

HCPS Suicide Prevention Guidelines: For School-Based Mental Health Teams



Student Support
& Wellness



Policy Updates:

Section [22.1-79.4.](#) and [§ 22.1-272.1.](#) require threat assessment teams and suicide risk assessment teams to provide parents or guardians with materials that help them recognize and respond to behaviors suggesting a student may pose a risk to self or others. It mandates that this information be shared either immediately upon initial parental notification or as soon as practicable following notification. Additionally, this bill requires that parents be informed of the legal requirements regarding children's access to firearms under [§ 18.2-56.2.](#)

More information:

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/student-service/s/prevention-strategies-programs/suicide-prevention-resources>



DISCLAIMER

This training is not to replace every school mental health provider reviewing the Suicide Prevention Guidelines in complete detail so that they are familiar with the entire process.





<https://tinyurl.com/CSSRS-FAQs>



Legal Team



Highlights:

Not a new process!

- Steps/processes are clearly outlined
- Quick-reference flow chart
- Next Steps for Parents/Guardians, based on risk level
- Language aligns with new VDOE policy updates
- Strengthened community partnerships

Who Should Provide the Screening:

- A member of the school based mental health team
 - school counselor
 - school social worker
 - school psychologist
- Ideally, 2 SBMH team members should be present. The school nurse can serve as the 2nd team member if needed.

Administrators should NOT be present during the screening

Flowchart

School Personnel Becomes Aware of a Student's Suicidal Intent, Ideation, Gestures, Thoughts or Feelings
Continuously Supervise Student

Conduct Suicide Risk Screening & Determine a Level of Risk/Response

Assure Student Safety and Make Parent/Guardian Contact

Create a Safety Plan/Follow-Up/Back-to-School Transition

Ensure all Documentation Has Been Completed



School Personnel Becomes Aware of a Student's Suicidal Intent, Ideation, Gestures, Thoughts or Feelings

★ Continuously Supervise Student ★

- School personnel, while supervising the student, should make a school mental health provider aware of this situation immediately through face-to-face contact
 - Refrain from emails, texts, notes, voice mails, etc.
- If school personnel believe a student to be in **immediate imminent** danger, they may contact emergency services/911
- If threat to self **and** others, the mental health provider should collaborate with the administrator
- Do not dismiss a student until a suicide risk screener has been conducted
 - Keep your administrator aware of the situation

If a school mental health provider is made aware that the student expressed suicidal intent, ideation, gestures, thoughts of feelings and the student has left the school grounds:

Step 1

Notify the parent/guardian.

Step 2

Notify the administrator or administrative designee. If not available OR after consultation it is deemed that student safety cannot be ensured.

Step 3

Notify the SRO and/or police to complete a safety visit/wellness check to the home and document the decision process.

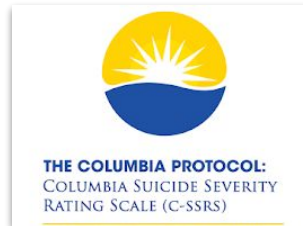
Step 4

Call 911 and document the decision process

Conduct Suicide Risk Screening & Determine a Level of Risk/Response

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) with Triage Points for Schools

- Bring the screening tool into the conversation as naturally as possible.
- Have printouts of the C-SSRS available so that you can ask questions as they are written.
- Make any notes for yourself on a separate sheet of paper.



ENDORSED, RECOMMENDED, OR ADOPTED BY:



Always ask questions 1 and 2.		Past Month
1) Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?		
2) Have you actually had any thoughts about killing yourself?		
If YES to 2, ask questions 3, 4, 5 and 6. If NO to 2, skip to question 6.		
3) Have you been thinking about how you might do this?		
4) Have you had these thoughts and had some intention of acting on them?		High Risk
5) Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?		High Risk
Always Ask Question 6		Life-time
6) Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life?		High Risk
<i>Examples: Took pills, tried to shoot yourself, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, or collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, took out pills but didn't swallow any, held a gun but changed your mind or it was grabbed from your hand, went to the roof but didn't jump, etc.</i> If yes, was this within the past 3 months?		

Assure Student Safety and Make Parent/Guardian Contact

★Continuously Supervise Student★

Contact the parent/guardian as soon as practicable following completion of the suicide risk screening

Important consideration: Does an interpreter or the language line need to be utilized?

Next Steps:

- Share your name and position in the school
- Provide assurance that the student is currently safe and being continuously supervised
- Provide an explanation for why a suicide risk screening was conducted
- Review the results of the screener
- Make a recommendation based on screening results
- Offer to support parent/guardian in connecting with a mental health provider



High Risk

- Student safety precautions & request for parent/guardian to come to the school to pick up the student and pursue a suicide risk assessment through one of the options below:



1. **Children's Response & Stabilization Team (CRest)**
2. **Crisis Receiving Center at St. Joseph's Villa.**
3. Henrico Area Mental Health & Developmental Services (HAMHDS)
4. Existing community health provider and/or a new community provider of their choice
5. Local emergency room



Next Steps for Parents/Guardians:

Student safety is our priority. As a result of the completion of a suicide risk screening by a school mental health provider, you were asked to come to school and accept responsibility for your student's safety. The next steps outlined below have been provided to help support you and your child.

