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PazLo Education Foundation Suicide Prevention Policy

The Role of School Climate in Suicide Prevention

Understanding the critical impact of school climate on student well-being, including its influence on suicidality, is essential in developing effective prevention policies. Research consistently shows that positive school climates are associated with reduced levels of violence, bullying victimization, and greater feelings of safety among students. Importantly, school climate significantly affects the risk of suicidality in youth. Studies have demonstrated that adolescents who perceive their school climate as positive are less likely to report suicidal ideation or behaviors (Cornell & Huang, 2016; La Salle et al., 2017; Marraccini & Brier, 2017).

Positive school climates foster environments characterized by respectful, supportive relationships among students, staff, and teachers. These relationships play a protective role by creating a sense of connection and belonging that reduces feelings of isolation—a key risk factor for suicide. Schools with positive climates prioritize safety, inclusivity, and social support, ensuring that all students feel valued and respected.

In alignment with these findings, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy emphasizes the shared responsibility of staff, students, and families to cultivate safe, nurturing, and welcoming campuses. A positive school climate under this model includes:

1. **Strong Peer and Staff Relationships:** Encouraging respectful interactions, collaboration, and mutual understanding among students and staff to create a foundation of trust and openness.
2. **Proactive Safety Measures:** Implementing anti-bullying policies, clear behavioral expectations, and conflict resolution strategies to ensure students feel protected.
3. **Accessible Support Systems:** Ensuring that mental health resources are visible, destigmatized, and readily available to students who may need assistance for themselves or their peers.
4. **Inclusive Practices:** Promoting diversity and equity, ensuring that all students—regardless of background, ability, or identity—feel seen and included.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly assessing and improving school climate through surveys, feedback, and evidence-based practices, while involving students, parents, and staff in the process.

School leaders at PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy are committed to fostering a culture where students feel empowered to seek help without fear of judgment. Through continuous training, monitoring, and collaboration, the organization strives to sustain a school environment that promotes emotional well-being, resilience, and mutual support.

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Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Integration

A robust SEL program strengthens the impact of OBPP by teaching students emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication. Programs like **CASEL's SEL Framework** can be integrated with OBPP to build resilience and reduce emotional distress in students.

Recommended SEL Program:

- **Second Step® Social-Emotional Learning Program**
 - Teaches skills like emotion management, problem-solving, and decision-making.
 - Reinforces a positive school climate that complements OBPP's goals.
 - Learn more: [Second Step SEL Program](#).

Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has developed strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. These strategies include professional development for all school personnel (certificated and classified) in all job categories who regularly interact with students or are in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, including substitute teachers, volunteers, expanded learning staff (afterschool), and other individuals in regular contact with students such as crossing guards, tutors, and coaches.

Recognizing that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide, the PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has developed and implemented preventive strategies and intervention procedures that include the following:

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy consults school-employed professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses), administrators, other school staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local health agencies and mental health professionals, and community organizations in planning, implementing, evaluating, and updating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy also regularly convenes these stakeholders to review the policy, at a minimum every five years, and update as necessary as required by *EC* Section 215.

Collaboration and Resource Alignment

To maximize impact, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy actively works with:

1. **Local Governments and Community-Based Organizations:**
 - Partner with city and county agencies to align district suicide prevention policies with broader municipal or county suicide prevention strategic plans.

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- Ensure alignment of goals, research, and resources between district and local plans for cohesive prevention efforts.
- 2. **Behavioral Health and Community Resources:**
 - Leverage tools like the California Alliance for Children and Family Services' **Behavioral Health Resource Map**, which provides a comprehensive directory of mental health services by location, service type, contact information, and funding. This resource is invaluable for identifying supports available to youth and families in the community. Access the map here: [Behavioral Health Resource Map](#).
- 3. **Local Health and Emergency Services:**
 - Collaborate with first responders and local health organizations to strengthen crisis response systems and streamline access to care.
- 4. **Youth and Family Engagement:**
 - Foster the inclusion of student and family voices in the development and evaluation of policies to ensure culturally competent and accessible practices.

Stakeholder Partnerships

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy maintains a directory of partners actively involved in the district's suicide prevention efforts. Partners include representatives from schools, government agencies, board members, and healthcare providers. PazLo Education Foundation-Matrix for Success Academy ensures transparent communication and ongoing engagement with these stakeholders.

Continuous Improvement and Data-Driven Strategies

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy uses data from districtwide surveys, school site feedback, and community needs assessments to inform its suicide prevention strategies. This data-driven approach ensures that interventions remain effective, equitable, and responsive to emerging trends.

By fostering strong community partnerships and leveraging state and local resources, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy strives to create a proactive, comprehensive approach to suicide prevention that promotes the mental health and well-being of all students.

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Key Components of the Policy

1. Suicide Prevention:

- **Promote Emotional Wellness:** PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy recognizes that emotional wellness is integral to all functioning. Therefore, suicide prevention efforts should be aligned with broader policies and practices that support the emotional and behavioral well-being of students and staff. These efforts include:
 - School-based mental health services
 - Classroom education about mental health, stress management, and coping strategies
 - Activities to reduce stigma related to mental health and suicide
- **Create a Positive School Climate:** Research has shown that a positive school climate can significantly reduce suicidality among youth. Schools with a culture of respect, safety, and social support are associated with lower levels of bullying, violence, and suicidal behavior (Cornell & Huang, 2016; La Salle et al., 2017). Therefore, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy will foster a positive school climate where students feel safe, supported, and valued, and where they are encouraged to seek help for themselves or their peers.
- **Student Education:** Students should be educated to:
 - Recognize mental health challenges in themselves and their peers
 - Understand that seeking help is a sign of strength
 - Be aware of resources available to them, including on-campus mental health professionals and local community services
- **Staff Education and Training:** School staff, including certificated and classified personnel, substitute teachers, volunteers, expanded learning staff, and tutors, will receive ongoing professional development on recognizing the warning signs of suicidal ideation and behavior. Training will include:
 - Identifying risk factors and warning signs
 - How to approach and refer students to appropriate resources
 - How to create an emotionally supportive environment for student

