

Grizzly Challenge Charter School

721 Mendocino Ave, Bldg 945, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Suicide Prevention Policy

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GRIZZLY CHALLENGE CHARTER SCHOOL SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

Vision

Grizzly Challenge Charter School, in partnership with the California National Guard, is designed to provide an opportunity for students with unique needs, to redirect their lives toward productive work, healthy lifestyles, responsible citizenship and lifelong learning.

Mission

The mission of the Grizzly Challenge Charter School is to provide a safe, consistent, structured, educational environment focusing on the success of the whole student. Our voluntary residential high school offers a curriculum that is goal oriented, integrated, cooperative, flexible and designed to meet California State Standards as well as the diverse needs of our at-risk population. Through partnerships with the California National Guard, the business community and post-secondary educational programs, we prepare students for the transition from high school to employment, higher or continuing education, and adult responsibilities.

Introduction

The Grizzly Challenge Charter School (GCCS) Suicide Prevention Policy complies with mandates added to the Education Code by Assembly Bill 2246. This Policy corresponds with and supports the federal, state and local efforts to provide staff and youth, through professional training, prevention education, early identification, intervention and postvention strategies. GCCS will access resources to promote the health and well-being of the cadets by working to prevent personal harm or self-injury, specifically among the following high risk groups.

- A. Youth bereaved by suicide;
- B. Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorder;
- C. Youth experiencing homelessness, out-of-home settings, or foster care;
- D. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.

Grizzly Youth Academy (GYA) is in a unique position to address suicide prevention among its student population. Early identification of cadets that may have suicidal tendencies can be determined from the questions in the enrollment packet regarding their past behaviors. Reviewing that information will help recognize those at risk very soon in the cycle. The cadets live on grounds which gives staff the ability to monitor behaviors. GYA and Grizzly Challenge Charter School (collectively "Grizzly") has developed a Suicide Prevention Policy

that directs its efforts toward the implementation of a unified and targeted plan that wraps its services around those most vulnerable.

Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention (Plan)

The Plan is designed to reduce suicidal behavior and to inform all staff of the mental health challenges associated with suicidal thinking. Strategies are developed for the implementation of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. The following is an outline of the **Four Part Strategic Plan**:

I. School Climate and Classroom Prevention Education

- Curriculum Identified
- “Upstander” Bully Prevention Program
- BLOC Box for Anonymous Reporting and Requests for Help
- Anonymous Reporting System for Bullying/Harassment
- Schoolwide and Military Counseling Services
- After School and Lunchtime Counseling Groups

II. Staff and Cadet Training and Responsibilities

- Professional Development for all Grizzly Employees
- Professional Training for all Cadets

III. Crisis Response Team (CRT) and Risk Level Assessment Team (RLAT)

Teams are responsible for implementation of Flowchart, which identifies the process and employee responsibilities. *see appendix*

Prevention Process

- Identify High Risk Cadets from Intake Information
- Implement Referral Process
- RLAT Determines Risk Level for Referrals
- Implement Prevention Strategies
- Apply Strategies Appropriate to Risk Level

Intervention Process

- Apply Criteria for Low, Medium or High Risk level *see appendix*
- Implement Appropriate Strategies Related to Risk Level
- Communicate to Staff and Parents
- Communicate with Mental Health Services, if necessary
- Monitor

Postvention Process

- Ongoing Monitoring

- Ongoing Communication to Staff and Parents
- Implement Appropriate Strategies/Procedures

IV. Suicide Crisis Response Procedures

- Suicide Threat Procedure
- Procedure for Suicidal Act or Attempt on School Grounds
- Procedure for Suicidal Act or Attempt on School Grounds After School Hours

Suicide Prevention Policy Actions: Four Part Strategic Plan

I. School Climate and Classroom Prevention Education

Cadets will receive appropriate lessons in their classrooms through health science education on the importance of safe and healthy choices, as well as, help-seeking strategies for self or others. Cadets are taught not to make promises of confidence when they are concerned about a peer or significant other, but to inform an adult. Lessons will contain information on comprehensive health and wellness, including emotional, behavioral and social skills development. Cadets who are in need of intervention will be referred to the school counselor for screening. Within the first two weeks of school, all cadets will be introduced to the Bully Prevention Program and their responsibilities to fellow cadets. Cadets will be informed as to how and where to respond anonymously to report suicidal thoughts, suicidal behaviors and bullying to self or others.

