



**UTOPIAN**  
ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS

## **SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY**

Utopian Academy for the Arts (UAFA) recognizes the importance of the health and welfare of students and staff. Therefore, UAFA shall provide to all certified personnel, annual training in suicide awareness and prevention in accordance with state law and rules established by the Georgia Department of Education.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop procedures to address at a minimum, suicide prevention efforts, intervention, and postvention. Such procedures shall be developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders, school employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention experts.

In accordance with state law, no person shall have a cause of action for any loss or damage caused by any act or omission resulting from the implementation of this policy or its implementing procedures or resulting from any training, or lack thereof, required by state law or this policy. The training, or lack thereof, required by the provisions of state law shall not be construed to impose any specific duty of care. Neither the training nor the procedures are designed to impose ministerial duties but to provide a framework in which educators can exercise their professional judgment in the best interest of students.

It shall be the policy of all faculty and staff to monitor student behavior in a manner that allows for notification to be given to the proper school or external authorities should we suspect that a student is contemplating or has contemplated suicide. For the purpose of this policy, the Crisis Team shall consist of the Dean of Students, the Special Education Director, and the Principal. Markers for students at high risk for suicide include those who:

- Have previously threatened suicide.
- Look for access to means to harm themselves.
- Talk or write about death, dying, or suicide.
- Have made previous suicide attempts serious enough to require hospitalization.
- Talking about suicide
- Frequently talking about death
- Talking about feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless - saying things like "it would be better if I wasn't here" or "I want out"
- Individual exhibits signs of depression, including deep sadness, loss of interest, trouble sleeping and eating
- Abrupt change of mood, from extreme sadness to happiness or calm
- Risk-taking behavior, (e.g. driving too fast)
- Person exhibits loss of interest in things that he/she used to care about



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- Person calls or visits people to say good-bye
- Person seems to be putting their affairs in order

Should there be a verbal outcry or a written indicator that a student is thinking about committing suicide, and the incident occurs on Utopian's property, faculty and staff are to take the following steps:

- Call 911
- Contact Principal
- Secure the area as soon as possible and keep all students away
- Send staff communication informing them that a medical emergency has occurred
- Provide constant adult supervision to the student to ensure safety ( do not let the student out of your sight)
- Contact the student's parent or guardian
- Release the student to parent or Emergency Response Personnel as dictated by the situation
- The Crisis Team will meet to assess whether additional steps should be taken to ensure the safety of the affected student or any other students on property
- A representative from the Crisis Team will prepare a written statement outlining precipitating events to be distributed to parents and guardians either through email or by letter.
- If a student makes a threat to physically or verbally harm themselves, UAFAs faculty and staff will take the following actions:
  - Have a member of the Crisis Team notify parents to pick up the student immediately after the statement is made so that the student can be taken to a mental health professional.
  - A Crisis Team representative will remain with the student and be available to provide referral resources for the student once the parent picks them up. Resource information will be maintained and kept current in the Counsellors office. Resources for free 24 hour mental health assessment services should also be given to parents
  - A Crisis Team representative should request that parents provide documentation that the student has been assessed, is stable, and is cleared to return to school.

If a staff member becomes aware of a suicide attempt by a student, and the threat or attempt occurred at an out of school location, the staff member WILL:

- Call 911
- Contact the student's parent or guardian
- Make a written report to the Dean of Students, the Special Education Director, or the Principal.



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It should be noted that students are less likely to harm themselves when:

- They are involved in extracurricular activities
- There is a positive connection with staff members
- There is a safe place to vent/ share concern/issues
- There is a sense of connection or participation in school
- When we teach students it is okay to ask for help
- When we acknowledge student efforts
- When we can readily access and care for mental / physical / substance disorders

Resources:

Clayton County Government – Department of Mental Health

- 770-991-7420

Ga. Crisis and Access Line:

- 1-800-715-4225
- 1-800-Suicide (1-800-784-2433)
- 1-800-Talk (1-800-273-8255)

Web resources:

[Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#)

Sponsor of this program, focuses on resources for the competent school community, including Lifelines, an evidence-based suicide prevention program for schools. Free on-line educator training!

[www.sptsusa.org](http://www.sptsusa.org)

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#)

Free confidential, 24-hour hotline, free materials

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)



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[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)