



The Birches Academy of Academics and Art Suicide Prevention Policy

The Board of Trustees is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; to establish methods of prevention, intervention, and response to suicide or suicide attempt (“postvention”); and to promote access to suicide awareness, prevention and postvention resources.

- A. Suicide Prevention Plan and Biennial Review. The Dean of School shall develop and provide to the Board for approval, a coordinated written Suicide Prevention and Response Plan (the “Plan”) to include guidelines, protocols and procedures with the objectives of prevention, risk assessment, intervention and response to youth suicides and suicide attempts.
1. Specific Requirements for Plan Terms: The Birches Academy Suicide Prevention and Response Plan shall include terms relating to:
 - a. Suicide prevention (risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, referrals);
 - b. Response to in-or-out-of-school student suicides or suicide attempts (postvention, suicide contagion);
 - c. Student education regarding safe and healthy choices, coping strategies, recognition of risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide; and help-seeking strategies;
 - d. Training of staff, designated volunteers, and contracted personnel on the issues of youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referrals, post-intervention and resources available within the school and community;
 - e. Confidentiality considerations;
 - f. Designation of Suicide Prevention Coordinator (Dean of School) and Suicide Prevention Liaison (Dean of Students), to act as points of contact when students are believed to be at an elevated risk of suicide;
 - g. Information regarding state and community resources for referral, crisis intervention, and other related information;
 - h. Dissemination of the Plan or information about the Plan to students, parents, faculty, staff, and school volunteers;
 - i. Promotion of cooperative efforts between the school and community suicide prevention program personnel;
 - j. Inclusion of such other provisions deemed appropriate to meet the objectives of this Policy (e.g., student handbook language, reporting processes, “postvention” strategies, memorial parameters, etc.).



2. Biennial Review: No less than once every two years, the Dean of School, in consultation with the Dean of Students and with input and evidence from community health or suicide prevention organizations, and community health and guidance personnel, shall update The Birches Academy Suicide Prevention Plan, and present the same to the Board for review. Such Plan updates shall be submitted to the Board in time for appropriate budget consideration.

B. Suicide Prevention Coordinator and Liaisons.

1. The Dean of Students shall be responsible for:
 - a. Developing and maintaining cooperative relationships with and coordination efforts between The Birches Academy and community suicide prevention programs and personnel;
 - b. Annual updating of (i) State and community crisis or intervention referral intervention information, and (ii) names and contact information of Building Suicide Prevention Liaisons, for inclusion in student handbooks and on the school website;
 - c. Developing – or assisting individual teachers with the development of age appropriate student educational programming, such that all students receive information about the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies, recognizing risk factors and warning signs of mental disorders and suicide in oneself and others, and providing help-seeking strategies for oneself or others, including how to engage school resources and refer friends for help;
 - d. Developing or assisting in the development of the annual staff training required under section C of this policy;
 - e. Such other duties as referenced in this Policy.
2. Building Suicide Prevention Liaison. The Dean of Students, or, in his/her absence, the Dean of School, shall be designated as the Building Suicide Prevention Liaison, and shall serve as the in building point-of-contact person when a student is believed to be at an elevated risk for suicide. Employees who have reason to believe a student is at risk of suicide, or is exhibiting risk factors for suicide, shall report that information to the Building Liaison, who shall, immediately or as soon as possible, establish and implement a response plan with the Suicide Prevention Coordinator.

C. Annual Staff Training. The Dean of School shall assure that beginning with the 2020-21 school year, all school building faculty and staff, designated volunteers, and any other personnel who have regular contact with students, including contracted personnel or third-party employees, receive at least two hours of training in suicide awareness and prevention. Such training may include such matters as youth suicide risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, intervention, response procedures, referrals, and postvention and local resources.



D. Dissemination. Student handbooks and the school website will be updated each year with the contact information for the Suicide Prevention Liaisons, State and community crisis or intervention referral intervention resources. The Suicide Prevention and Response Plan will be made available on the school website.

Legal References:

RSA 193-J: Suicide Prevention Education

Legal References Disclaimer: *These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.*

Other Resources:

- *The New Hampshire Department of Education’s Bureau of Student Wellness, Office of Social and Emotional Wellness (OSEW), provides resources and technical assistance to school districts to work collaboratively with their community to respond to the needs of students through a multi-tiered system of support for behavioral health and wellness. For further information see: www.nhstudentwellness.org*
 - *American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) - <https://www.afsp.org>*
 - *Suicide Prevention Resource Center - <http://www.sprc.org>*
 - *The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – <https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>*
 - *The Trevor Project - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>*
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