

# School District 50: Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlotte

**Policy Subject:** SUICIDE INTERVENTION

**Date Passed:** March 2009

**Date Amended:** NA

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Policy No. 4660

Date Approved: March, 2009

Date Amended:

## POLICY

The Board recognizes that school personnel will, from time to time, become aware or receive reports of pupils contemplating or attempting suicide. The Board, in placing the primary focus on the safety and care of students, endorses appropriate supportive procedures for dealing with potentially suicidal pupils.

The Board recognizes that school personnel cannot provide the intensive therapeutic follow-up required by suicidal students and their families.

## PROCEDURE

Principal informed of possible student in crisis:

Principal consults School Counsellor where available

Counsellor or Principal completes an initial risk assessment and follows the suicide interventions guidelines below.

General Guidelines for determining severity of risk

Low to Moderate:

- Jokes about suicide or death
- Drug/alcohol use, or increasing use of
- Giving away possessions
- Risk taking behaviours
- Drop in school attendance, grades
- Change in relationships
- Severe mood swings
- Preoccupation with death (ie art or literature)
- Change in personal care, weight, energy or appearance
- Withdrawal

High:

- Articulated plan: Is thinking of killing self, has planned out the weapon/means, location, and/or time
- Access to lethal means, i.e. pills, guns, etc.
- Close friend or relative has “modelled” suicide

The risk severity is linked to having a plan, the means to do it, and a short time frame in which the plan will occur.

? Notes: If there has been an attempted suicide resulting in a medical emergency, arrange for transport directly to the hospital. Call the local hospital emergency room and provide all of the pertinent background information.

? Students should not be left alone if an imminent threat of suicide is assessed.

\*\* Contact a parent or guardian to inform him/her of the potential seriousness of the situation and that immediate intervention is required. If the parents cannot be reached, the student can be referred to an outside mental health agency without parental permission provided that they are informed at the earliest possible opportunity. If the parent(s) refuses to allow a referral and there is concern about the student’s safety, the Ministry of Children and Family Development should be involved and the student’s safety ensured.

If contact is not made with the parent/guardian prior to referral for assessment or

hospitalization of the student, another staff member should continue trying to reach the parent/guardian. Recommend to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that they contact the hospital as soon as possible.

Consultation with other counsellors and/or other agency personnel may occur at any or several stages. It is also important to note that while the steps can usually be followed sequentially, the situation will determine what actions need to be taken first.

#### Confidentiality:

In the event of a suicidal attempt, the best interests and safety of the child are of paramount concern. Therefore, the normal adherence to confidentiality with respect to notification and reporting shall not apply to suicidal students. (Section 33 of Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act)

#### Contact Numbers:

Ministry of Children and Family Development

Masset 626-5481 Port Clements 557-4478

Sandspit 637-5403 Village of Queen Charlotte 559-4403

Haida Family Services 559-8400

#### General Hospital

Masset 626-4702 Village of Queen Charlotte 559-4302

Help Line for Children 310-1234

Mental Health 559-8765

Ambulance 1-800-461-9911

#### RCMP

Masset and Port Clements 626-3991 Queen Charlotte, Sandspit, and Skidegate 559-4421