

REGULATION ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: ~~Policy~~-GAD

Responsible Office: ~~DEPARTMENT-DIVISION~~ OF STUDENT ~~SUPPORT~~ SERVICES

CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATION: REPORTING OF AT-RISK STUDENT BEHAVIOR

A. PURPOSE

To establish ~~guidance~~procedures regarding ~~the reporting by at-risk students during confidential communications of at-risk~~ behaviors, including suicidal ~~thoughts~~threats and/or gestures, self-injurious behaviors, runaway, threats and/or ~~actions~~related actions, requests for drug and alcohol counseling, requests for mental health support, and ~~student~~ requests for pregnancy support ~~regarding pregnancy~~.

B. BACKGROUND

The Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) administration ~~shall take~~recognizes the importance of taking the appropriate measures to protect students from harm. This regulation establishes procedures and the responsibility of staff regarding this charge.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. **Suicidal ~~thoughts~~threats and/or gestures** ~~– are any~~ statements, including ~~(oral, written, and or through~~ electronic communications), or behaviors that imply possible suicide or self-harm.
2. **Self-injurious behaviors** ~~– are~~ behaviors by a student to himself/herselfthe student that deliberately cause physical harm to the extent of causing tissue damage, ~~(e.g., including but not limited to,~~ breaking the skin, bruising, and leaving lasting marks.
3. **Runaway** ~~– is~~ a ~~youth~~student who is absent from his/herthe student's home or place of legal residence at least overnight without the permission of his or herthe student's parent(s) ~~/or legal~~guardian(s).
4. **Threats and/or actions** ~~– are~~ an expression of intent to harm someone, including that may be spoken oral, written, electronic, or gestured. Threats may be direct (“I’m going to beat you up”) or indirect (“I’m going to get him”). ~~The threat can be presented orally, visually, in writing or electronically.~~

- a. ~~A Transient threat is~~ a threat that does not express a lasting intent to harm someone. A threat is transient only if it can be quickly and easily resolved and then no longer exists.
 - b. ~~A Serious substantive threat is~~ a threat that expresses a continuing intent to harm someone.
 - c. ~~A Very serious substantive threat is~~ a threat that involves using a weapon or a threat to kill, rape, or inflict severe injury upon someone.
 - d. ***Threat Determination*** ~~is~~ a procedure to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations and resolve them. The goal of the threat determination is to provide assistance to the student, to support victim(s) or potential victim(s), and to take appropriate preventive or corrective measures to maintain a safe and secure school environment. A threat determination is a separate process from disciplinary action and is not a prerequisite to disciplinary action. Documents, if available at the time of due process disciplinary proceedings, may be used as a part of that process.
5. ***Student request for drug and alcohol counseling*** ~~is~~ a request for counseling and information related to drug or alcohol abuse, including treatment and advice.
- a. ~~Screening with parent consent.~~
 - b. ~~Consultative services for parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and student addressing substance abuse.~~
 - c. ~~Short term counseling to provide student and parent(s)/legal guardian(s) with adequate support to access appropriate resources.~~
 - d. ~~Referrals, when appropriate, for comprehensive assessment and/or treatment.~~
6. ***Student request for mental health support*** ~~is~~ a request for counseling support which may include, but is not limited to, including psycho-educational services designed to prevent/ and support emotional and/or learning ~~problems/difficulties~~ to ensure student success.
7. ***Student request for support regarding pregnancy*** ~~is~~ a request for reproductive health services by a student who reports that ~~she believes~~ she is pregnant or who believes she is pregnant.

8. **Confidential communication** ~~is~~ information revealed during a counseling session or a private conference that the student expresses either verbally or through other communication cues, a desire to maintain confidence in the communication to other persons, ~~e.g.,~~ other students, parents(s)/legal guardians(s), teachers, administrators, peers, ~~and/or~~ law enforcement officers.
9. **Student services team members** ~~are~~ pupil personnel workers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers and Anne Arundel County Department of Health school health professionals.
10. **Volunteers** ~~are~~ persons who, working under staff supervision, contribute service to the school system without remuneration.
11. **Eligible Student** ~~refers to~~ a student who is 18 years of age or older, or a student who is married and, therefore, has the same rights as those granted to the student's parent as defined in Policy JH – Student Records. ~~For eligible students with disabilities, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all rights accorded the parents shall transfer to the child at the age of 18 years if the child has not been judged incompetent under state law and if there is documentation that:~~
 - a. ~~The parents are unavailable or unknown as defined in the Education Article, the child would be eligible for a parent surrogate, and the child requests that the parental rights be transferred to the child;~~
 - b. ~~The parents have not participated in the special education decision-making process for the child after repeated attempts by AACPS to involve the parents over the previous years as described in COMAR;~~
 - c. ~~The parents have affirmatively rejected participation in the special education decision-making process;~~
 - d. ~~The parents cannot participate in the special education decision-making process due to prolonged hospitalization, institutionalization, or serious illness or infirmity of one or both of the parents and the parents have consented to the transfer of rights to the child;~~
 - e. ~~The parents cannot participate in the special education decision-making process due to extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the parents and the parents have consented to the transfer of rights to the child; or~~
 - f. ~~The child is living outside of the parent's home and is not in the care or custody of another public agency as defined by the Education Article.~~