In addition, all cadets are able to access individual or group counseling when they self-report or are referred by staff. Group counseling sessions address anger management, Hospice, RISE, addiction, domestic violence and anxiety/depression, to name a few.

II. Staff and Cadet Training and Responsibilities

Professional Development will be provided by qualified facilitators using research-based, best practice materials. All staff are responsible for safeguarding the health and safety of students. All staff are expected to exercise sound professional judgment, err on the side of caution and demonstrate extreme sensitivity throughout any crisis situation. All school personnel will be informed of the signs of youth depression/suicidal tendencies.

Any staff member originally made aware of any threat or witnesses any attempt towards self-harm, that is written, drawn, spoken or threatened, will immediately notify the school counselor. Any threat in any form must be treated as real and dealt with immediately. No student should be left alone, nor confidences promised. Thus, in cases of life threatening situations a student's confidentiality will be waived. Grizzly's school suicide crisis response procedures will be implemented.

Staff Development Procedures

Training will be provided for all Grizzly staff members and other adults on campus at least annually under the direction of school-employed mental health professionals.

- School Counselors
- School Psychologists
- Mental Health Counselors

Training will include

- Risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors;
- How to talk to youth about thoughts of suicide
- How to respond appropriately
- Immediate referral process in place
- Emphasis on reducing stigma
- Reviewing data annually to look for patterns or trends
- Information regarding groups of students judged by the school, and available research, to be at elevated risk for suicide. These groups include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Youth affected by suicide.
 - Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts.
 - Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance abuse disorders.
 - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.
 - Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.
 - Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences.

Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services

Employees of Grizzly must act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. While it is expected that school professionals are able to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, and to prevent the immediate risk of a suicidal behavior, treatment of suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting. In addition, treatment of the mental health challenges often associated with suicidal thinking typically requires mental health resources beyond what schools are able to provide.

Cadet Training

Within the first two weeks of school, cadets will receive suicide prevention training by qualified personnel. Training will include information on risk factors, the referral process, making an anonymous referral, how to respond appropriately to a friend at risk, warning signs, and protective factors. In addition, all cadets will be introduced to the Bully Prevention Program and made aware of their responsibilities to their fellow cadets. Finally, all cadets will be apprised of their access to individual or group counseling when they self-report or are referred by staff.

III. Crisis Response Team (CRT) and Risk Level Assessment Team (RLAT)

The CRT and the RLAT members will have additional specialized training particular to Grizzly's needs, processes and procedures, documentation and parent contact. The team will meet to identify, refer and develop prevention plans for cadets at risk. An RLAT member will meet with targeted cadets, assess their risk level and develop a plan. Our goal is to intervene early in the cycle to prevent an actual suicidal event. *see flowchart in appendix*

CRT members are the Principal, Therapist, Director, and First Sergeant

- Responsible for attempted and suicidal deaths
- Responsible for interacting with 911 teams
- Responsible for interacting with the press
- Responsible for informing the parents
- Responsible for the required documentation
- Responsible for informing the staff

RLAT members may include the School Counselor, Lead Military Counselor, Military Counselor for the platoon, counselor working with the cadet and/or the Mental Health Counselor

- Responsible for handling referrals
- Responsible for determining Risk Level and interventions
- Responsible for communicating with parents and appropriate staff
- Responsible for completing paperwork

Prevention Process

- Identify high risk cadets from intake information
- Implement Referral Process for staff and cadet referrals
- RLAT determines risk level See Appendix
- Apply strategies appropriate to risk level

Intervention Process

- Apply criteria for low, medium or high risk level Appendix
- Implement appropriate strategies related to risk level
- Communicate to staff and parents and/or Mental Health Services
- Obtain required signatures
- Monitor

Postvention

- Ongoing monitoring
- Ongoing communication with staff and parents
- Implement appropriate strategies/procedures
- Complete paperwork and obtain signatures.

