

## VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

**BOARD POLICY NO. 5141.5**

**ADOPTED: 03/15/21**

**CLASSIFICATION: Students**

**SUBJECT: Mental Health**

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The Ventura County Board of Education and County Superintendent recognize that students' emotional well-being and mental health contribute to their ability to perform to their full academic and personal potential. The Superintendent or designee shall develop strategies and services to build students' resiliency skills, help students cope with life challenges, and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

In developing measures and strategies for Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) and the Superintendent or designee shall consult and collaborate with school-employed mental health professionals, the county mental health department, psychologists and other health professionals, social workers, and/or community organizations to strengthen local mental health services and develop and implement an integrated plan to support student mental health.

To the extent possible, VCOE shall focus on preventive strategies which increase students' connectedness to school, create a support network of peers and trusted adults, and provide techniques for conflict resolution. VCOE shall investigate and resolve any complaint of bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination in accordance with law and VCOE policy.

VCOE shall provide instruction to students that promotes their healthy mental, emotional, and social development. Health education courses shall be aligned with the state content standards and curriculum framework and shall include, but not be limited to, instruction related to identifying signs of depression and self-destructive behaviors, developing coping skills, and identifying resources that may provide assistance.

The Superintendent or designee shall provide school staff with information and training to recognize the early signs of an emerging mental health condition, identify risk factors and warning signs of suicidal intent, respond to students who have been impacted by traumatic stress, and link students with effective services and supports. Such information may also be provided to parents/guardians and families.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop a protocol for identifying and assessing students who may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, depression, eating disorder, or other severe or disabling mental illness. The Superintendent or designee may establish countywide or school-site crisis intervention team(s) to respond to mental health concerns in the school setting.

A school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker may provide mental health counseling to students in accordance with the specialization(s) authorized on the individual's credential. As needed, students and their parents/guardians may be provided referrals to mental health services in the community and/or to mental health services at or near VCOE schools.

If a student has an emotional or mental illness that limits a major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment, or may need special education and related services, the student shall be referred for an evaluation for purposes of determining whether any educational or related services are required in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as applicable. [Education Code 56301-56302; 29 USC 794; 28 CFR 35.108]

The Superintendent or designee shall explore potential funding sources for VCOE programs and services that support student's mental health. In accordance with local plans and priorities, VCOE may apply to the county for grants for prevention and early intervention activities that are designed to prevent mental illness from becoming severe and disabling and to improve timely access for underserved populations.

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

215-216	Student Suicide Prevention
234.6	Posting suicide prevention policy on web site
32280-32289.5	Comprehensive safety plan
49060-49079	Student Records
49600	Responsibilities of school counselors
49602	Confidentiality of student information
49604	Suicide prevention training for school counselors
56171	Duty to identify and assess children in private schools who need special education services
56300-56385	Identification, referral, and assessment for special education

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

5698	Emotionally disturbed youth; legislative intent
5840-5840.8	Prevention and early intervention programs
5850-5886	Children's Mental Health Services Act

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20

1400-1482	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
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UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 29

794	Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
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CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 28

5193	California Bloodborne Pathogens Standard
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CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 28  
35.101-35.190      Nondiscrimination on the basis of disability

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 34  
34 CFR 300.1-300.818      Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Management Resources:

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS  
Health Education Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2008  
Health Framework for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, 2019

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION PUBLICATIONS  
School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth, 2009

NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK PUBLICATIONS  
Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, 2008

WEB SITES

American Association of Suicidology: <http://www.suicidology.org>  
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: <http://afsp.org>  
American Psychological Association: <http://www.apa.org>  
American School Counselor Association: <http://www.schoolcounselor.org>  
California Department of Education, Mental Health: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh>  
California Department of Health Care Services, Mental Health Services:  
<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH>  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Mental Health:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth>  
National Association of School Psychologists: <http://www.nasponline.org>  
National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <http://www.nctsn.org>  
National Council for Behavioral Health, Mental Health First Aid:  
<http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>  
National Institute for Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>  
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>  
Suicide Prevention Resource Center: <http://www.sprc.org/about-suicide>  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <http://www.samhsa.gov>