

5601 SCHOOL CLEARANCE FOLLOWING CRISIS SITUATION

The Board is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of students during the school day, and will take action necessary to provide for the safety and security of its students, staff and/or property. In “crisis situations,” the Board reserves the right to exclude a student who has been determined to pose an imminent or potential threat to the safety of the student, other students or staff, pending appropriate mental health clearance.

1. **Examples of “Crisis Situations”***(not exclusive or exhaustive)*

- a. Actions creating an imminent danger to the student or others;
- b. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) threatening or potentially threatening the health, safety or well-being of the student, staff or other students;
- c. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) reflecting an intent or plan to harm the student or others (regarding self-harm, see also Policy No. 5350);
- d. Verbalization(s) or other action(s) indicating that the student may be at risk of causing harm to the student or other (regarding self-harm, see also Policy No. 5350); or
- e. Possession of object(s) or material(s) posing a threat to the health, safety or well-being of the student, staff or other students (regarding self-harm, see also Policy No. 5350);
- f. Posting inflammatory images and/or statements online or in social media relating to, but not limited to, guns, bombs, knives or other such objects that would cause a reasonable person to feel threatened or intimidated.

2. **Discipline**

- a. A student’s exclusion based upon an identified crisis situation shall not be considered a disciplinary consequence.
- b. This Policy is intended to address mental health related issues only (i.e., to ensure that the student does not represent a danger to him/herself or others), and does not supersede the implementation of appropriate disciplinary action



for infractions of school regulations or action required by N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-12 or N.J.A.C. 6A:16-4.3 as described in policies and explained in student handbooks and/or Code of Student Conduct. (See Policy No. 5600)

3. Procedures

- a. In situations where a student presents as an imminent danger to himself or others, school emergency procedures will be followed, and supersede the provisions of Section III. C of this Policy.
- b. Staff members shall immediately notify the School Principal, or his/her designee, of any potential crisis situations.
- c. In response to every report of a Crisis situation, the School Principal (or designee) shall:
 1. Notify the Crisis Intervention Team (or other designated team/individual responsible for the initial assessment of the student);
 2. Notify the Superintendent of Schools; and
 3. Notify the police if in accordance to the guidelines set forth in the Law Enforcement Memorandum of Agreement
 4. Notify the parent or legal guardian.
- d. In response to every report of a crisis situation, the superintendent or designee shall consult with the principal and/or members of Crisis Intervention Team in order to assess whether or not the student presents as a potential danger to him/herself or others, and to determine whether or not the student requires a mental health assessment prior to reinstatement.
- e. Provisions shall be made for the appropriate care and supervision of the student pending either: (1) a determination by administrators or the Crisis Intervention Team that the student's exclusion is not required; or (2) the student's release to his or her parent/guardian.

4. Assessment and Reinstatement



- a. If the superintendent, principal or Crisis Intervention Team determines that the student presents as a potential danger to him/herself or others and requires a mental health assessment prior to reinstatement, the Principal shall notify the student's parent/guardian of this determination.
- b. The assessment must be completed by a Board of Education approved psychiatrist or other licensed or certified mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, psychiatrist, social worker (or psychiatric nurse practitioner) as determined by the District. The Principal shall provide the student's parents/guardians with appropriate referral information for qualified mental health providers as appropriate for the situation.
 1. Assessments completed by evaluators selected by the school district shall be at the expense of the school district.
 2. If applicable, assessments completed by evaluators selected by the student's parent/guardian shall be at the expense of the parent.
- c. For purposes of the assessment, it is necessary for the evaluator to have access to all relevant information regarding the student and the incident giving rise to the exclusion. The student's parent/guardian must provide consent for a member of the District to contact the professional completing the evaluation to provide necessary background information.
 1. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached and the student is screened and/or assessed by the appropriate school personnel as being in imminent danger of harming him/herself or others, the school may initiate an immediate assessment.
- d. The assessment report must include the Evaluator's name and license number as well as the following:
 1. Identifying information i.e. the student's name and date of birth, date of evaluation, and date of report;
 2. Medical and family history;
 3. Review of presenting problem or incident;
 4. Mental status examination;



5. Diagnosis, as appropriate;
 6. Triggers for recurrence, as appropriate;
 7. Recommendations for follow-up services, as appropriate; and
 8. Other information deemed relevant by evaluator;
 9. A specific statement that the student does not present a danger to him/herself or others.
 10. Confirmation that the evaluator assessed the student in accordance with the standards set forth in Section IV. D of this Policy following and in connection with the precipitating school based incident.
- e. If the parents or guardians assume the cost of the assessment (through a provider of their own choosing), the resulting report is their property, and will require their consent before being released to the school district. Parents are encouraged to share such information with the school district. However, they must provide a clearance letter that includes at least the following information:
1. Student's name and date of birth;
 2. Confirmation that the evaluator assessed the student in accordance with the standards set forth in Section IV.D of this Policy following and in connection with the precipitating school based incident;
 3. The date of the assessment; and
 4. A specific statement that the student does not present as a danger to him/herself or others.
- g. If the parents or guardians assume the cost of the assessment (through a provider of their own choosing), the district reserves the right to obtain its own assessment by an evaluator of its choosing.



- h. Any evaluation report procured by the district is the property of the district. The parent may have access to such report, but may not limit or deny the District's access to such report.
- i. Regardless of whether the school district obtains an assessment by an evaluator of its selection or relies upon the assessment and/or clearance letter by an evaluator the parent/guardian selects, the final determination as to the student's readiness to return to school rests with the school district.

5. Re-Entry to School

Following receipt of the report/school clearance letter, the District shall schedule a meeting with the child's parents/guardian and an appropriate school district designee. The discussion may include the following:

- a. Consideration of CST referral, as appropriate
- b. The need for follow-up treatment, as necessary
- c. The need for additional evaluative information

If re-entry is deemed appropriate at that time, the District shall schedule a re-entry meeting with the child and his/her parents/guardians and an appropriate school district designee to facilitate the child's re-entry

6. Instruction During Exclusion

Students will be provided with appropriate home or other out of school instruction in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1 et seq. during any period of exclusion.

7. PROCEDURES

1. Any and all employees must immediately refer a student that they believe may be risk to the principal, school counselor, school psychologist, or school social worker. The student should not be left alone, rather escorted to the appropriate school personnel.

When in doubt, err on the side of caution.



By the close of the school day, the referring staff member must submit the attached form that recounts the events leading up to the referral.

2. Principal shall be immediately notified about the situation.
3. Principal or designee will direct two appropriate school employees to assess the student's "degree of risk."
4. The Principal or designees will alert the Superintendent if risk is suspected. If the student has an IEP, the Director of Special Services must be immediately notified as well. In this instance, the Director will also be copied on all summary reports.
5. The Principal or designee will alert the parent/guardian via telephone. A follow up letter, signed by the parent/guardian, must document the occurrence. If necessary, the parent/guardian may be summoned to the school. Any student drawings or letters etc. should be signed by the parent and filed with assessment documents.
6. Once assessed, the principal will make the determination as how to proceed.
7. All risk assessments will be documented and kept in the school's files, and by the building principal.
8. All risk assessment documents are due to the Principal by the close of the school day, on which the student was referred.
9. The principal shall determine "follow up" procedures, which shall be documented and kept with the risk assessment file.

Legal References:

N.J.S.A. 18A:17-42

Adopted: 22 August 2018