IV. Suicide Crisis Response Procedures

The CRT and the RLAT will be trained in the procedures developed for suicide threats, attempts and/or acts. It is important to remember that the health and safety of the cadet and those around him/her is critical.

- Suicide Threat Procedures
- Suicidal Act or Attempt on School Grounds
- Suicide Act or Attempt After School Hours

Suicide Threat

Definition – A suicide threat is a verbal or nonverbal communication that the individual intends to harm him/herself with the intention to die but has not acted on the behavior.

- a) The staff member who learns of the threat will locate the individual and arrange for or provide constant adult supervision.
- b) The above-mentioned staff member will immediately inform the school counselor or designee.
- c) The school counselor will involve appropriate National Guard staff and the other members of the Risk Level Assessment Team (RLAT).
- d) RLAT will determine risk level and intervention needed by counseling the student, and gathering appropriate supportive documentation from teachers or others who witnessed the threat.
- e) The school counselor will:
 - Contact the National Guard partner, apprise them of the situation and make recommendations. The National Guard counselor will contact the parent/guardian.
 - Put all recommendations in writing to the parent/guardian.
 - Mail the recommendation through certified mail if there is any question or doubt of the parent/guardian receiving the recommendations. *see appendix*

- Maintain a file copy of the letter in a secure and appropriate location.
- f) If the student is known to be currently in counseling, the school counselor will attempt to inform their treatment provider of what occurred and the actions taken.
- g) Develop student safety plan.
- h) Document interventions.
- i) Follow-up and support will be monitored by appropriate Grizzly staff.

After a referral is made, Grizzly shall verify with the parent/guardian that the follow up treatment has been accessed. Parents/guardians will be required to provide documentation of care for the student. If parents/guardians refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at risk for suicide or in emotional distress, the suicide prevention liaisons shall meet with the parent to identify barriers to treatment (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues) and work to rectify the situation and build understanding of care. If follow up care is still not provided, Grizzly may contact Child Protective Services.

Suicidal Act or Attempt on School Grounds or During a School-Sponsored Activity

Definition - Suicidal act (also referred to as suicide attempt) – a potentially self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person probably intended to kill himself or herself; a suicidal act may result in death, injuries, or no injuries.

The first Grizzly employee on the scene must call for help from the school counselor, locate the individual and follow emergency medical procedures.

- a) A staff member must notify the principal or designee, or school counselor.
- b) Staff members should move all other students out of the immediate area and arrange appropriate supervision. Students should not be allowed to observe the scene.
- c) Principal or designee, or school counselor will involve appropriate Grizzly personnel to assist as needed.
- d) Principal or designee, or school counselor will contact appropriate Grizzly personnel to contact the parent/guardian and inform them of the attempt and ask them to come to the school or hospital.
- e) Principal or designee, or school counselor will inform San Luis Obispo County Office of Education, or call for assistance from the SLO County's Crisis Services at **1-800-838-1381**.
- f) Principal or designee, or school counselor will document in writing all actions taken and recommendations. *see appendix*

- g) If the student is known to be currently in counseling, the principal or designee, or school counselor will gather treatment information from counselor.
- h) Principal or designee, or school counselor will request written documentation from any treating facilities prior to a student's return to school.
- i) Offer to the student and parent/guardian steps for re-integration to school. Re-integration may include obtaining a written release from the parent/guardian to speak with any health care providers; conferring with the student and parent/guardian about any specific requests on how to handle the situation; informing the student's teachers about possible days of absences; allowing accommodations for make-up work (being understanding that missed assignments may add stress to the student); appropriate staff maintaining ongoing contact with the student to monitor the student's actions and mood; and working with the parent/guardian to involve the student in an aftercare plan
- j) The principal or designee will promptly follow up with any students or staff who might have witnessed the attempt, and contact their parents/guardians. The principal or designee will provide support and document all actions taken.
- k) Refer media requests to Grizzly spokesperson or Principal at **805-782-6819**.

