

## MANAGING SUICIDAL THREATS AND ATTEMPTS

When school staff members become aware of a student who has made verbal or written threats toward self or has attempted suicide, school staff members should communicate immediately with the administrator to determine the level of threat. Level of threat is determined with input from the school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, and/or SRO, where appropriate.

A student who is actively threatening suicide should be referred to the school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker for an emergency consultation. The student should not be left alone or sent on to the next class until assistance has been provided by trained Student Support Services personnel. In addition to understanding what the student is saying about harming himself or herself, school staff members should actively listen for the reasons for the student's distress, any plan, and any mention of access to a means to commit a self-destructive act.

Administrators should assure that suicidal threats are effectively managed in the following ways:

- Assist in-school Student Support Services personnel with required processes for handling suicide threats and attempts as outlined in the *Student Threat Management Process*, found in the *Critical Response and School Emergency Safety Management Guide-BCPS* and PS 112.
- Assure that parents/guardians have been contacted regarding the suicidal threat or attempt and that their responsibilities to obtain assistance for the student have been explained to them. Understand that the State of Maryland requires that school personnel report a student's suicidal threat or attempt to parents/guardians even when the report comes from a third party other than the student involved in the threat or attempt. Information about the time/date of notification of parents/guardians, school staff contacted, and intervention steps taken by school staff and parents/guardians should be kept by Student Support Services personnel.
- Know the referral resources for assisting of the suicidal student in the community including the emergency room services of local hospitals. Consult with the SRO or local police precinct to seek information and assistance regarding emergency evaluation. Publish the **Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline number: 1-800-422-0009** for staff, student, and parental awareness.
- Consider the need for a Student Support Team as outlined in PS 112 to assist a student who has threatened or attempted suicide to support a student's return to the school setting. In those cases where the student has been hospitalized, school intake procedures described in PS 508, Part 2, Students Entering and Leaving Institutions, should be followed.
- The completed suicide of a student or staff member is a potentially traumatic event for both the students and the school staff. In the event of a completed suicide of a member of the school community, the principal is to notify immediately the Area Assistant Superintendent of Schools and the Coordinator of School Counseling. The Coordinator of School Counseling will identify a Traumatic Loss Team to assist the school. In cooperation with the Traumatic Loss Team members, the principal will conduct a staff meeting to plan for a coordinated aftermath response to inform and assist students and staff with the loss (PS 128).