- ☐ Obtain a **suicide risk assessment** for your student by contacting one of the options below and inform them that you have been advised by a school mental health professional to seek a **suicide risk assessment** for your child.
 - **Children's Response & Stabilization Team (CRest)**: This mobile resource is for youth, ages 5-18, who are experiencing a crisis: 1-833-868-1800
 - **Henrico Area Mental Health and Developmental Services (HAMHDS)** at 804-727-8515 (same day access) or 804-727-8484 (emergency services)
 - Your student's **existing community mental health provider** if they are already receiving mental health services, or a new **community mental health provider** if they are not. A list of community providers have been **attached to this document**.
 - Transport your student to a local **emergency room**
- ☐ Continue to monitor your student for warning signs of suicide:
 - Talking/writing about or making plans for ending their life/suicide;
 - Expressing hopelessness about the future;
 - Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress;
 - Attempting to acquire lethal means (i.e., gun, pills, rope); and
 - Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, which could include:
 - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situations;
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context; and
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability.
- ☐ Restrict access to lethal means (i.e., guns, pills, ropes, knives, harmful substances, etc.)
- ☐ Contact your student's **Primary Care Provider** to provide an update and seek any additional recommendations for support.
- ☐ Family and community support is a protective/resilience factor for those with thoughts of suicide. Here are some ways to approach a conversation with your student about suicide:
 - Let them know you care. Express your concern about what you are observing in their behavior.
 - Listen to their story. Talk privately. Be attentive and non-judgmental.
 - Reflect what they share and let them know they have been heard. Avoid debating the value of life, minimizing their problems or giving advice.
 - Tell them they are not alone. Let them know there are supports and treatments available that can help.
 - Ask directly if they are having thoughts of suicide.
 - If you are or they are concerned, guide them to additional professional help.
- ☐ When your child is ready to return to school, please see the Return-to-Learn procedures on the back of this document. We want to ensure your child has a smooth transition back to school.

Next Steps for Parents/Guardians



A community resource that can provide a quick response to youth who are in crisis.

They provide:

- De-escalation and Crisis Resolution
- Warm hand-off and quick linkages
- Support provided until crisis is resolved
- Crisis Counseling, Peer Support, Individual/Family Therapy

Moderate Risk

- Student safety precautions and request for parent/guardian to come to the school to pick up the student and pursue a suicide risk assessment (*Moderate Risk- request to pick up*)
- OR**
- Student safety precautions and request for parent/guardian to pursue mental health services with a community mental health provider by contacting one of the options below (*Moderate Risk- other*):
 - Existing community mental health provider
 - ★ **Henrico Area Mental Health & Developmental Services (HAMHDS)**
 - New community mental health provider
 - Primary Care Provider

HCPS Student Support and Wellness

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 - Your student's existing community mental health provider if they are already receiving mental health services, or a new community mental health provider if they are not. A list of community providers have been attached to this document.
 - Transport your student to a local emergency room
- ☐ Continue to monitor your student for warning signs of:
 - Talking/writing about or making plans for ending their life
 - Expressing hopelessness about the future
 - Displaying severe/unwarranting emotional pain or distress
 - Attempting to acquire lethal means (i.e., guns, pills, knives)
 - Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes
 - Withdrawn from or changing in school work
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased)
 - Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context and
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Pick up

Other

Next Steps for Parents/Guardians

Henrico Area Mental Health and Developmental Services (HAMHDS)



New this year!

Mental Health Liaison:

Kathleen Dalane

Ph: 804-727-8349

dal013@henrico.gov

Same Day Access

Walk-in process for accessing outpatient therapy and case management services. *Not appropriate if they already have an outpatient provider in the community*

Monday - Wednesday 7:30am-3:00pm

Thursday 7:30am-5:30pm

Friday 7:30am-11:00am

Woodman Road and East Center locations

Emergency Services

Provides pre-screening for individuals seeking inpatient hospitalization.

