



COCALICO

SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Guidelines
for
SUICIDE AWARENESS,
PREVENTION & RESPONSE**

Parent/Guardian Packet

This document was adapted from guidelines established by the State College Area School District (SCASD).

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INTRODUCTION

Cocalico School District has used information from their suicide awareness, prevention, and response policy to create a list of suicide risk factors and warning signs that parents and all school employees should consider when working with children, teens, and young adults. In addition, the district has developed procedures and protocols for all employees to utilize when addressing a suicide threat or the imminent risk of suicide. Training for the implementation of these protocols has also been developed.

The district's work was an outcome of Act 71, which was signed into Pennsylvania law on June 26, 2014. This law, which added section 1526 of the School Code, 24 PS § 15-1526, specifically requires school entities to: (1) adopt a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy; and (2) provide ongoing professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention for professional educators in building serving students in grades 6-12. Additionally, section 1526 specifically permits school entities to incorporate curriculum on this topic into their instructional programs pursuant to their youth suicide awareness and prevention policies.

Detailed information about the law and related resources can be found at the following link:
<http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Safe%20Schools/Pages/Act-71.aspx#1526>.

SUICIDE RISK FACTORS AND WARNING SIGNS

Risk factors refer to personal or environmental characteristics that are associated with suicide including, but not limited to:

- Behavioral Health Issues/Disorders
 - Depression
 - Substance abuse or dependence
 - Previous suicide attempts
 - Self injury
- Personal Characteristics
 - Hopelessness/Low self-esteem
 - Loneliness/Social alienation/isolation/lack of belonging
 - Poor problem-solving or coping skills
 - Impulsivity/Risk-taking/recklessness
- Adverse/Stressful Life Circumstances
 - Interpersonal difficulties or losses (divorce, loss of loved one, breakup)
 - Disciplinary or legal problems
 - Bullying (victim or perpetrator)
 - School or work issues
 - Physical, sexual, or psychological abuse
 - Gender identity issues
 - Exposure to peer suicide
- Family Characteristics
 - Family history of suicide or suicidal behavior
 - Family mental health problems
 - Divorce/Death of parent/guardian
 - Parental-Child relationship

Warning signs are indications that someone may be in danger of suicide, either immediately or in the near future. Warning signs include, but are not limited to:

- Expressions such as hopelessness, rage, anger, seeking revenge, feeling trapped, anxiety, agitation, no reason to live or sense of purpose
- Recklessness or risky behavior
- Giving away of valued possessions
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or society
- Dramatic mood changes

EMERGENCY CONTACTS – PHONE NUMBERS

EMS/Police	911
Lancaster County Children and Youth Services	717-299-7925
Lancaster County Crisis Intervention	717-394-2631
WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital	717-733-0311
Reading Hospital	484-628-8000
Child Line	800-932-0313

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

Please note: The resources listed here are free of charge. There are many more excellent resources for minimal cost.

General Information (many with webinar sessions)

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

<http://www.afsp.org/>

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has been at the forefront of a wide range of suicide prevention initiatives – each designed to reduce loss of life from suicide. They are investing in groundbreaking research, new educational campaigns, innovative demonstration projects and critical policy work. And they are expanding their assistance to people, whose lives have been affected by suicide, reaching out to offer support and offering opportunities to become involved in prevention.

American Association of Suicidology

<http://www.suicidology.org/home>

AAS is a membership organization for all those involved in suicide prevention and intervention, or touched by suicide. AAS is a leader in the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.

PA Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative

<http://www.payspi.org/>

Mission - The Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative is a multi-system collaboration to reduce youth suicide.

Vision - Youth suicide prevention will be embraced and incorporated into the fabric of every community in Pennsylvania to address the social and emotional needs of youth at risk and survivors of suicide.

Services for Teens At Risk (STAR Center)

<http://www.starcenter.pitt.edu/>

Services for Teens At Risk (STAR-Center) is a comprehensive research, treatment, and training center. Funded by the State of Pennsylvania's General Assembly in 1986 to address adolescent suicide and depression, the program provides individual assessment and treatment to teens that are experiencing depression and suicidality. They also provide community education services about depression and suicidality to schools, social service agencies, churches and other organizations that request them.

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

<http://www.sprc.org/>

SPRC is the nation's only federally supported resource center devoted to advancing the *National Strategy for Suicide Prevention*. They provide technical assistance, training, and materials to increase the knowledge and expertise of suicide prevention practitioners and other professionals serving people at risk for suicide. They also promote collaboration among a variety of organizations that play a role in developing the field of suicide prevention.