

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

*(For Board Approval 8/31/22)*

Health Sciences High and Middle College (HSHMC) Board of Directors and its entire educational community is committed to the health, safety and welfare of its students and accepts its mandated responsibility to develop, implement, and make available a comprehensive suicide prevention policy, practices and resources. This includes resources to educate students and parents about available school and community resources to support students experiencing thoughts of suicide. Our intention is to increase help-seeking behavior in students and to ensure students are aware of HSHMC’s mental health programs and staff. It is important that all charter school staff are trained to respond and refer students seeking support for themselves or a peer experiencing suicidal ideation.

Be it resolved that, suicide prevention practices and resources will be posted on the charter school’s website, a component of staff development, reflected in public service announcements throughout the school, taught in all health classes, and delineated in the student handbook.

The entire charter school community will be aware of the following steps that will be used to adopt this policy.

1. Annual training will be provided to all staff on best suicide prevention practices and school resources and procedures. Staff will learn about recognizing warning signs and responding accordingly. Additionally, training will include information related to:
   1. The higher risk of suicide among certain groups of students
   2. Individual risk factors
   3. Protective factors that may help to decrease a student's suicide risk
   4. Instructional strategies for teaching the suicide prevention curriculum, promoting mental and emotional health, reducing the stigma associated with mental illness, and using safe and effective messaging about suicide.
2. Students will be encouraged to approach any member of the school staff to seek help for themselves and friends. Staff in turn are responsible for immediately contacting either of the charter school principals who jointly serve as the point of contact for students in crisis and to refer students to appropriate resources.
3. Students will learn about recognizing and responding to warning signs of suicide in friends, using coping skills, using support systems, and seeking help for themselves and friends. This will occur in all health classes.
4. When a student is identified as being at risk, they will be assessed by a charter school employed mental health professional who will work with the student and help connect them to appropriate local resources.
5. Students will have access to national resources which they can contact for additional support, such as:
   1. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1.800.273.8255 (TALK), [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)
   2. The Trevor Lifeline – 1.866.488.73.86, [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org/)
6. All staff and students will be expected to help create a school culture of respect and support in which students feel comfortable seeking help for themselves or friends. Students are encouraged to tell any staff member if they, or a friend, are feeling suicidal or in need of help.
7. Students should also know that because of the life or death nature of these matters, confidentiality or privacy concerns are secondary to seeking help for students in crisis.

As a generic resource, HSHMC’s Board of Directors also accepts the recommendation of our Desert Mountain SELPA to adopt and post the Trevor Project for Proactive Schools and Suicide Prevention which satisfies the requirements for Assembly Bill 2246. https://[www.hshmc.org/documents/Suicide-Prevention-Policy-AB%202246-2017-2018.pdf](http://www.hshmc.org/documents/Suicide-Prevention-Policy-AB%202246-2017-2018.pdf)

In addition to the Trevor Project, the Desert Mountain SELPA and the Desert Mountain Children’s Center (DMCC) will continue to offer the Youth Mental Health First Aid to HSHMC. In addition, the following resources are also support by the DMCC:

* Proactive Schools: Key components to developing a comprehensive suicide prevention policy.
  + Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention: <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/modelschoolpolicy>
  + Model School District Policy (Webinar): on same link above.
* Suicide Prevention: Risk factors, protective factors, intervention and referrals.
  + The Lifeguard Workshop: <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/lifeguard>
* Additional Trainings are available regarding student mental health through DMCC:
  + Youth Mental Health First Aid
    - Program Manager – 760.955.3607, [www.cahelp.org](http://www.cahelp.org/)