Lower Risk

- Student safety precautions and parent/guardian discussion about next steps to assist them in pursuing mental health services with a community mental health provider by contacting one of the options below:

1. Student's existing community mental health provider
2. HAMHDS
3. New community mental health provider
4. Primary Care Provider



Student Support and Wellness

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Next Steps for Parents/Guardians

Important Considerations:

Child Protective Services

- Per Virginia Code § 22.1-272.1: If the student has indicated that the reason for being at imminent risk of suicide relates to parental abuse or neglect, this contact shall not be made with the parent. Instead, the school mental health professional should immediately notify the administrator or his/her designee consistent with HCPS School Board Policy P6-09-016. The school mental health provider, principal or his/her designee shall:
 - Make a report of the suspected child abuse and/or neglect related to suicidal intent, ideation, gesture, thoughts or feelings to Child Protective Services (CPS) immediately as required by Virginia Code § 63.2-1509 (804-501-5437).
- If the school mental health recommendation is for a **suicide risk assessment** by a community-based licensed mental health professional or primary care provider (based on the results of the suicide screening) and the parent indicates that they have no intention of seeking services of any type, the school mental health provider must determine whether a report to CPS for suspected abuse or neglect (ie. medical neglect) is appropriate/necessary.





Create a Safety Plan/Follow-Up/
Back-to-School Transition

Create a Safety Plan/Follow-Up/Back-to-School Transition

- School mental health provider should create a Safety Plan with the student/family
 - Created when it is determined the student is not longer in crisis, OR
 - When the student returns to the school setting
 - Copies provided to all staff that support the student
- A follow-up (by same provider) should be made with the parent/guardian
 - Ascertain student's status
 - Facilitate an exchange of information
 - Identify additional needs
- Ensure all required documentation related to the suicide risk screening process is completed
 - Checklist has been created
- When the student returns from an extended absence, please have your administrator follow the Transition Facilitation Guidelines/Procedures



Documentation Checklist

- ✓ Suicide Risk Screening: Parent/Guardian Notification Form
- ✓ Release/Exchange of Confidential Information Form
- ✓ Columbia Suicide Screening Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
- ✓ Safety Plan
- ✓ HCPS Suicide Risk Screening Documentation Google form (within 24 hours)
- ✓ Part 1, Section A: Safety Screening Form of the Threat Assessment document (discuss with administrators for them to complete)



Copies Provided to Parent/Guardian

- ✓ Suicide Risk Screening: Parent/Guardian Notification Form
- ✓ Release/Exchange of Confidential Information Form
- ✓ Columbia Suicide Screening Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
- ✓ Safety Plan
- ✓ Next Steps for Parents/Guardians



Storage and Record Retention

All suicide risk screening-related documentation (with the exception of the Release/Exchange of Confidential Information Form) **should NOT be housed in the student's educational/cumulative record.**

- Maintained **securely** and **confidentially** by the school
- Should **follow** a student (**separate** from the educational/cumulative record) through each educational level as appropriate
 - (i.e. transfer with the student from elementary to middle and middle to high)
- All suicide risk screening-related documentation is required to be **retained** until **7 years** after a student **graduates, completes Board of Education program, transfers, or withdraws**, and then destroyed



Create a Safety Plan/Follow-Up/**Back-to-School Transition**

Transition Facilitation Process

Students transitioning from a number of life events benefit from a scaffolded approach for (re)integration into the learning environment.

Transition Guidelines

Include students who are entering/returning from:

- Psychiatric hospitalization
- Extended Illness (e.g., requiring hospitalization or from long term absence)
- Homebound or home-based services related to mental/behavioral health needs (could be combined with IEP or 504 meeting if appropriate)
- Residential Placement (could be combined with IEP or 504 meeting if appropriate)
- Other as determined by the re-entry committee

Similar Process, Different Plan:

- Juvenile Detention Center
- Long-term suspension (returning to the same school requires one or more team members (e.g., school counselor))

Return-to-Learn Plan/Documentation

Return to Learn Plan

Students transitioning into school may need support as they enter from a multitude of situations and reintegrate into the learning environment. This tool is intended to help guide teams in planning and implementing accommodations and supports a student may need for effective transition. The Return-to-Learn Plan shall be maintained in the student's cumulative file.

[*Complete this Google Form following the meeting for district tracking.](#)

Administrator/Transition Facilitator:	School Counselor:
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Student Demographics	
Student Name:	Grade Level:
School:	Meeting Date:
Last School Attended:	Meeting is being combined with:
The student has: ☐ IEP ☐ 504 ☐ Health Plan	☐ IEP Review ☐ 504 Review ☐ BID ☐ Other _____ ☐ Disciplinary Review

Student Transition Information	
Parent/Guardian Contact	The student is (re)entering as

Reminders:

1. Read the Suicide Prevention Protocols **in its entirety** so you are familiar with the process from start to finish, along with all required documentation and resources.
2. Provide an **all-staff Suicide Awareness and Prevention** training. All resources have been prepared for you!
 - a. Asynchronous training has been developed: PSPL #51697 (this should be used for staff that were unable to attend your live training)
3. **Middle** and **High** School teams-- please complete the Signs of Suicide lesson tracking form, which is located in the SOS Resource Guide.
 - b. Lessons must be **complete by 12/16/26**.



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Thank you!!



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