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Suicide Prevention Crisis Team

To ensure the effective adoption, implementation, and periodic review of suicide prevention policies, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has established an in-house Suicide Prevention Crisis Team. This team comprises administrators, mental health professionals, school staff, parents or guardians. A staff member is designated to serve as a liaison to the district's Suicide Prevention Crisis Team. The school also involves one or two students per site to ensure the representation of student perspectives.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Suicide Prevention Crisis Team

The Crisis Team performs the following essential functions:

1. **Policy Review and Updates:**
 - Regularly review and update mental health-related school policies and procedures.
 - Provide annual summaries of school and district data, including trends related to student mental health and suicide prevention.
2. **Training and Professional Development:**
 - Review and select evidence-based or evidence-informed general and specialized mental health and suicide prevention training for staff, parents/guardians, and students.
 - Oversee the implementation of training programs and ensure compliance with California Education Code Section 215.
3. **Resource Management:**
 - Ensure suicide prevention policies, protocols, and resources are accessible on district and school websites.
 - Identify, vet, and promote resources and agencies that provide evidence-based or evidence-informed mental health services and crisis intervention.
4. **Community Collaboration:**
 - Partner with community mental health organizations to enhance prevention and response efforts.
 - Engage with law enforcement and relevant agencies to strengthen interagency collaboration and build a community-wide response framework.
5. **Advocacy and Awareness:**
 - Develop initiatives to raise awareness of suicide prevention resources among students, staff, and families.
 - Facilitate programs and campaigns that promote mental health awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding seeking help.
6. **Monitoring Compliance:**
 - Ensure adherence to district protocols, policies, and legal requirements related to suicide prevention.

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Guidance and Resources

The Crisis Team leverages national best practices to inform its strategies and interventions. Guidance from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a key resource. Additional information can be found at:

[Preventing Suicide: Guidelines for Administrators and Crisis Teams.](#)

By fostering collaboration and prioritizing mental health, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy aims to provide a safe, supportive environment for all students while proactively addressing the issue of suicide prevention.

Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has ensured school employees adhere to *EC* Section 215 which mandates district and school employees and their partners to act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. While it is expected that school professionals are able to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, screen and assess to identify suicide risk, and to provide ongoing supports to youth identified at risk, the care or treatment for suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting.

The development of messages related to suicide and suicide prevention can significantly impact individuals' thoughts and behaviors. Research demonstrates that talking about suicide prevention, when aligned with the **National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention's Framework for Successful Messaging**, does not increase suicide risk. In fact, positive, informed messages may promote help-seeking behavior and reduce stigma.

To ensure safe and effective communication, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy abides by the following guidelines:

- All messaging aligns with the **Skills Building: Messaging for Suicide Prevention** framework, which emphasizes safety, cultural competency, and clarity. [View the framework here.](#)
- Materials, resources, and communications are thoroughly reviewed to ensure compliance with evidence-based best practices for safe and effective messaging.
- Language used in materials and conversations promotes respect, inclusivity, and people-first terminology, avoiding stigma and harmful connotations.

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Approved Suicide-Related Terminology

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy uses specific language to refer to suicide or suicidal behavior. Examples include:

Use	Do Not Use
<p>“Died by suicide”</p> <p>or</p> <p>“Took their own life”</p>	<p>“Committed suicide”</p> <p>Note: Use of the word “commit” can imply crime/sin</p>
<p>“Attempted suicide”</p>	<p>“Successful” or “unsuccessful”</p> <p>Note: There is no success, or lack of success, when dealing with suicide</p>

Examples of People-First Language

- **Use:** “Person who has died by suicide” instead of “Suicide victim.”
- **Use:** “People with [mental illness, depression, etc.]” instead of labeling individuals by their diagnosis.
- **Focus:** On people’s experiences and perspectives without defining them solely by their challenges.

Safe and Effective Messaging

To ensure suicide prevention messaging is both safe and impactful, the PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy:

1. **Includes Suicide Prevention Resources:**
 - Distribute contact information for crisis resources in:
 - Parent/student handbooks.
 - District and school-issued identification cards for staff and students.
 - District and school websites.
 - Mental health or suicide prevention activities, parent/family workshops, and staff development sessions.
 - Recommended resources include:
 - **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Dial 988.
 - **Crisis Text Line:** Text “HELP” to 741-741.
 - **Teen Line:** Text “TEEN” to 839863.
 - **Trevor Project:** Call 1-866-488-7386 or text “START” to 678678.
 - **Trans Lifeline:** Call 1-877-565-8860.

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- Additional resources: [CDE Help for Students in Crisis](https://cdehelpforstudentsin crisis.org) & <https://suicidepreventionmessaging.org/>
- **Matrix for Success Academy School phone number:** 323-765-7005
- **Point of contact** (school resource)
 - Email School Psychologist: acastellanos@matrix4success.org
 - Email School Social Worker: vrojas@matrix4success.org
 - Email Administrator of Student Services: besparza@matrix4success.org

2. **Focuses on Prevention and Support:**

- Include information on warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors.
- Highlight the complexity of suicide, avoiding oversimplification or attributing it to singular causes.
- Emphasize prevention, coping mechanisms, and protective factors, encouraging a hopeful perspective.

3. **Avoids Harmful Messaging:**

- Do not share details about specific methods of suicide.
- Avoid sensationalizing language, such as "epidemic" or "skyrocketing," and refrain from using graphic images.

By adhering to these principles, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy seeks to foster a supportive, stigma-free environment that promotes mental health, encourages help-seeking, and prevents suicide.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention Training for School Staff

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy recognizes the critical role school staff play in identifying and supporting students at risk for suicide. In collaboration with CDE resources, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has carefully reviewed and selected training programs that are evidence-based, evidence-informed, and aligned with current best practices in suicide prevention.

