

# 414: Youth Protection Policy

## 1. Purpose

St. George Academy recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people and that an even greater number of youth consider and attempt suicide. The possibility of youth suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from both school staff and families. SGA will comply with all state laws regarding parental notification in the event that a student demonstrates suicidal behavior or expresses an intention to complete suicide. The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and well-being of all students by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicidal ideation.

## 2. Definitions

2.1 “Intervention” means an effort to prevent a student from attempting suicide.

2.2 “Parent” means a biological or adoptive parent, a legal guardian or other individual legally authorized to make educational decisions for the child, an individual with whom the child lives who is acting as a parent in the absence of a natural parent or a guardian, a foster parent if the authority of the biological or adoptive parents to make educational decisions on the child’s behalf has been terminated or specifically limited by a court order, or a stepparent if the stepparent is present on a day-to-day basis with the natural parent and child, and the other parent is absent from the home.

2.3 “Postvention” means mental health intervention designed to prevent or contain contagion and promote the healthy recovery of the affected community after the suicide attempt or death of a member of the school community.

2.4 “Risk Assessment” means an evaluation of a student who may be at risk for suicide, conducted by the appropriate school staff (e.g., school psychologist, school counselor, or school social worker).

2.5 “Self-harm” means behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself.

2.6 “Suicide” means death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with an intent to die as a result of the behavior.

2.7 “Suicide Attempt” means a self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to kill themselves. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

2.8 “Suicidal Behavior” means suicide attempts, intentional injury to self, associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a

## [Board Rule R277-620](#)

suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

2.9 "Suicidal Ideation" means thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior which may result in death.

### 3. Prevention Program

3.1 St George Academy will include the following in its social/emotional learning program;

3.1.1 Life affirming education, including the concepts of resiliency, healthy habits, self-care, problem solving, and conflict resolution;

3.1.2 Methods of communicating with family members and other trusted mentors; and

3.1.3 Methods of strengthening a youth's relationships in the school and community.

3.2 St George Academy will select and implement an evidence-based youth suicide prevention program for students that includes the following components:

3.2.1 Prevention of youth suicides;

3.2.2 Youth suicide intervention;

3.2.3 Postvention for family, students, and faculty;

3.2.4 Prevention of underage drinking of alcohol and substance abuse;

3.2.5 Prevention of bullying and cyberbullying; and

3.2.6 Decreasing the risk of suicide among youth who are not accepted by family for any reason, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth, or who have experienced bullying.

3.3 This program will also include provisions to ensure that the school promptly communicates with the parent of a student who is at risk of suicide in accordance with USBE requirements and state law.

3.4 As part of SGA's suicide prevention program, school personnel may ask students questions related to youth suicide prevention, intervention, or postvention.

### 4. Crisis Response and Assessment

4.1 If an SGA employee believes a student is at risk of attempting suicide, physical self-harm, or harming others, the SGA employee may intervene and ask a student questions regarding the student's suicidal thoughts, physically self-harming behavior, or thoughts of harming others for the purposes of referring the student to appropriate prevention services,

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## **Board Rule R277-620**

and for informing the student's parent.

4.2 If an SGA employee becomes aware that a student is experiencing a crisis that may involve risk of harm to self or others, that individual should obtain basic information from the student about the crisis, and immediately share the information with the SGA Administration.

4.2.1 If the information comes from another person such as a peer or a parent, the SGA employee will obtain the student's name and basic information about the crisis, and refer the situation to the SGA Administration before the end of the school day, or at the beginning of the next school day if the information is shared outside of school hours.

4.3 When an SGA employee identifies a student in crisis, the student will be seen by a school administrator or counselor within the same school day, or at the beginning of the next school day if the information is shared outside of school hours.

4.4 The purpose of the meeting is to gather all further information necessary about the crisis in order to assess the risk.

4.5 In situations where a student exhibits any level of risk for suicide, or has threatened to commit suicide, the student's parent will be informed by SGA Administration without delay.

4.6 SGA Administration will contact the student's parent with a personal phone call and with an invitation to come in immediately to meet with school personnel.

4.7 Documentation shall be made of this contact.

4.8 If no parent is available, SGA Administration must determine, based on the extent of the ideation, whether to call the emergency contact, police, Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), 911, or wait until such time as a parent is available.

4.9 If the SGA Administration reports the matter to DCFS, it is the responsibility of DCFS to notify the student's parent.

4.10 If the parent meets with school personnel, such personnel will discuss the crisis situation, identify available resources, and determine whether the student should be checked out of school.

4.11 A plan for supervision should be discussed prior to releasing any student who is being checked out of school in a crisis situation.

4.12 In the event that the student is checked out of school, the parent should communicate with SGA Administration before the student returns to school.

4.13 Upon a student's return to school, SGA Administration shall follow-up with the student in a reasonable amount of time based upon the circumstances.

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## [Board Rule R277-620](#)

### 5. Parent Notification

5.1 SGA will maintain a record that verifies the parents were notified of the threat involving their student. This record must include the date of contact, time of discussion, and information given to parent.

5.2 This record should not be used to notify a parent of the incident.

5.3 Documentation should be kept in a secure location, but not in a student's cumulative file.

5.4 SGA will not disclose this record, including any information obtained to prepare the record, to a person other than the student's parent, the student involved, or the person identified to receive such information in a court order.

### 6. SGA Response to Suicide

6.1 SGA will implement an action plan to guide the response following a death by suicide. The action plan may include:

6.1.1 Verifying the death. If the cause of death has been confirmed as suicide but the parent will not permit the cause of death to be disclosed, the school may not share the cause of death.

6.1.2 Assessing how the death affected the school community, taking into account whether other traumatic events have occurred, and the time of year (during school, summer break, or a school vacation).

6.1.3 Avoiding suicide contagion by identifying and offering support to those students who may be highly impacted.

6.1.4 Identifying support services and making reasonable effort to make them available to students, families, and employees.

6.2 SGA will not create on-campus memorials, funeral services, or fly the flag at half-mast because it may sensationalize the death. School should not be canceled for a funeral. Any school-based memorials must focus on how to prevent future suicides and prevention resources available.

### 7. Employee Training

7.1 Training will be provided for all teachers, school counselors, and other staff who have direct student contact that includes information about prevention of youth suicide, youth suicide intervention and postvention, and identification of their roles in a crisis.

7.2 All licensed educators are required to complete a minimum of two hours of professional development training on youth suicide prevention every three years.

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## **Board Rule R277-620**

7.3 This training shall complement the state mandated training on bullying and cyber-bullying training.

## **8. Resources Available**

8.1 Many crisis services are available for students and their families in the community. Students or families in need are encouraged to contact SGA Administration for a list of available resources.

8.2 Students or families needing immediate assistance may call:

8.2.1 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: The Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis or their friends and loved ones. For assistance, call 1.800.273.8255 (TALK). Information can also be obtained on their website at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

8.2.2 SafeUT: Call a crisis counselor at 1.833.372.3388, or chat online with a crisis counselor at <https://safeut.med.utah.edu/> or through the SafeUT App available on your phone.

8.2.3 The Utah Department of Human Services' Utah Crisis and Suicide Prevention Resources handout is available [here](#).

8.2.4 If there is a threat to loss of life or an emergency situation that requires the immediate assistance of emergency medical services, the police department, or the fire department, call 911.