



PROCEDURE: Anti -Suicide

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STATEMENT OF INTENT:

At Northlakes High School, suicide prevention is the concern of all workers. Teachers are mandatory reporters and can play a key role in early detection and intervention with people who are at risk of suicide.

Suicidal behaviour is complex and despite the best available expertise and exemplary care, some individuals will go on to suicide.

Team management is central to effective management of a person at risk of suicide. In particular, transitions in care can be highly vulnerable periods in the management of a person at risk. Clear, concise documentation of assessments, including observations and clinical decisions, is the most helpful process to assist in good team management.

APPLICABILITY:

To all Staff

DoE POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE:

Northlakes High School's Suicide Policy is based on;

- *The NSW Health guidelines on Suicide Risk Assessment and Management Protocols.*
- *Framework for Suicide Risk Assessment and Management for NSW Health Staff.*

DEFINITION: Northlakes High School recognises that depression and self-destruction are problems of increasing severity among adolescents. A student who suffers from depression cannot benefit fully from the educational programs of schooling, and a student who has attempted self-destruction poses a danger both to himself/herself and to other students.

Northlakes High School directs all its workers to be aware to any student who exhibits signs of unusual depression, strange behaviours and/or who threatens or attempts suicide. Any such signs or reports of such signs from a student or staff member should be taken with the utmost seriousness.

RATIONALE:

This Policy is intended to:

- Support student parents and our community on issues related to severe mental health.

- Provide various levels of support and help facilitate referrals to external support agencies where possible.
- Offer counselling and support to individuals and others affected by the impact of severe mental health issues.

PROCEDURES:

Northlakes High School has developed five levels of intervention;

1. Stabilisation

- Student not to be left alone
- Determine to see if he/she has any dangerous instruments present (weapon, substance, instrument capable of wounding)
- Assess the safety of the environment
- Notify Head Teacher Welfare/Deputy/Counsellor ASAP
- HT Welfare/Deputy/Counsellor to fill out the Suicide Report Form (get a second opinion if not confident about outcome)

2. Assessment of Risk

- HT Welfare/Deputy/Counsellor to assess using the Assessment of Suicide Risk form. Talk calmly, listen, but avoid giving advice. Keep questions non-judgemental.

3. Use of Risk Procedures

High Risk

- Contact parents and inform them of situation and actions needed to be taken
- Advise Central Intake Wyong Emergency of the student needing assessment
- Call ambulance/police if needed
- Collect student information sheet from front office
- Keep student engaged in conversation and reassured until parent and/or ambulance arrives
- Stay with student till student has left school grounds
- DOCS notification to be done
- Risk Assessment to be done and distributed to staff

Medium Risk

- Determine if student's distress is the result of parental abuse, neglect, or exploitation. If so, notify DOCS, and follow their instructions
- If not, contact parents and inform them of the situation
- Give parents advice on outside agencies they can access for their child for support

Low Risk

- Try to determine student's distress
- Contact parents and inform them of the situation
- Provide information to parents on appropriate support agencies

4. Communication with Appropriate Parties

- Inform appropriate staff members and district staff such year Adviser, Year Deputy, HT Welfare, LST, counsellors and/or school social worker/appropriate staff of the facts and the actions being taken
- If the parents request, inform the students' close friends of the facts and the actions being taken
- Email sent to SED re action via template (saved in T drive/Office/Word Processing/Welfare/Self harm Template)

5. Follow up

- Determine the extent to which emergency or short-term procedures were completed properly
- Any student sent to hospital by Northlakes High School will be placed on exemption and can only return after a Mental Health Plan has been sent through to the school by the treating Mental Health Team. This is then attached to the exemption and risk assessment.
- Find out if arrangements have been made for long-term clinical and/or support services
- If neither short-term procedures, nor long-term services were properly conducted or pursued, consult with the LST to determine appropriate action
- Maintain continued contact with the student to communicate interest in his/her welfare (this may be done by counsellor or Year Adviser) and support of the long-term services being provided
- Remain alert to the possibility of 'copycat' suicide attempts/claims by other students. Evaluate steps.

SUICIDE POSTVENTION PROCESS

If, in spite of all intervention efforts, a suicide should occur, implement the District's Crisis Intervention Plan.