Training Requirements

In compliance with **Education Code Section 215**, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy provides comprehensive training to all school staff and other adults on campus, including:

- Certificated and classified employees.
- Substitutes, volunteers, interns, tutors, coaches, and expanded learning staff (e.g., after school program staff).

At a minimum, all staff participate in:

- **Core Components of Suicide Prevention Training** before working with youth.

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- **Annual Refresher Training** to build on previous knowledge and integrate emerging best practices.

New hires receive training during the school year, and previously employed staff complete a minimum of one-hour general suicide prevention training annually.

Core Components of Suicide Prevention Training

The core training includes:

1. **Identifying Youth at Risk for Suicide**
 - Recognizing suicide warning signs, risk factors, and protective factors.
2. **Responding to Emotional Distress**
 - Approaching and interacting with youth experiencing emotional distress.
 - Developing skills to ask directly about suicidal thoughts.
3. **Warm Handoff Protocol**
 - Ensuring students at risk are not left to seek help independently.
 - Facilitating a “warm handoff” to another staff member or mental health professional by transferring care directly, in the presence of the student or family.
 - This hands-on approach emphasizes continuous care and immediate follow-up, rather than leaving students to navigate the process on their own.
4. **District-Approved Suicide Risk Response Procedures**
 - Adhering to protocols within the district’s Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).
 - Maintaining constant supervision of students at risk and immediately referring them for a suicide risk assessment.
5. **Postvention**
 - Understanding the role of educators and staff in supporting students and colleagues following a suicide death or attempt.

Ongoing Professional Development

Annual training expands on the core components and includes:

1. **Understanding the Impact of Trauma**
 - Exploring the effects of traumatic stress on emotional and mental health.
 - Reducing stigma associated with mental illness and promoting early prevention and intervention are critical in reducing suicide risk.
2. **Challenging Misconceptions about Suicide**
 - Addressing common myths about suicide, such as the belief that discussing suicide encourages it, to foster a more informed and supportive school environment.
 - In addition to providing accurate research-based information.
3. **Utilizing Resources**
 - Familiarizing staff with school and community mental health, suicide prevention resources, and referral services.

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4. **Safe Messaging Guidelines**

- Using appropriate terminology and adhering to safe messaging guidelines.
- Training on how to communicate about suicide with care to avoid potentially harmful effects.

5. **Recognizing Elevated Risk Groups**

- Learning to identify and support students from groups disproportionately affected by suicidal thoughts and behaviors, including:
 - Youth impacted by suicide or with a history of suicidal thoughts or behavior.
 - Youth with disabilities, mental illness, or substance use disorders.
 - Youth experiencing homelessness or in foster care or out-of-home settings.
 - Youth identifying as LGBTQ+.

6. **Skill-Building in Suicide Prevention**

- Practicing direct communication about suicide.
- Conducting warm handoffs effectively.

7. **District Procedures and Resources**

- Following district-approved response protocols for suicide risk, including supervision, referral, and MTSS supports.
- Understanding the role of staff in postvention strategies.

Data-Driven Training

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy integrates data from tools such as the **California School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys (CaSCHLS)**, **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**, and **Project CoVitality** to assess trends in suicidal ideation and behaviors. This data informs targeted interventions and improves staff training to address school-specific needs.

- **CaSCHLS:** calschls.org
- **YRBS:** cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs
- **Project CoVitality:** covitalityucsb.info

Responding to Students with Self-Injurious Behavior (NSSI)

Self-injury involves deliberately harming one's body, such as cutting or burning, often without suicidal intent. However, youth who self-injure are at higher risk for suicide attempts, making a comprehensive assessment essential.

Procedures for Addressing NSSI:

1. **Comprehensive Suicide Risk Assessment:**

- Conduct a **suicide risk assessment** using the protocols established by the Suicide Crisis Response Team (SCRT).

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- If the student is found to be suicidal, implement the action plan corresponding to their risk level.
- 2. **If Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) is Determined:**
 - Develop a **student safety plan** (refer to Attachment: [Student Safety Plan](#)).
 - **Notify parent/guardian** and request their presence at the school.
- 3. **Support for Parents/Guardians:**
 - Provide referrals to emergency and outpatient care services (refer to [Community & Mental Health Resources](#)).
 - Facilitate referrals for counseling services tailored to the family's needs (refer to: [Counseling Referral Form](#)).
 - Share resources about NSSI behaviors in youth (refer to <https://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu/resources.html>: Cornell Research Program on Self-Injurious Behavior in Adolescents and Young Adults).
- 4. **Communication and Confidentiality:**
 - Provide confidential, appropriate information to teachers directly supporting the student (refer to: [Teacher Notification Form](#)).
 - Retain all documentation in a **confidential file** (not in the student's cumulative record).

Responding to Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may exhibit self-injurious behaviors without suicidal intent, but comprehensive assessments are still required for those displaying suicidal ideation or behaviors.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities:

1. **Action Steps for SCRT:**
 - Collaborate with the **school psychologist** and/or the **Special Education Office**.
 - Follow **case-specific guidelines** outlined in the Special Education Procedural Manual.
 - Implement positive behavior interventions as outlined in the **MTSS Behavioral Framework** for students with disabilities.
2. **Specialized Support:**
 - Ensure interventions align with **Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services (ERICS)** for students whose emotional needs impact their ability to benefit from special education programs

Responding to Students in Transitional Housing, Foster Care, or Out-of-Home Placement

Youth experiencing housing instability or placement disruptions face increased risk for suicide.

Action Steps:

1. Conduct a **comprehensive suicide risk assessment** and follow the appropriate risk-level action plan.

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2. Collaborate with the **district administrator overseeing transitional housing or foster care programs** to create a network of support.
3. Obtain necessary releases of information from service agencies.
4. Maintain regular communication with the student's support team to ensure continuity of services and care.

Responding to Students Living with Mental and/or Substance Use Disorders

Students with mental health or substance use disorders face elevated suicide risks, especially when untreated.

