

SUICIDE PREVENTION REFERRAL PROCESS



BALDWIN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The following steps outline the suicide prevention referral process for the Baldwin County Public School System:

1. Once the student has expressed suicidal ideation or behavior, the **school counselor** or **school social worker** will be notified immediately. (If neither the school counselor nor the school social worker is available, an **administrator** will be notified immediately.)

NOTE: It is not permissible for the school counselor, the school social worker, or the administrator to be notified of a student's suicidal ideation or behavior via e-mail or text. This information must be shared in person.

2. The school counselor or school social worker will talk/conference with the student who is at suicide risk.
3. The school counselor or school social worker will have the student to complete a **safety plan**, which is a pre-determined list of potential coping strategies, as well as a list of individuals or agencies that students may contact in order to help them lower their imminent risk of suicidal behavior. (If the student has an iPhone, encourage him/her to also download the Safety Net app, which is an electronic version of the safety plan.)
4. The school counselor or school social worker will make contact with the student's parent/guardian via telephone to inform them that their child is at suicide risk.
 - a. If the school counselor or school social worker is unable to reach the student's parent/guardian via telephone, call the designated emergency contacts that have been provided by the student's parent/guardian.
 - b. If the school counselor or school social worker is unable to reach either the parent/guardian, or the designated emergency contacts, she may contact the school's resource officer, the local police department, or the Sheriff's department to assist in locating the student's parent/guardian.

Note: If the student's parent/guardian is the reason for his suicidal ideation or behavior, and it is, consequently, deemed inappropriate to call the parent/guardian, then the school counselor or the school social worker will need to call one of the other designated emergency contacts that have been provided for the student.

5. The school counselor or school social worker will remain with the student until the parent/guardian arrives. The school counselor or school social worker will meet with the parent/guardian immediately. The purpose of the emergency conference is to discuss the student's suicidal ideation or behavior and to outline a plan to meet the student's immediate psychological and safety needs, including supervision. Topics to be included for discussion during this emergency conference are the following:
 - a. Current status of the student
 - b. Student's exact reference to suicide
 - c. Importance of parental role in providing continuous observation and supervision
 - d. Steps to be taken to supervise the student in order to ensure safety: removing all means of suicide from the student's access, i.e., weapons, pills, knives, belts, shoe strings, etc.
6. A copy of the safety plan will be given to the student's parent/guardian. In addition, a copy of the Suicide Prevention Resources handout will be given to the student's parent/guardian with identified places to seek help both locally and nationally, as well as in other parts of the state.
7. The student's parent/guardian will be encouraged to complete a referral (as well as an Authorization for Release of Information) to Alta Pointe. Upon completion of the referral form, it should be faxed to 928.0216. **(DO NOT FAX OR SEND THE ALTA POINTE REFERRAL FORM TO THE INTERVENTION SUPERVISOR.)** The student's parent/guardian should be directed to contact the Access to Care Department, Care Pointe, at 450.2211 or 1-888-335-3044.
8. In addition to encouraging a referral to Alta Pointe, the parent/guardian will also be advised that it is in the best interest of the student to be evaluated/assessed by a medical doctor or mental health professional before returning to school to ensure that he/she is no longer at risk of harming himself/herself.
9. The student's parent/guardian will be asked to sign the ***Suicide Intervention Parent Acknowledgment of Notification Letter***, which documents the need to seek medical/mental health assistance. The parent/guardian will also be asked to indicate whether they will seek medical/mental health assistance for their child. This form acknowledges that the parent/guardian has been notified of his/her child's suicidal ideation and/or behaviors and the recommendations for treatment options. A copy of this completed form may be given to the student's parent/guardian. A copy of the form will also be kept in a confidential file at school.
10. After talking with the student and his parent/guardian, the school counselor or school social worker will complete the ***Suicide Intervention Referral Form***, which should be forwarded to the Intervention Supervisor via the courier. **(TO ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY, DO NOT FAX THE SUICIDE INTERVENTION REFERRAL FORM.)** The school counselor or school social worker should make a copy for himself/herself, which should be retained for his/her personal files. The principal's signature should also be included on this Suicide Intervention Referral Form before being forwarded to the Intervention Supervisor.
11. The school principal should be notified of the student who is at suicide risk and should also be apprised of all steps taken to ensure the emotional well-being and safety of the student who has expressed suicidal ideation or behavior.

12. When the student returns to school, the school counselor or school social worker will meet and conference with the student in an effort to ensure that the student doesn't have any intentions of harming him/herself.
13. In the event that a student has expressed having suicidal ideations or behaviors multiple times, i.e., **a minimum of three times** during the course of the same school year, the student's parent/guardian will be **required** to seek medical/mental health assistance for the student before he is re-admitted on the school campus.
14. A **mandatory** re-admit conference will be held with the student and his parent/guardian upon the student's return to school. At this time, appropriate clearance documentation, i.e., a discharge form, doctor's note, mental health clearance form, etc. will be collected from the parent/guardian. A copy of this documentation should be attached to the Suicide Intervention Parent Acknowledgment of Notification letter and sent to the attention of the Intervention Supervisor. A copy of all information will also be kept in a confidential file at school.
*****NOTE: This is only done when a student has expressed harming himself at least three or more times during the course of the same school year.**
15. Through contact with the student, teacher(s), and/or observation, the school counselor or school social worker will periodically monitor the student for at least four weeks upon his return to school.
*****NOTE: This is only done when a student has expressed harming himself at least three or more times during the course of the same school year.**
16. Upon a student's **fourth (and any subsequent expressions)** about suicidal ideations or behaviors **during the course of the same school year**, the student's parent/guardian will again be **required** to seek medical/mental health assistance for the student before he is re-admitted on the school campus.
EXCEPTION: For those students who are currently being seen on a regular basis by a mental health therapist, it will be permissible for the student to bring a note back to school after his next regularly scheduled visit with his therapist. If the school counselor or school social worker is in receipt of a signed Authorization for Release of Information form by the student's parent, it is also acceptable for either an e-mail or telephone call to be made to the student's therapist in order to inform the therapist of the student's continued suicidal ideations or behaviors.
17. A **mandatory** re-admit conference will again be held with the student and his parent/guardian upon the student's return to school. At this time, appropriate clearance documentation, i.e., a discharge form, doctor's note, mental health clearance form, etc. will be collected from the parent/guardian. A copy of this documentation should be attached to the Suicide Intervention Parent Acknowledgment of Notification Letter and sent to the attention of the Intervention Supervisor. A copy of all information will also be kept in a confidential file at school.
EXCEPTION: For those students who are currently being seen on a regular basis by a mental health therapist, it will be permissible for this re-admit conference to be held whenever the student brings a note back to school after his next regularly scheduled visit with his therapist.

NOTE: For those students who are receiving special services, we cannot deny them FAPE, which is a free appropriate public education. Specifically, this means that we

cannot deny their attendance at school should their parents fail to take them to see a mental health therapist—even if the student has expressed to harm himself at least three or more times during the course of the same school year.

When coding students' suicide intervention referrals in iNow, please note the following, per the instructions received from the Attendance Department:

- The first three days should be coded as administrative approved.
- Beyond three days, if all nine parent notes have not been exhausted, then code as parent excused.
- Beyond three days, if all nine parent notes have been exhausted, then code as parent unexcused.
- Once the student returns to school and submits his/her physician's excuse, change the coding to physician excused.