D. PROCEDURES

1. Overview

- a. ~~The AACPS principal~~ shall ~~arrange/~~provide yearly-periodic training for all school staff regarding mandated procedures for handling at-risk student behaviors ~~as specified in~~ accordance with this regulation.
- ~~2.~~b. In accordance with State law, certificated employees who have direct contact with students on a regular basis shall complete training or on or before December 1 each year in the skills required to understand and respond to youth suicide risk and identify professional resources to help students in crisis.
- ~~3.~~c. AACPS~~In general~~ all employees and volunteers shall immediately report to the principal or the principal's designee any discussion with any student that indicates any behavior or threat of behavior that is potentially harmful or dangerous to self, others, or to the community, unless an exception applies under this regulation or the law.
- ~~b.~~d. It is mandatory that ~~p~~Professionals who work with students in counseling relationships shall inform students of the limitations regarding confidential communications, and ~~that they are obligated~~the obligation to disclose certain at-risk student behavior to the principal or the principal's designee.

4.2. Suicidal Thoughts Threats and/or Gestures

- a. ~~Any~~An AACPS employee or volunteer who becomes aware of a student who implies, states, writes about, or ~~discusses (including through electronic communications)~~communicates possible suicide threats or makes suicidal gestures shall immediately report this information to a student services team member and the principal or the principal's designee.
- b. The student ~~shall remain~~must be kept under ~~constant~~continuous adult supervision ~~at all times without exception until the risk assessment has been completed, including accompanying him/her~~the student to the restroom.
- c. The student services team member, ~~principal, or designee~~ shall meet with the student immediately to assess the lethality of the situation.
- d. The ~~staff person~~student services team member assessing the situation shall formally consult with another student services team member, either on site

or by telephone to discuss the case prior to determining appropriate next steps.

- e. The student services team member, principal, or designee shall promptly contact the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s), principal or the principal's designee promptly to inform them of the matter.
- i. If the student services team member is unable to contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or individual designated by the eligible student, the student services team member shall inform the principal or the principal's designee, who will attempt to make contact.
 - ii. If the principal or the principal's designee is unable to make contact with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or individual designated by the eligible student, the School Resource Officer (SRO) or law enforcement shall be notified.
- d.f. If the situation warrants action necessary for the safety of the student, the student services team member shall advise the principal or the principal's designee on the appropriate course of action. This may include: ~~the principal or designee shall request that the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or the person contacted for the eligible student come to the school as soon as possible. In the case of an eligible student, the emergency contact or an individual designated by the student shall be contacted.~~
- i. Contacting the SRO or law enforcement for an immediate assessment and transport to the hospital;
 - ii. Requesting that the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or individual designated by the eligible student complete a mental health evaluation;
 - iii. Meeting with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss safety and supports for the student;
 - iv. Identifying other supports and safety plans, as appropriate;
 - i.v. If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) refuses to accept responsibility for the child or cannot be contacted, the staff member in charge shall call the police at 911 and notify the principal. The principal the principal's designee shall contact law enforcement or call 911 and notify the Regional Assistant Superintendent; or-