Role of School Staff:

1. Recognize risk factors associated with mental health and substance use disorders, including:
 - Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and other mood disorders.
 - Alcohol or drug misuse.
2. Refer students to appropriate **treatment and counseling services**, facilitating connections to community-based resources when necessary.

Responding to LGBTQ Youth

LGBTQ youth, particularly those experiencing bias, bullying, or rejection, have significantly higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempts.

Considerations When Supporting LGBTQ Students:

1. **Assessment and Risk Management:**
 - Conduct a comprehensive **suicide risk assessment** and follow the corresponding action plan.
2. **Affirmation and Privacy:**
 - Be affirming and avoid making assumptions about a student's sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - Maintain confidentiality; do not disclose a student's sexual orientation or gender identity without their consent, including to parents/guardians.
3. **Create a Safe Environment:**
 - Ensure interactions are free of negative or rejecting messages.
 - Acknowledge the risks of suppression or concealment of identity and provide support.

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Procedures for Suicide Risk Response

- **Supervision and Immediate Referral:** Once a potential suicide risk is identified, students should be under **constant supervision** until they are referred for a formal suicide risk assessment. PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy will ensure that all staff are familiar with the **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)** and other district-approved procedures for managing student crises, including clear protocols for referring students to the appropriate mental health professionals and support services.
- **Postvention Support:** In the unfortunate event of a suicide attempt or death, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy will provide detailed **postvention protocols** to support students, staff, and families. This will include grief counseling, crisis support, and ongoing care for those affected by the incident. Educators and school staff will receive training on their roles in supporting students during this difficult time.

Alignment with Broader Plans

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy ensures all training aligns with countywide or regional strategic plans, such as **Striving for Zero: California's Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention 2020–2025**, and incorporates updates based on emerging research and feedback from previous trainings.

Review and Continuous Improvement

All training programs are reviewed and adjusted annually based on:

- Feedback from staff and stakeholders.
- Updates in best practices and research.
- Evaluation of prior professional development activities.

Through comprehensive, evidence-based training, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy is committed to fostering a school environment where all staff are equipped to identify, support, and refer students at risk for suicide while promoting mental health and well-being across the district.

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy are encourage to use the CalSCHLS, YRBS, or other survey (e.g., Project CoVitality) data to determine the prevalence of suicidal ideation and behaviors, including patterns or trends, among all students, particularly among identified high-risk populations at their schools and district. For a curated list of staff trainings, please visit Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Trainings/Programs for School Communities. See the CalSCHLS website at <https://calschls.org/>, the YRBS web page at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>, and the University of Santa Barbera's Project CoVitality web page at <https://www.covitalityucsb.info/>

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PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy ensures that designated mental health professionals receive specialized professional development to effectively assess and respond to students at risk for suicide. This professional development is tailored to enhance the skills of LEA-based mental health staff, including school counselors, psychologists, social workers, administrators, and nurses.

Purpose of Specialized Professional Development

Training is focused on equipping staff to:

- Conduct **suicide risk assessments (SRA)** using evidence-based tools.
- Intervene effectively during crises.
- De-escalate situations involving students in distress.
- Develop and implement **intervention strategies** specific to suicide prevention.
- Create **safety plans** and manage student re-entry following a crisis.
- Collaborate with caregivers and external support systems.

Components of Specialized Professional Training

1. Evidence-Based Suicide Risk Screening and Assessment Tools

Designated mental health professionals receive training on the administration and interpretation of the following PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy approved tools:

- **Columbia—Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS):**
[Access here](#)
- **Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9) Depression Scale:**
[Access here](#)
- **Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS):**
[Access here](#)
- **Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Toolkit (NIMH):**
[Access here](#)
- **Adolescent Suicide Assessment Protocol–20 (ASAP–20):**
[Access here](#)

2. Engaging and Supporting Students in Crisis

- Training on **approaching students** and initiating conversations about suicidal thoughts in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner.
- Skill-building for appropriately responding to disclosures of suicidal ideation, including active listening, empathy, and validation.

3. Parent/Caregiver Communication and Collaboration

- **Best practices for caregiver engagement:**

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- Approaching parents/caregivers with sensitivity.
- Delivering information about risk in a way that builds trust and collaboration.
- Providing resources and referrals to support services.

4. Safety Planning and Crisis Intervention

- Developing individualized **student safety plans**, focusing on immediate risk mitigation and long-term support.
- Identifying coping strategies and a network of trusted individuals to support the student.

5. Re-entry After a Crisis

- Best practices for managing student re-entry following a suicide attempt or crisis:
 - Creating a supportive environment that prioritizes the student's emotional and academic well-being.
 - Collaborating with teachers, administrators, and parents/caregivers to monitor progress and ensure follow-up care.

Frequency and Delivery of Training

- **Annual Professional Development:** All designated mental health staff receive annual training updates on emerging best practices, tools, and protocols for suicide risk assessment and prevention.
- **New Hire Training:** Newly hired mental health professionals are trained on core competencies in suicide prevention and crisis response upon employment.
- **Ongoing Skill Development:** Staff are provided with opportunities for continuous learning through workshops, webinars, and professional conferences.

By implementing this policy, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy ensures that mental health staff are equipped to provide comprehensive, evidence-based support to students at risk for suicide, fostering a safer school community.

Virtual Screenings for Suicide Risk

As telehealth services become a critical component of mental health care, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has established comprehensive policies and protocols to provide virtual suicide prevention, assessment, and intervention services. These practices address the need for flexibility during school closures or remote learning periods due to natural disasters, pandemics, or other emergencies.

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Virtual Suicide Prevention Efforts

1. Ensuring Regular Contact with Students

- **Staff Assignment and Protocols:**
PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy assigns school staff to establish regular contact with all students during distance learning or school closures.
- **Daily or Regular Check-ins:**
A structured process is implemented to maintain communication with students. Staff are trained to recognize and report concerns about emotional wellbeing or safety to appropriate mental health professionals.

