

POLICY 5141.5: MENTAL HEALTH**Adopted:** _____

The Governing Board recognizes that students' emotional well-being and mental health are critical to their ability to perform to their full academic and personal potential. The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies and services to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness, facilitate access to mental health services, and help students build resiliency skills, including digital resilience, increase social connections, and cope with life challenges.

The Superintendent or designee shall consult and collaborate with school-employed mental health professionals, the county mental health department, psychologists and other health professionals, social workers, and/or community organizations to strengthen local mental health services and develop and implement an integrated plan to support student mental health.

To the extent possible, the district shall focus on preventive strategies which increase students' connectedness to school, create a support network of peers and trusted adults, and provide techniques for conflict resolution. The district shall investigate and resolve any complaint of bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination in accordance with law and district policy.

The district shall provide instruction to students that promotes their healthy mental, emotional, and social development. Health education courses shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework and shall include, but not be limited to, instruction related to identifying signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, developing coping skills, and identifying resources that may provide assistance.

Information and Training

The Superintendent or designee shall provide school staff with information and training to recognize the early signs and symptoms of an emerging mental health condition or behavioral health disorder, including common psychiatric conditions and substance use disorders such as opioid and alcohol abuse, identify risk factors and warning signs of suicidal intent, respond to students who have been impacted by traumatic stress, safely deescalate crisis situations involving students with a behavioral health disorder, and link students with effective services, referrals, and supports. Such training shall also provide instruction on how to maintain student privacy and confidentiality. Behavioral health information and training may also be provided to parents/guardians, students, and families. (Education Code 49428.15)

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a protocol for identifying and assessing students who may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, depression, eating disorder, or other severe or disabling mental illness. The Superintendent or designee may establish districtwide or school-site crisis intervention team(s) to respond to mental health concerns in the school setting.

At least twice per school year, the Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each school provides notice regarding how to initiate access to student mental health services on campus and/or in the community. The notification shall be in at least two of the following methods: (Education Code 49428)

- 1. Distributing the information, electronically or in hardcopy, in a letter to parents/guardians, and in a school publication or other document to students*

2. *Including the information, at the beginning of the school year, in the parent handbook for parents/guardians and in student orientation materials or a student handbook*
3. *Posting the information on the school's website or social media*

Parents/guardians and students shall each receive two notices on how to initiate access to student mental health services, which may be delivered by different methods. (Education Code 494280)

Each school site that serves students in any of grades 6-12 shall create an age appropriate and culturally relevant poster that identifies approaches and shares resources about student mental health, and that includes the following information: (Education Code 49428.5)

1. *Identification of common behaviors of those struggling with mental health or who are in a mental health crisis, including, but not limited to, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, emotional dysregulation, bipolar episodes, and schizophrenic episodes*
2. *A list of, and contact information for, school site-specific resources, including, but not limited to, counselors, wellness centers, and peer counselors*
3. *A list of, and contact information for, community resources, including, but not limited to, suicide prevention, substance abuse, child crisis, nonpolice mental health hotlines, public behavioral health services, and community mental health centers*
4. *A list of positive coping strategies to use when dealing with mental health, including, but not limited to, meditation, mindfulness, yoga, breathing exercises, grounding skills, journaling, acceptance, and seeking therapy*
5. *A list of negative coping strategies to avoid, including, but not limited to, substance abuse or self-medication, violence and abuse, self-harm, compulsivity, dissociation, catastrophizing, and isolating*

The poster shall be displayed in English and any primary language spoken by 15 percent or more of the students at the school site and be no smaller than 8.5 by 11 inches and at least 12-point font. The poster shall be prominently and conspicuously displayed in public areas that are accessible to, and commonly frequented by, students at each school site such as bathrooms, locker rooms, classrooms, classroom hallways, gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, wellness centers, and offices. Additionally, at the beginning of each school year the poster shall be distributed online to students through social media, websites, portals, and learning platforms. (Education Code 49428.5)

Mental Health Counseling and Referrals

A school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker may provide mental health counseling to students in accordance with the specialization(s) authorized on the individual's credential. As needed, students and their parents/guardians may be provided referrals to mental health services in the community and/or to mental health services at or near district schools.

Mental health and behavioral health services for students on campus may be provided by way of telehealth technology. (Education Code 49429)

If a student has an emotional or mental illness that limits a major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment, or may need special education and related services, the student shall be

referred for an evaluation for purposes of determining whether any educational or related services are required in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as applicable. (Education Code 56301-56302; 29 USC 794; 28 CFR 35.108)

Funding Resources

The Superintendent or designee shall explore potential funding sources for district programs and services that support student's mental health. In accordance with local plans and priorities, the district may apply to the county for grants for prevention and early intervention activities that are designed to prevent mental illness from becoming severe and disabling and to improve timely access for underserved populations.

Policy Reference Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State

Ed. Code 215-216
Ed. Code 234.6
Ed. Code 32280-32289.5
Ed. Code 49060-49079
Ed. Code 49428.1
Ed. Code 49428.15

Ed. Code 49428.5
Ed. Code 49600
Ed. Code 49602
Ed. Code 49604
Ed. Code 56171

Ed. Code 56300-56385
W&I Code 5698
W&I Code 5840-5840.8
W&I Code 5850-5883

Federal

20 USC 1400-1482
28 CFR 35.101-35.190
29 USC 794
34 CFR 300.1-300.818

Management Resources

California Department of Education Publication
California Department of Education Publication
California Department of Education Publication
CDC and Prevention Publication
Nat. Child Traumatic Stress Network Publication
US Department of Education Publication
US Department of Health and Human Services

Description

Student suicide prevention
Bullying and harassment prevention information
School safety plans
Student records
Student mental health referral protocols
Identification of evidence-based and evidence-informed training programs for schools to address youth behavioral health
Student mental health poster
Responsibilities of school counselors
Counseling and confidentiality of student information
Suicide prevention training for school counselors
Duty to identify and assess children in private schools who need special education services
Identification and referral; assessment, instructional planning
Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
Prevention and early intervention programs
Mental Health Services Act

Description

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
Americans with Disabilities Act
Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Section 504
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Description

Youth Behavioral Health Training Programs
Health Education Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, May 2019
Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008
School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009
Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, 2008
Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program, Frequently Asked Questions, April 2023
Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, 2023

US Dept of Health and Human Services Publication

Website
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Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Health Effects of Social Connection and the Community, 2023
CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
National Child Traumatic Stress Network
National Council for Behavioral Health, Mental Health First Aid
Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Suicide Prevention Resource Center
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
American Association of Suicidology
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Psychological Association
California Department of Health Care Services, Mental Health Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health
National Association of School Psychologists
National Institute for Mental Health
California Department of Education, Mental Health
American School Counselor Association
Office of the Surgeon General

Cross References

Code

1113
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3515.3
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3515.31
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5131.2
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6164.5
6173.4

Description

District and School Websites
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District Police/Security Department
District Police/Security Department
School Resource Officers
Staff Development
Bullying
Bullying
Infectious Diseases
Infectious Diseases
Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting
Child Abuse Prevention and Reporting
Suicide Prevention
Suicide Prevention
School Health Services
School Health Services
Comprehensive Health Education
Comprehensive Health Education
Guidance/Counseling Services
Student Success Teams
Student Success Teams
Education for American Indian Students