- ~~ii.~~ In the case of an eligible student, an emergency contact or individual designated by the eligible student shall be contacted to assist with accessing mental health support. If the emergency contact or individual designated by the eligible student cannot be contacted or refuses to assist the student, ~~then the staff member in Charge~~ the principal or the principal's designee shall ~~call the police contact law enforcement at or~~ 911 and ~~notify the principal.~~ The principal shall notify the Regional Assistant Superintendent.
- ~~e.~~ Contacting the SRO or the police for an immediate assessment transport to the hospital;
- ~~f.~~ Requesting that the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) or individual designated by the eligible student complete a mental health evaluation;
- ~~g.~~ Meeting with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss safety and supports for the student; or
- ~~h.~~ Identifying other supports and safety plans as appropriate.
- ~~g.~~
 - ~~i.~~ In consultation with the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and/or
 - ~~i.~~ an eligible student, the student services team member, principal, or the principal's designee may, if appropriate, suggest evaluation by a mental health professional, discuss with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and/or eligible student which, shall discuss which, if any, teachers they wish to designate to may be given have knowledge information of the incident.
 - ~~ii.~~ The student services team member who has been working with the student shall complete the online report located on the AACPS intranet.
 - ~~h.~~ When appropriate, the student services team member(s) and the
 - ~~j.~~ principal or the principal's designee shall plan for the student's return to school by collaboratively developing a student support plan. The plan may include: , and inform him/her of the process for the student's return to school, which includes the following:
 - ~~i.~~ The student reporting to the school counseling office upon the student's return to school;
 - ~~ii.~~ A student services team member meeting with the student and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss needs for support in school; or

iii. The student services team member contacting the parent(s)/~~legal guardian(s) and/or eligible student~~ regarding follow up mental health services in the community, if appropriate.

i. If the suicide threat or gesture occurs when the student is not in the presence of staff, including social media posts or a class assignment:

i. Staff shall notify the principal or the principal's designee to inform about the situation.

ii. If staff is unable to contact the principal or the principal's designee, or the situation is imminent, including a direct suicide statement made on social media or class assignment, staff shall contact law enforcement or 911.

iii. The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the Office of School Safety.

iv. Upon the student's return to school, the principal or the principal's designee shall notify the appropriate student services team members to initiate a risk assessment, if appropriate, and share relevant information.

j. If the suicide threat or gesture occurs during a school-sponsored field trip, the staff member in charge shall contact the police or 911:

i. The student shall be supervised at all times by staff;

ii. The principal or the principal's designee shall be notified;

iii. If it is during the school day, staff shall consult with student services team members to determine an appropriate course of action; and

iv. The student's parent(s)/ guardian(s) shall be contacted immediately, and a plan shall be developed to ensure the student's safety. The plan may include:

a) Contacting the police for an immediate assessment and transport to the hospital;

b) Requesting that the parent(s)/ guardian(s) or individual designated by the eligible student come to the field trip site as soon as possible to pick up the student and take the student for a mental health evaluation; and

- c) Requesting that the parent(s)/guardian(s) or individual designated by the eligible student meet the student upon return from the field trip.
- ~~k. v.~~ The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the school counselor/appropriate student services team member at the start of the next school day for to follow up to discuss the case.
- ~~g.~~ The student services team member, principal, or designee who has been working with the student shall immediately notify the appropriate Regional Assistant Superintendent for School Performance (Regional Assistant Superintendent) and complete the online report available on the AACPS Intranet, including the names of teachers designated by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and/or eligible student who are to be informed of the incident.
- ~~h.~~ The School Resource Officer (SRO) or the police shall be notified:
- ~~ii.~~ If the situation warrants action (intention or lethality is judged high by the school psychologist) and the student services team member, principal, or designee is unable to contact the parent(s)/legal guardian(s)/emergency contact or individual designated by the eligible student.
- ~~iii.~~ If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) refuses to accept responsibility and/or refuses to assist and it is after the regular school or workday, or
- ~~iv.~~ When school personnel learn of a serious threat after the student has left school property, are unable to contact the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or eligible student, and feel that the student may be in imminent danger of harming himself or herself.
- ~~ik.~~ The following procedures shall be followed if the suicide threat or gesture occurs at an after-hour's school-sponsored event; suicide threats and gestures shall be handled similarly to other medical emergencies by the staff member in charge:
- a) If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) is present, staff shall immediately notify him/her the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and suggest that he/she take the student be taken for an evaluation by a mental health professional. The student should not be allowed to may not continue with the activity until the concern has been addressed. The principal or the principal's designee shall be notified.

- b) If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) is not present, but can be reached by telephone, inform him/her the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the situation and request that he/she immediately the student come and pick the student be picked up. The staff member in charge shall suggest that the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) pursue student be taken for an evaluation by a mental health professional. The principal or the principal's designee shall be notified.
- c) If the parent(s)/ guardian(s) refuses to accept responsibility for the child or cannot be contacted, the staff member in charge shall call law enforcement at 911 and notify the principal or the principal's designee. The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the Regional Assistant Superintendent.
- d) In the case of an eligible student, an emergency contact or individual designated by the eligible student shall be contacted to assist with accessing mental health support. If the emergency contact or individual designated by the eligible student cannot be contacted or refuses to assist the student, the staff member in charge shall call the police at 911 and notify the principal or the principal's designee. The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the Regional Assistant Superintendent.
- e) The principal or the principal's designee shall notify the appropriate student services team member at the start of the next school day for follow-up.
- f) Upon the student's return to school, the principal or the principal's designee shall notify the appropriate student services team members to initiate a risk assessment, if appropriate, and share relevant information.