2. Prioritizing High-Risk Students

- PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses, etc.) maintain regular contact with:
 - Students identified as high-risk due to prior behaviors or disclosures.
 - Students already on mental health caseloads.
 - Students referred by staff for exhibiting signs of distress.

3. Establishing Safety During Virtual Interactions

- **Location Identification:**
Each virtual interaction begins with confirming the student's physical location.
- **Parent/Caregiver Availability:**
The availability of a trusted adult is established to ensure a safety net during the conversation.

4. Resource Promotion and Access:

Staff provide students and families with information about school-based and community resources that address mental wellbeing and suicide prevention.

Protocols for Virtual Suicide Risk Assessments

1. Adopting Best Practices

- PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has adopted the **National Association of School Psychologists' (NASP's) guidelines** to ensure high standards of care during virtual screenings:
 - **Preparing for Virtual School Suicide Assessments Checklist:**
[Access here](#)
 - **Conducting Virtual Suicide Assessments Checklist:**
[Access here](#)

2. Evidence-Based Virtual Assessment Tools

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Designated mental health professionals use evidence-based tools adapted for virtual settings, including:

- **Columbia—Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)**
- **Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9)**
- **Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Toolkit**

3. Ensuring Confidentiality and Safety

- Virtual sessions are conducted through secure platforms that comply with privacy laws (e.g., FERPA and HIPAA).
- In cases where immediate risk is identified, the professional coordinates with parents/caregivers and emergency services to ensure student safety.

Training and Support for Staff

1. Staff Training on Virtual Practices

All school staff are trained annually on:

- Recognizing signs of distress in virtual environments.
- Responding to disclosures of suicidal thoughts or behaviors during remote interactions.
- Referring students to designated mental health professionals for further assessment.

2. Specialized Training for Mental Health Professionals

Designated mental health professionals receive advanced training on:

- Conducting suicide risk assessments in virtual settings.
- Communicating with caregivers during virtual assessments.
- Navigating challenges unique to remote interventions.
-

Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- **Feedback and Adjustment:**
PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy regularly reviews and updates its virtual suicide prevention protocols based on feedback, emerging best practices, and advancements in telehealth technologies.
- **Collaboration:**
PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy collaborates with community mental health providers to expand telehealth resources and referrals for students and families.

By implementing these protocols, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy ensures that students receive critical support during school closures or virtual learning periods, reducing risk and promoting mental wellbeing across all learning environments.

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Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Participation and Education

To effectively involve parents, guardians, and caregivers in suicide prevention efforts, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy has implemented a comprehensive approach that emphasizes collaboration, education, and accessibility of resources.

Policy Awareness and Accessibility

1. Wide Distribution of Policies:
 - The suicide prevention policy is included in all Parent/Student Handbooks and shared during parent meetings, orientations, and other events.
 - The policy is prominently displayed on the Matrix website, ensuring easy access for all stakeholders.
2. Opportunities for Input:
 - Parents, guardians, and caregivers are invited to provide feedback during the development, review, and implementation of the suicide prevention policy through forums, surveys, and committees.

Supporting Mental Health Awareness

- **Dedicated Online Resources:**
PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy maintains a dedicated webpage featuring guidance on addressing mental health challenges and promoting emotional wellbeing.
- **Community Engagement:**
Information about workshops, webinars, and local mental health events is shared with families to increase awareness and involvement.

By fostering education, providing resources, and maintaining open communication, PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy ensures that parents, guardians, and caregivers are well-equipped to support their children's mental health and participate actively in suicide prevention efforts.

Student Participation and Education

Effective suicide prevention includes educating and engaging students to recognize mental health challenges, develop coping skills, and seek help for themselves and others. PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy is committed to ensuring students are empowered with the knowledge and resources to support their mental health and the wellbeing of their peers.

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Promoting Awareness: Student Engagement and Self-Reporting

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy encourages initiatives to increase mental health awareness, including:

- Mental Health Awareness Weeks.
- Peer Counseling Programs.
- Freshman Success Programs.
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) on Campus High School Clubs.
- Adding hotline numbers to student ID cards.

Self-Reporting Procedures

- Students are encouraged to self-report concerns about suicidal thoughts or behaviors.
- While confidentiality is respected, students are informed that safety takes precedence, and any reports of suicide risk must be communicated to appropriate staff.
- PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy Staff, Counselors, Social Workers and School Psychologists are trained to address these reports with care, ensuring students feel supported.

Action Plan

Upon completion of the comprehensive suicide risk assessment, the Site Crisis Response Team (SCRT) member will develop an appropriate action plan based on the students risk levels.

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy recognizes that assessing and responding to suicidal ideation and self-injurious behaviors is crucial for student safety. This policy outlines different levels of risk, corresponding warning signs, and detailed action plans for intervention. The goal is to ensure timely and appropriate responses to safeguard students.

Levels of Risk for Suicidal Ideation and Self-Injurious Behaviors

1. Low Risk

- **Definition:** Exhibits some warning signs of distress but denies suicidal thoughts or plans.

Signs:

- Mild expressions of hopelessness or sadness.
- Reduced interest in previously enjoyed activities.
- Occasional self-isolating behavior.

Indicators:

- Vague or indirect statements about suicide (e.g., “I don’t want to be here anymore”).

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- Expressing feelings of hopelessness or helplessness without specific plans.
- Non-lethal, self-injurious behaviors with no expressed intent to die (e.g., superficial cutting).

Action Plan:

- **Immediate Steps:**
 - Speak with the student privately and compassionately.
 - Conduct a preliminary risk screening using an evidence-based tool (e.g., Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale [C-SSRS]).
 - Notify the student's parent/guardian.
 - Refer the student to school-based mental health resources for further evaluation.
- **Follow-Up:**
 - Schedule regular check-ins with the student.
 - Provide access to counseling or therapy services.
 - Equip the student with coping strategies and community resources.

2. Moderate Risk

- **Definition:** Verbalizes suicidal ideation without a specific plan or demonstrates non-lethal self-injury.

