

SUICIDE AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Committee recognizes that depression and self-destruction are problems of increasing severity among children and adolescents. A pupil suffering from depression cannot benefit fully from the educational program and may pose a threat to him-herself or others. All school personnel should be alert to the pupil who exhibits signs of unusual depression or who threatens or attempts suicide.

With the intent of contributing to the prevention of suicide among its pupils where possible, the Committee directs that an Adolescent Suicide Awareness Program be initiated, including:

- a) In-service education to increase the awareness of all building staff about the seriousness of the problem and possible suicide “warning signs”;
- b) Establishment of referral/response procedures in each school to facilitate assisting pupils identified as possible suicidal;
- c) Infusion into the curriculum (K-12) of appropriate understandings and information to help students deal appropriately with feelings, to recognize possible suicide “warning signs” in themselves and others, and to increase awareness of alternatives and resources available for assistance;
- d) Parent awareness to increase understandings of parents about the problem and the resources available; and
- e) Procedures in each school for dealing appropriately with tragedies to ease the impact on pupils, staff and community in the event of a student suicide.

School system personnel cannot be expected to treat the suicidal adolescent. Rather, they need to recognize that they are in a position to aide in the identification of those young people who may be suicidally prone, and to intervene in order to link these young people and their families to treatment programs in the community. In addition, school personnel need to be better prepared to sensitively relate to suicidal young people following a suicide attempt and to deal with the intense emotions/reactions of the school community following an actual suicide.

Cross Reference: EBCA - Crisis Response Plan

Adopted: July 5, 1994

KITTERY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT