



MEMBER ALERT
(AB 2246) SUICIDE PREVENTION
POLICY REQUIREMENT
APRIL 2017

Effective July 1, 2017, new Education Code section 215 requires local education agencies (LEAs) serving any of grades 7 to 12 to adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention for those grades.

Section 215 requires the State Department of Education to develop and maintain a model policy to serve as a guide. As of this writing, that model policy has not been published, but when published is likely to be available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp>. An uncodified section of the bill states that there is an existing model policy, from the Trevor Project, which is available for adoption or adaptation by LEAs and the State DOE. This model policy is available at <http://www.thetrevorproject.org/pages/modelschoolpolicy>.

The suicide prevention policy must:

- Be adopted at a regularly scheduled meeting
- Be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts
- Address procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- Provide that a school employee is to act only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license, and is not to diagnose or treat mental illness unless specifically licensed and employed to do so

The adopted policy is required specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Youth bereaved by suicide.
- Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders.
- Youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as foster care.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning youth.

The policy is also required to address any training to be provided to teachers in grades 7 to 12 on suicide awareness and prevention. Any materials approved by an LEA for training are to:

- state how to identify appropriate mental health services, both at the school site and within the community, and
- when and how to refer youth and their families to those services. Such materials may also include programs that can be completed through self-review.

Further resources are available on the SIA Website:

<http://www.sia-jpa.org/resources/member-alerts/ab-2246-suicide-prevention-policy-april-2017/>