5.3. Self-Injurious Behaviors

- a. Each school-based student services team shall meet and to discuss the handling of these incidents. the procedures for addressing self-injurious behaviors. A member of the school-based student services team shall be identified as the case manager for the student.
- b.a. Any situation in which a student engages in self-injurious behavior, whether self-reported or reported by another individual, shall is be handled as a suicide threat the first time the behavior occurs, unless the student services team member working with the student is convinced without question that this is an incident of self-injury rather than a suicidal gesture.

~~e.b.~~ ~~If the initial incident is reported as a suicide gesture and, in the judgment of the student services team members~~ If the behavior is repetitive self-injurious behavior and does not appear to reflect suicidal ~~thoughts~~ threats or ~~desires~~ gestures, the protocol for handling those behaviors ~~is as follows~~ shall be:

- i. The student shall be seen by a student services team member to gather information.
- ii. A plan of action ~~shall be~~ developed in consultation with other student services team members and the parent(s)/guardian(s). The plan shall include an agreed upon method of communication between the student services team member and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- ~~v.~~ iii. Permission to speak with outside mental health professionals shall be obtained, if appropriate.

- ~~d.~~ ~~In all instances of reported self-injurious behaviors;~~
 - ~~(1) A member of the school-based student services team sees the student, gathers information, and develops a plan of action, including continuing or revising the IEP, if applicable.~~
 - ~~(2) A plan of action is reviewed and implemented.~~

~~iv.~~ The student's Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) ~~are~~ shall be notified for each instance of self-injurious behavior, unless a different procedure for handling this isuch a matter has been established and documented (~~for example, rather than a phone call, the parent may request an email contact, or the student may have a daily behavior contract on which such behaviors are documented~~). If the student is not being seen by an outside mental health professional, this is outside services shall be recommended suggested to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) ~~and~~/or eligible student.

~~e.~~ v. The principal or the principal's designee shall be ~~is~~ notified.

~~vi.~~ The student services team member, working with the student, shall submit the electronic reporting form found complete the online report located on the AACPS ~~Intranet~~ intranet.

6.4. **Runaway**

- a. A student services team member, principal or the principal's designee shall meet with the student immediately to discuss the situation and explore alternative solutions.

- b. The principal or the principal's designee shall promptly contact the student's parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) ~~promptly informing them of the problem~~. If the situation warrants action necessary for the safety of the student, the principal or the principal's designee shall request that the student(s) parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) come to the school as soon as possible.
- c. The student services team member ~~and~~/or principal or the principal's designee shall conduct a conference with the student's parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) to explore the appropriateness of the student being seen by an outside mental health professional.
- d. If a student communicates directly with a student services team member that the student plans to run away, the information shall be ~~shared~~ communicated with to the ~~building~~ principal or the principal's designee and ~~steps paragraphs~~ (b) and (c) above shall be followed.
- e. If a student ~~then actually~~ runs away from the student's legal residence, ~~school personnel are staff shall be obligated to~~ report to the student's parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) any available information about where, when, and with whom the student ran away. The principal or the principal's designee shall immediately notify the Regional Assistant Superintendent ~~by telephone~~.

7.5. Student Threats to Harm Others or Property

- a. Student threats shall be reported to the principal or the principal's designee immediately upon becoming aware of the threat. No judgments regarding the seriousness or nature of the threat ~~are shall be~~ made by the reporter. ~~A staff member~~ shall accompany the student to the office, if compliant, or an administrator shall be summoned to the location.
- b. The student who expressed the threat, ~~the recipient(s) of the threat and any witnesses~~ individuals who received or heard the threat, and any other pertinent individuals shall be interviewed independently by the school administrator to obtain specific information regarding the threat. ~~The administrator will~~ principal or the principal's designee shall then make a determination of the level of the threat ~~(transient, serious substantive, and very serious substantive)~~. Once the level of the threat has been determined, the principal or the principal's designee shall follow the appropriate procedures as outlined in paragraph c. of this subsection.