Signs:

- Increased expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness.
- Difficulty concentrating or marked decline in academic performance.
- Self-harm behaviors (e.g., cutting, scratching) without suicidal intent.

Indicators:

- Specific verbal or written expression of suicidal thoughts without a plan (e.g., "I'm thinking about ending my life").
- Self-injurious behavior with emotional distress but no imminent danger (e.g., cutting requiring medical attention).
- Increased withdrawal from friends and family or reckless behavior.

Action Plan:

- **Immediate Steps:**
 - Escalate to a trained school mental health professional immediately.
 - Conduct a full Suicide Risk Assessment (SRA).
 - Contact parents/guardians to develop a safety plan.
- **Follow-Up:**
 - Implement a formalized safety plan that includes:
 - Removing access to harmful items.
 - Identifying trusted adults for support.
 - Creating a crisis response protocol.

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- Ensure ongoing communication between the school, family, mental health providers, and provide resources.

3. High Risk

- **Definition:** Expresses suicidal ideation with a specific plan or intent, or engages in potentially lethal self-harm.

Signs:

- Direct verbal threats (e.g., "I want to die" or "I have a plan").
- Access to means (e.g., weapons, medications).
- Intense mood swings or sudden calm after agitation.
- Giving away possessions or saying goodbyes.

Indicators:

- Specific suicidal ideation with a plan and means to carry it out.
- Statements indicating an intent to die (e.g., "I will kill myself tomorrow").
- Recent or escalating self-injurious behavior with significant lethality.
- History of suicide attempts or recent traumatic events.

Action Plan:

- **Immediate Steps:**
 - Treat the situation as a crisis; ensure the student is not left alone.
 - Contact emergency services (911 or local crisis hotline) if immediate danger is present.
 - Notify the parent/guardian immediately.
 - Arrange for an emergency mental health evaluation.
 - **Safety Measures:** Remove access to means of self-harm.
 - **Parent/Caregiver Involvement:** Notify parents/caregivers immediately and provide them with crisis resources (e.g., National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988).
- **Follow-Up:**
 - Ensure the student has access to crisis intervention services, such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988lifeline.org).
 - Collaborate with community mental health agencies for intensive support.
 - Develop a re-entry plan for the student to return to school safely.

Visual Representations of Risk Levels and Signs

Below are resources that include visual aids to help educators, parents, and caregivers recognize and respond to various risk levels:

1. **The Columbia Protocol (C-SSRS):**
 - A step-by-step guide with visuals to assess risk levels.
 - [Access here.](#)

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2. **Youth Suicide Warning Signs (Visual Infographic):**
 - Detailed infographic of warning signs and risk levels.
 - [Access here.](#)
3. **Risk Assessment Flowchart (NASP):**
 - Visual guide to school-based suicide prevention protocols.
 - [Access here.](#)
 - [Access here.](#)
4. **SAMHSA Behavioral Health Risk Continuum Infographic:**
 - Helps identify where behaviors fall on a continuum from low to high risk.
 - [A Behavioral Health Lens for Prevention - Mass.gov](#)
 - [Access here.](#)

Warning Signs of Suicidal Ideation and Self-Injurious Behaviors

Emotional Signs:

- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or feeling trapped.
- Sudden mood changes (e.g., from depression to calmness).
- Increased anxiety, agitation, or anger.

Behavioral Signs:

- Withdrawing from friends, family, or activities.
- Giving away possessions or saying goodbyes.
- Sudden risk-taking behaviors or substance use.

Physical Signs:

- Unexplained injuries or frequent accidents.
- Drastic changes in sleeping or eating patterns.
- Neglect of personal appearance or hygiene.

Warning Signs Across Risk Levels

Behavioral Signs

- **Low Risk:** Withdrawal from social activities, minor changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- **Moderate Risk:** Increased irritability, reckless behavior, self-injury without suicidal intent.
- **High Risk:** Sudden calmness after distress, creating a will, detailed suicide plan.

Emotional Signs

- **Low Risk:** Mild sadness or anxiety.
- **Moderate Risk:** Persistent hopelessness or feelings of being a burden.

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- **High Risk:** Intense guilt, shame, or anger; expressions of being trapped.

Physical Signs

- **Low Risk:** Fatigue, headaches, or minor physical complaints.
- **Moderate Risk:** Noticeable weight loss or gain, unhealed wounds from self-injury.
- **High Risk:** Significant physical harm from self-injury, signs of substance abuse.

Action Steps by Risk Level

Low Risk

- Open dialogue: Ask the student about their feelings.
- Build trust: Encourage participation in safe, positive activities.
- Monitor: Observe for changes in behavior or mood.

Moderate Risk

- Conduct a suicide risk assessment (e.g., PHQ-9 or ASQ Toolkit).
- Provide school-based counseling or external referrals.
- Develop a collaborative safety plan with the student and parents.
- Educate parents on signs of escalating risk.

High Risk

- Remove the student from potential dangers immediately.
- Engage crisis response teams or emergency services.
- Create a 24/7 supervision plan until professional care is accessed.
- Collaborate with external mental health providers for ongoing care.
- Provide re-entry support upon the student's return to school.

Resources and Training for Staff and Families

1. **AFSP's Interactive Screening Program (ISP):**
 - Online tool for identifying students at risk.
 - [Learn more.](#)
2. **NASP Suicide Prevention Resources:**
 - Includes risk level-specific action plans and templates.
 - [Learn more.](#)
3. **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Risk Assessment Tools:**
 - Best practices for youth suicide prevention and assessment.
 - [Learn more.](#)
4. **Directing Change Warning Signs Guide:**
 - Step-by-step visuals for youth suicide prevention.
 - [Access here.](#)

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By using clear risk level definitions, corresponding signs, and detailed action plans, **PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy** ensures a comprehensive, proactive approach to addressing suicidal ideation and self-injurious behaviors. This policy prioritizes student safety through awareness, training, and robust intervention protocols.

