



Suicide Prevention Policy

Definition:

Suicidal ideation is a medical term used to describe suicidal thoughts or plans.

Rationale:

Local and international research indicates:

- The combination of risk factors that lead to suicide are not predictable.
- Population based preventative approaches to build resilience in young people are more effective means of suicide prevention than intervention based processes.
- Schools should not employ a narrow approach that focuses only on suicide.

Aims:

To promote a healthy, supportive and secure environment for students, with targeted support for students at risk of self-harm and / or suicide. To educate students, staff and the wider community on this issue to reduce the incidence of suicide among students.

Implementation:

To aid suicide prevention, Alkira SC will develop school curriculum that will:

- Allow students to develop strong communication and problem solving skills;
- Knowledge and understanding of person/s at school to contact regarding wellbeing issues.
- Incorporate curriculum in how to access medical and professional services through-
 - Networking with other professionals and the local community;
 - Developing a health-promoting framework;
 - Professional organisations; such as-
 - Kids Helpline
 - Beyond Blue
 - Life Line
 - Reach Out Program
- Outside agencies may be recommended to the student and their family in support of the child, including;
 - Head Space
 - Adolescent Recovery Centre
 - Casey Youth Services
 - Stepping Stones

The school will implement welfare support structures and programs which prioritise and address the identified needs of students. The stages at which support will be provided are: -

Primary Prevention: programs which develop resilience, through enhanced life skills and protective factors.

Early Intervention: strategies and processes which, assess and manage individuals and groups identified as 'at risk'.

Intervention: provision of crisis support for individuals exhibiting 'at risk' behaviours.

Postvention: implement a critical incident response plan including counselling.

The College and staff will undertake the following processes:

All Alkira SC staff **must act** as soon as they witness, form a belief or receive a disclosure of a student an incident that breaches student safety or when they form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of self-harm and / or suicide.

To make processes, understandings and obligations clear, our College has appointed a dedicated Child-Safety Officer (Wellbeing Co-ordinator) which staff must liaise with on all child safety areas. Staff will be provided with knowledge and understanding through professional development sessions in the identifying signs of student self-harm and suicide.

1 Staff will advise the Child Safety Officer and the Principal promptly when they believe a:

- Student's safety is compromised.
- When a student discloses intent to self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

Note: If the teacher cannot leave the student to advise the Child Safety Office or Principal they should tell someone else to take a message immediately to one of these people.

2 The Child Safety Officer or the Principal will manage the process of referral and notify Security Services Unit (phone 9589-6266) of the critical incident.

3 Security Services Unit will notify the Regional Emergency Management Co-ordinator.

4 Regional Emergency Management Co-ordinator will ensure:

- A response is timely;
- Supports are put in place to minimise the impact on the wellbeing of students, staff involved in the incident and a response for the wider school community;
- The Student Critical Incident Advisory Unit is contacted, if required, for advice and support.

In liaison with all relevant Regional and Central personnel, the College will organise a strategic approach to communication with staff, students, parents and the wider school community upon raised incidents, including, a template letter for the parents of the school community. The school will also utilise a suicide Postvention response plan to assist in its compliance to processes and Head Space support documentation for students, staff and parents.

Managing school emergencies

The Principal will liaise with relevant Regional personnel and school support services with procedures to manage a range of emergencies and traumatic events. This may include (but not limited to):

- Planning to manage identified at-risk behaviour;
- Trauma reactions for students, families, staff and others
- Record keeping
- Media releases.

In maintaining our obligations to Child Safety Standards, all staff of Alkira SC have a responsibility to provide teaching and learning environments and the development of a culture where discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion. The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our College and compliments our vision and values of: Respect, Integrity, Care and Excellence.

No student should feel the need to self-harm or undertake suicide and Alkira SC is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse; including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. Alkira SC affirms our commitment towards-

- The support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Actively working towards listening to and empowering children.
- Creating systems to protect children from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns seriously; having mechanisms in place to ensure consistency in line with school, DET and DHS protocols.
- Promoting cultural safety and safe learning environments for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Empowering and providing an inclusive environment for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children living in Out-of-Home Care.

References

- Health Record Act 2001
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Information contained in this policy has been taken, in part, from DET's **PROTECT** documents- *Identifying and Responding to ALL Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* and linked website- www.education.vic.gov.au/protect
- References: Vic Govt Schools Reference Guide http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/referenceguide/curric/3_17.htm
- Circular 341/2002 - Responding to Suicidal Intent or Self Harm www.curriculum.edu.au/mindmatters
- Safe from Harm – resource manual *Framework for Student Support Services in Government Schools – Teacher Resource*

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

September 2016