c. ***Transient Threat***

- i. Determine whether disciplinary action, in accordance with the AACPS Code of Student Conduct, ~~should~~ will be taken against the student who expressed the threat based ~~on the Code of Student Conduct~~.
- ii. Develop student supports, as appropriate, considering both the student who expressed the threat and the intended victim(s).
- iii. Inform the parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) of the student who expressed the threat and intended victim(s), if ~~identified~~ appropriate. In the case of an eligible student, only notify the intended victim(s).
- iv. Notify the appropriate staff. The principal or designee shall further notify staff as indicated by the circumstances of the threat. As an example, if the student who expressed the threat and the victim are part of the same class or activity, the teacher and other staff members in the class or activity shall be notified to ensure the safety of the school environment.

d. ***Serious and Very Serious Substantive Threat***

- i. Consult with the Office of School Security and safety and security specialist/school resource officer (SRO) if there is an SRO assigned to the school, ~~and call the Communications Officer~~.
- ii. The ~~Communications Center~~ Office of School Security shall inform appropriate Central Office staff.
- iii. Determine whether disciplinary action should be taken against the student who expressed the threat ~~based on~~ in accordance with the AACPS Code of Student Conduct.
- iv. Mobilize student services team members, as needed, ~~to gather data conduct a threat determination, and to develop -determine a need for~~ an action plan, if appropriate.
- v. Notify the parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) of the student who expressed the threat. -Notify the intended victim(s) and their intended victim's parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) of the threat ~~made~~. If the intended victim(s) is an eligible student, only notify the intended victim(s).

- vi. The principal or the principal's designee shall ~~further~~ notify the appropriate staff, as indicated by the circumstances of the threat. ~~As an example, if the student who expressed the threat and the victim are part of the same class or activity, the teacher and other staff members in the class or activity shall be notified to ensure the safety of the school environment.~~

e. ~~Very Serious Substantive:~~

- i. ~~Notify the SRO or call for police using 911 if no SRO is available to the school.~~
- ii. ~~Call the Communications Center, which shall inform appropriate Central Office staff.~~
- iii. ~~Determine whether disciplinary action should be taken against the student who expressed the threat based on the *Code of Student Conduct*.~~
- iv. ~~Mobilize team members as needed to gather data to determine a need for an action plan.~~
- v. ~~Notify parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the student who expressed the threat. Notify intended victim(s) and their parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of the threat made. If the intended victim(s) is an eligible student, only notify the intended victim(s).~~
- vi. ~~The principal or designee shall further notify staff as indicated by the circumstances of the threat. As an example, if the student who expressed the threat and the victim are part of the same class or activity, the teacher and other staff members in the class or activity shall be notified to ensure the safety of the school environment.~~

8.6. Student Request for Mental Health Support

- a. Student services team members may provide counseling to students with the informed consent of the student's parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s).
- b. Parental/guardian consent is not required for an eligible student. ~~or to students over 18 years of age.~~
- c. Student services team members may meet a student for counseling sessions on a crisis basis. The student's ~~P~~parent(s)/~~legal~~ guardian(s) shall be notified as soon as possible, unless information results in a referral to the Department of Social Services for potential child abuse, neglect,

sexual abuse, or mental injury committed by the parent(s)/~~or legal~~ guardian(s).

9.7. Student Request for Drug and Alcohol Counseling

- a. ~~Any s~~Staff member receiving a request from a student regarding alcohol or drug abuse counseling shall refer the student to a member of the school-based student services team, ~~the Maryland Student Assistance Program team, or an addictions counselor assigned to the school.~~
- b. In accordance with State law~~Under Maryland's Confidentiality of Medical Records Act~~, a minor, ~~acting alone, has the legal capacity to consent to alcohol/drug abuse treatment.~~ has the same capacity as an adult to consent to treatment for or advice about drug abuse and alcoholism. ~~Therefore~~As such, a request that is solely for alcohol and drug abuse counseling ~~is a~~ shall be a confidential communication and may not be disclosed to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) without the student's consent.

10.8. Student Request for ~~Support Regarding~~ Pregnancy Support

- a. In accordance with State law~~Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Maryland's Confidentiality of Medical Records Act~~, a minor has the same capacity as an adult to consent to treatment for or advice about ~~pregnancy~~reproductive health services. Therefore, this information ~~is~~ shall be confidential and may not be disclosed to the student's parent(s)/~~or legal~~ guardian(s) without the student's consent.
- b. When a student seeks counseling regarding pregnancy concerns, the first goal ~~is~~ shall be to encourage the student to involve the student's family.
- c. If the student is persistently resistant to informing the family regarding the pregnancy concern, the ~~staff~~ student services team member, working with ~~her~~ the student, shall refer ~~her~~ the student to the school health professional who shall continue to recommend parent involvement, ~~but shall also and~~ provide information and referrals regarding prenatal care.
- d. Attendance accommodations for the student shall be in accordance with Policy JB – Compulsory Attendance.

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