas about committing suicide.

Suicidal Intent – A specific plan and motivation to carry out suicidal ideation.

Suicide Warning Signs – An overt indicator of suicide risk in a particular individual.

Identification of Students for Referral

In general, suicidal behaviors develop over time, allowing for identification of students who become increasingly at risk of suicide before the students actually attempt suicide. Drug and alcohol use and mental health issues are often associated with suicide and attempted suicide. While treatment is a job for mental health professionals, staff members can contribute by identifying certain risk factors and referring students for further assessment.

All staff members who, in the course of their duties, have contact with students on a regular basis will receive annual training that will include:

1. The symptoms of alcohol or drug abuse.
2. The symptoms of mental health problems.
3. Identification of suicidal behavior, including risk factors for suicide, suicide warning signs and familiarity with the assessment process used by mental health professionals.

Reporting

The referral coordinator(s) for the district is (are):

[Title (e.g., High School Counselor)]

[Address]

[Phone]

All reports of drug or alcohol use, suspected mental health issues or suicidal behaviors must be submitted to the referral coordinator in writing. In urgent situations where there is an imminent threat to the health or life of the student, the referral may be made verbally and reduced to writing as soon as possible. Once a report is received, the referral coordinator will:

1. Assess the student.
2. Report drug or alcohol use that violates district policies to the building administrator.
3. Notify parents/guardians of the referral and the results of the assessment.
4. Notify the building administrator of the results of the assessment.
5. If appropriate or if requested, provide information about outside services and identify low- or no-cost services. The referral coordinator will maintain a comprehensive list, including current contact information, of mental health services providers, drug and alcohol counseling and treatment providers, and other appropriate public and private services available to students and their parents/guardians.
6. At the request of the parent/guardian, make a referral to an outside service selected by the parent/guardian.
7. Follow up with the referring staff member by providing information the staff member needs to know to perform his or her duties as they relate to the student.

The referral coordinator will not make recommendations as to which services parents/guardians or the student should use or promise or imply that the district will assume financial responsibility for such services.

Students Identified as Having Suicidal Intent

If a staff member identifies a student with suicidal intent, the staff member will notify the referral coordinator and the building administrator and will stay with the student until the referral coordinator

arrives. The following actions should be completed by the referral coordinator, the building administrator or another staff member in the absence of the referral coordinator or building administrator:

1. Do not allow the student to leave school. Call the police if the student attempts to leave.
2. Notify the parents/guardians.
3. Ask the student to turn over any suicide implements, such as pills or weapons, if such a request can be made safely.
4. Make a police report if the student has weapons or drugs.
5. Take the student to a designated safe area.

Confidentiality

It is necessary for counselors to build trusting relationships with students and district staff; however, counselors are not permitted to promise students complete confidentiality. Counselors may at times be required to disclose information to parents/guardians, to report child abuse or neglect, to convey to district staff information necessary to better serve a student, or to report to supervisors as appropriate.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to review policies and/or forms for related information in this administrative area.

Implemented: 04/12/2011

MSIP Refs: 6.9

Cole County R-I School District, Russellville, Missouri