Suicide Act or Attempt Not on School Grounds or During a School-Sponsored Activity but Reported to a School Employee

Follow the procedures outlined under Suicide Threat.

Suicide of a Student or Employee on School Grounds or During a School-Sponsored Activity

Definition - Suicide – death caused self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

Note: The coroner's or medical examiner's office must first confirm that the death was a suicide before any school official may state this as the cause of death. The school must adhere to the wishes of the family in this regard and respect their right to privacy and confidentiality.

When a sudden unexplained death of a student or staff member occurs, the principal or designee, or school counselor will confer with the appropriate Grizzly staff and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education and promptly implement crisis response procedures as outlined in the District's Safe Schools Plan. These actions may include the following:

- a) The first district employee on the scene must call for help from another staff member, locate the individual and follow district emergency medical

procedures, such as calling 911.

- b) A staff member must notify the principal or designee, or school counselor.
- c) Staff members should move all other students out of the immediate area and arrange appropriate supervision. Students should not be allowed to observe the scene.
- d) Principal or designee, or school counselor will involve appropriate Grizzly staff.
- e) Principal or designee, or school counselor will contact, or will have designated Grizzly staff contact, the parent/guardian and ask them to come to the school or hospital.
- f) Principal or designee, or school counselor will inform San Luis Obispo County Office of Education, or call for assistance from the SLO County's Crisis Services at **1-800-838-1381**.
- g) Principal or designee, or school counselor will document in writing all actions taken and recommendations.

Suicide Postvention (procedures to support schools following a sudden death).

The principal or designee will:

- a) Immediately notify, regardless of the day or time, the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education.
- b) Verify and obtain as much factual information as possible via staff, police, the parent/guardian, or others who may have the facts depending on circumstances.
- c) Assemble your response team using appropriate personnel from both the school staff and Grizzly staff.
- d) Do not describe the death as a suicide with the general public, parents, staff or students unless you have written confirmation from the coroner or medical examiner.
- e) Promptly collect and safeguard the student's belongings from backpack or locker, any student work or photo or staff belongings (in the event of a staff death). Consult with family members and determine a mutually agreeable date and time in private, to return these belongings.
- f) Inform the faculty that a sudden death has occurred using written communication if school has already begun, followed by a staff meeting at the conclusion of the day. If the death occurred in the evening, convene a staff meeting prior to the start of school the next day.
- g) Designate space for all postvention activities.
- h) Once obtained, provide funeral arrangements and related details to students, staff via Main Office and parents via written communication.
- i) Prioritize classrooms and students who will need immediate attention and connect them with the response team or other appropriate resources as determined by student services staff.
- j) Refer media requests to Grizzly spokesperson or Principal at **805-782-6819**.

- k) Do not disclose any information or details to the media.
- l) Meet with the response team at the end of the day or days during crisis management activities to insure the exchange of important information, as well as to insure communication and further planning of activities.
- m) Check in periodically with the family, staff and students to insure that everyone is supported as much as feasible with the context of the school setting.
- n) Thank those who assisted in the postvention. Don't forget to include the faculty, ancillary staff, crisis team and any outside agency or community folks.

Actions to Avoid

- a) Do not announce the death of anyone over the public address system.
- b) Do not hold an assembly program or bring large groups of students together in one place to discuss suicide.
- c) Avoid canceling school, classes or pre-planned activities unless absolutely necessary; students find comfort in following their normal routine when they are under stress, within reason. Discuss with superintendent prior to proceeding with any cancellations.

Memorials

It is recognized that grieving individuals need a variety of opportunities to personally express their emotions and reactions to this type of death. Recommendations and ideas for a memorial should be taken into consideration and discussed with the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education, Grizzly Youth Academy, and the response team prior to being implemented.

Memorials must be carefully and tastefully planned, considering a broad range of responses. A variety of activities may in fact occur to celebrate positive remembrances, and these expressions often vary.