To effectively prevent and respond to suicide and self-injurious behaviors, **PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy** has established protocols to assess and manage different levels of risk. The policy outlines risk levels, associated warning signs, and tailored action plans to ensure appropriate intervention and support.

Re-Entry Procedures for High-Risk Students

For students returning to school after a mental health crisis:

1. **Re-Entry Meeting:** Develop a plan with parents, mental health providers, and school staff.
2. **Monitoring:** Assign a trusted adult to check in regularly.
3. **Individualized Support Plan:** Adjust academic workload or schedule if needed.
4. **Peer Support:** Encourage involvement in peer-led groups (e.g., NAMI High School Clubs).
5. **Continuous Care:** Maintain communication with external mental health professionals.

By addressing each risk level with evidence-based strategies and clear protocols, **PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy** ensures a supportive and safe environment for all students.

Intervention and Referral for Suicide Screening or Risk Assessment

To safeguard the well-being of students, **PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy** has developed comprehensive protocols for intervention, screening/assessment, and referral in response to suicidal ideation or behavior. These protocols ensure that students receive immediate support, thorough assessment, and effective referral to appropriate mental health resources.

Intervention Protocol

1. **Immediate Action**
 - **Unsupervised Risk Prohibition:** Students experiencing suicidal ideation must not be left unsupervised.
 - **Escorted Support:** Students should be respectfully escorted by trained staff to a safe location for assessment.
2. **Notification of Crisis Team**
 - Staff must promptly notify the school's suicide prevention crisis team when a student is suspected of being at risk.
 - Crisis team members, trained in suicide prevention and intervention, will conduct a risk assessment.

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3. Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Parents/guardians/caregivers should be notified promptly, unless it is determined that such notification would put the student at greater risk.
- Crisis team members should provide parents/guardians with clear next steps, including mental health resources and referrals.

4. Documentation

- All interventions must be documented, including details of the incident, actions taken, and follow-up plans.

Screening/Assessment Protocols

1. Screening Tools

PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy utilizes evidence-based tools for suicide risk screening, including:

- **Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS):** [Access here.](#)
- **Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9):** [Access here.](#)
- **Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ):** [Access here.](#)
- **Beck Scale for Suicide Ideation (BSS):** [Access here.](#)

2. Assessment Procedures

- A trained crisis team member will administer the screening tool and evaluate the student's level of risk (low, moderate, or high).
- Risk levels are categorized based on the student's current thoughts, plans, intent, and available means.
- The assessment must be conducted in a private, supportive setting to ensure student comfort and openness.

3. Collaboration

- Teachers and staff should work closely with the crisis team, providing necessary context or observations.
- Consultation with external professionals (e.g., county mental health professionals) is initiated when necessary.

Referral Protocol

1. Internal and External Referrals

- Students identified as at risk must be referred to appropriate mental health resources, including school-based mental health professionals or community providers.
- For students requiring higher levels of care, a referral is made to the local County Mental Health Plan (MHP).

2. Referral Process

- All staff, including teachers, administrators, and volunteers, are trained in the referral process, which includes:
 - Completing referral forms and ensuring secure hand-off to the crisis team.
 - Providing information to parents/guardians about the referral and available services.
- Staff can access referral guides and forms on the school's shared digital platform.

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3. Community-Based Resources

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Call or text 988 ([Visit website](#)).
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741 ([Visit website](#)).
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Treatment Locator:** Access here.

Crisis Team Communication and Resources

1. Crisis Team Information

- Names, titles, and contact information of crisis team members are shared with staff, parents/guardians, and students through:
 - Parent/student handbooks.
 - School and LEA websites.
 - Staff training materials.

2. Crisis Intervention Procedures

- The crisis team collaborates with community mental health agencies to ensure follow-up care for students.
- Crisis intervention steps for on-campus incidents, including after an attempt or suicide death, are clearly outlined.

3. Postvention Support

- **After a Suicide Toolkit for Schools** (by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention): Access here.
- **Trauma-Informed Crisis Response Resources:** [Access here](#).

Staff Training

1. Advanced Training for Crisis Teams

- Training covers:
 - Suicide risk assessment techniques.
 - Legal and ethical considerations.
 - Crisis intervention and postvention strategies.

2. Training Resources

- **LivingWorks ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training):** Learn more.
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA):** [Learn more](#).
- **SafeTALK Training:** Learn more.

By implementing these intervention, screening, and referral protocols, **PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy** ensures a comprehensive approach to preventing suicide and protecting the mental health of all students.

Staff Protocols for Imminent Danger Situations

1. Recognizing Imminent Danger

Situations considered to present imminent danger include:

- The student has direct access to a weapon.

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- The student is in a physically unsafe location (e.g., rooftop, near traffic).
- The student expresses immediate intent to harm themselves with a clear and actionable plan.

2. Immediate Action Steps

- **Call for Assistance:** Notify the school administrator or suicide prevention liaison immediately.
- **Contact Emergency Services:** Call 911 to request emergency intervention. The call should **not** be made in the student's presence.
- **Do Not Leave the Student Alone:** Ensure the student remains supervised at all times by a trained staff member.
- **Avoid Physical Restraint:** Staff should never physically restrain a student or block an exit, unless explicitly trained to do so.

3. Documentation and Follow-Up

- Document all actions taken, including the time and details of the incident.
- Ensure that the situation is reported to the LEA crisis team for further review and action.

Parent, Guardian, Caregiver, and Family Support

1. Referral Awareness

- **Referral Process:** Parents/guardians/caregivers are educated about how to respond to a crisis, including accessing school-based and community resources.
- **Community Resources:** Community-based organizations offering evidence-based suicide prevention and intervention programs are prominently displayed on the LEA's website.

2. Vacation and Absence Coverage

- Staff out-of-office replies should include links to crisis resources, such as:
 - **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (988):** [Visit website](#).
 - **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741 ([Visit website](#)).
 - **Local mental health hotlines and support organizations.**

Student Empowerment and Support

1. Referral Awareness for Students

- Referral processes are made accessible and clear to students, providing information on how to access:
 - School-based counseling services.
 - Local mental health providers.
 - Crisis intervention services.

