

## **SUICIDE AWARENESS PROGRAM**

The School Committee recognizes that depression and self-destruction are problems of increasing severity among children and adolescents. A student suffering from depression cannot benefit fully from the educational program and may pose a threat to him/herself or others. All school personnel should be alert to students who exhibit signs of unusual depression or who threaten or attempt suicide.

With the intent of contributing to the prevention of suicide among its pupils where possible, the School Committee directs that an Adolescent Suicide Awareness Program be initiated, including:

- A. In-service education—to increase the awareness of all school staff about the seriousness of the problem and possible suicide “warning signs”;
- B. Establishment of referral/response procedures in each school—to facilitate assisting students who are identified as possibly suicidal;
- C. Infusion into the curriculum (K-12) of appropriate information to help students deal appropriately with feelings, to recognize possible suicide “warning signs” in themselves and others, and to increase awareness of alternatives and resources available for assistance;
- D. Parent awareness—to increase parental understanding about the problem and the resources available; and
- E. Procedures in each school for dealing appropriately with tragedies—to ease the impact on students, staff and community in the event of a student suicide.

School staff cannot be expected to treat the suicidal adolescent. Rather, they need to recognize that they are in a position to aid in the identification of those young people who may be at risk of suicide, and to intervene in order to link these young people and their families to treatment programs in the community. In addition, school staff needs to be prepared to sensitively relate to young people following a suicide attempt and to deal with the intense emotions/reactions of the school community following an actual suicide.

Cross Reference: EBCA - Crisis Action Plan

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