Appendix Available Upon Request

Grizzly Challenge Charter School

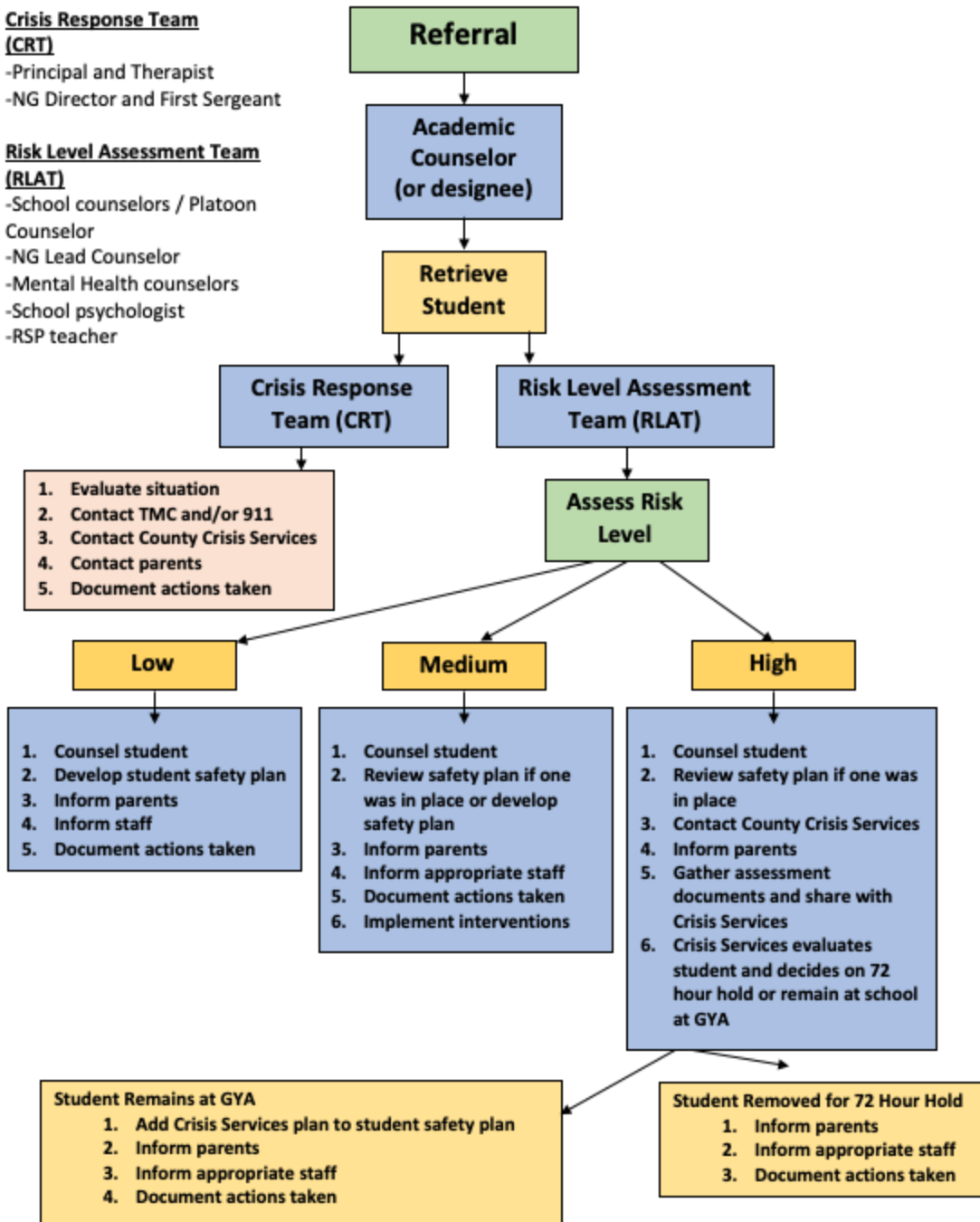
Suicide Prevention and Response Flowchart

Crisis Response Team (CRT)

- Principal and Therapist
- NG Director and First Sergeant

Risk Level Assessment Team (RLAT)

- School counselors / Platoon Counselor
- NG Lead Counselor
- Mental Health counselors
- School psychologist
- RSP teacher



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