2. Encouraging Peer Reporting

- Students are encouraged to seek help if they or a peer are experiencing emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or have attempted suicide.
- Staff create a culture of trust and openness, reducing stigma around mental health.

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Parental Notification and Involvement

1. Notification of Screening/Assessment

- Parents/guardians/caregivers are notified whenever their child has been screened or assessed for suicide risk.

2. Continuity of Care

- School staff verify that follow-up treatment has been accessed and request documentation from parents/guardians.
- If barriers to care are identified (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues), school staff work with families to address these concerns.
- If care is not provided, and the student remains at risk, Child Protective Services (CPS) may be contacted.
- **CPS Contact Information:** [Insert Local Contact Details].

Action Plan for In-School or During School-Sponsored Suicide Attempts

When a suicide attempt occurs during school hours or at a school-sponsored event, the following steps are to be implemented:

1. Immediate Response

- **Stay Calm:** Remaining calm helps de-escalate the situation.
- **Clear the Area:** Move other students away to ensure privacy and safety.
- **Contact Key Personnel:** Notify the administrator or suicide prevention liaison.

2. Emergency Response

- **Call 911:** Provide emergency responders with detailed information (e.g., suicide note, medications taken, weapons access).
- **Administer First Aid:** If required, provide first aid until professionals arrive.

3. Communication

- **Notify Parents/Guardians:** Contact parents/guardians/caregivers as soon as possible.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain privacy but emphasize safety. Avoid promising full confidentiality.

4. Support the Student

- **Do Not Leave Alone:** The student must remain supervised, even during restroom visits.
- **Listen Actively:** Encourage the student to talk, but avoid judgment.
- **Provide Comfort:** Offer reassurance and emphasize that help is available.

5. Release to a Responsible Party

- Students are only released to their parents/guardians/caregivers or qualified mental health professionals.

Resources and Training

1. Staff Training

- Regularly train staff on responding to imminent danger situations, including:
 - Suicide risk identification.
 - Crisis de-escalation strategies.

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- Emergency response protocols.

2. Resources for Families and Students

- **Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S):** [Learn more.](#)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA):** [Access resources.](#)
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA):** [Learn more.](#)

By implementing these enhanced policies, **PazLo Education Foundation - Matrix for Success Academy** ensures a proactive and comprehensive approach to managing imminent danger situations, prioritizing safety and effective crisis response.

Action Plan for Out-of-School Suicide Attempts

When a student attempts suicide outside of school property, it is crucial to handle the situation with compassion, confidentiality, and a focus on providing appropriate support for the student and their family. The following steps outline the policy and procedures to ensure privacy, intervention, and support.

1. Contacting Parents/Guardians/Caregivers/Families

- **Immediate Contact:** Reach out to the student's parents/guardians/caregivers to express concern and offer support.
- **Collaboration:** Discuss with the family how they would like the school to respond to the situation while minimizing the spread of rumors among staff and students.
- **Accurate Information:** Obtain permission from the family to share information and ensure the details shared are accurate.

2. Providing Support

- **Student Care:** Collaborate with mental health professionals to determine the best course of action for supporting the student and providing care.
- **Affected Peers:** Offer support to other students who may be affected by the incident, ensuring access to counseling and emotional resources.

3. Reintegration Plan

- Develop a clear plan for the student's return to school that includes academic accommodations and emotional support.
- Maintain close communication with the student's parents/guardians/caregivers and any mental health professionals involved in their care.

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Re-Entry and Supporting Students After a Mental Health Crisis

Students returning to school after a suicide attempt or mental health crisis require special attention to ensure their safety and continued recovery.

1. Re-Entry Process

- **Authorization:** Obtain a signed release of information from parents/guardians/caregivers and healthcare providers.
- **Safety Plan:** Collaboratively create a safety plan with input from the student, family, and school-based mental health professionals.
- **Staff Awareness:** Inform relevant staff about potential accommodations, such as excused absences or reduced workloads, while respecting the student's privacy.

2. Ongoing Support

- **Monitoring:** Maintain regular check-ins with the student to assess their emotional and academic well-being.
- **Parent Collaboration:** Keep an open line of communication with parents/guardians/caregivers to address any concerns.
- **Aftercare Plan:** Provide resources for aftercare, such as referrals to local mental health services or crisis hotlines.

Key Resources for Re-Entry

- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741 ([Website](#)).
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 ([Website](#)).

Responding After a Suicide Death (Postvention)

Postvention is an essential component of a comprehensive suicide prevention plan. It involves responding to a suicide death in a way that supports grieving individuals, reduces the risk of contagion, and fosters a sense of safety in the school community.

1. Immediate Response

- **Verification of Death:** Designate a staff member to confirm the death and its cause.
- **Crisis Team Activation:** Convene the school Crisis Team to coordinate the response.
- **Staff Notification:** Notify all staff in person or via phone to avoid misinformation.

2. Communication

- **Student Notification:** Share the news with students in small, supervised groups. Avoid large assemblies.
- **Media Liaison:** Assign a trained spokesperson to handle media inquiries. Use safe messaging guidelines from [Reporting on Suicide](#).

3. Support for the School Community

- Provide counseling and support services for students and staff.
- Identify and closely monitor students who may be at risk of imitative behavior.

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4. Memorial Considerations

- Avoid permanent or sensationalized memorials. Focus on meaningful activities, such as donations or service projects.

5. Long-Term Support

- Recognize anniversaries, birthdays, and other significant dates that may be difficult for the community.
- Provide ongoing support to close friends, siblings, and others significantly affected by the death.

Postvention Resource

- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Toolkit:** [After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools](#).

Important Contacts and Resources

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 ([Website](#)).
- **Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ Support):** Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678678 ([Website](#)).
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** [Suicide Prevention Resources](#).

These updates to the policy emphasize the importance of sensitivity, collaboration, and proactive planning to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and the broader school community.