



Comprehensive School Safety Plan

**B.E.S.T. Academy
1704 Cape Horn
Julian, CA 92036**

School Board Approved: 04/07/2021

B.E.S.T. Academy is committed to ensuring that students enrolled in this School, and all employees attend a school that is safe and secure. B.E.S.T. Academy believes that a beginning step toward safer schools is the development of a comprehensive plan for school safety. B.E.S.T. Academy intends that parents, students, teachers, administrators, counselors, classified personnel, and community agencies develop safe school plans, including local law enforcement. B.E.S.T. Academy site committee will review these safe school plans on an annual basis and proposed changes will be submitted to the Board for approval.

Academic Ethics

As members of the B.E.S.T. Academy community, students and teachers are expected to adhere to a high level of intellectual integrity. The school community takes pride in the atmosphere of honesty and academic integrity the teachers and students maintain. Students are honor bound to refrain from cheating or plagiarizing academic work. Those who do so can expect both grade penalty and disciplinary consequences.

Any instance of cheating or plagiarism by a B.E.S.T. Academy student is unacceptable. B.E.S.T. Academy students are expected to follow ethical and responsible academic behavior. Any instance of plagiarism/cheating is documented in the student file. The following is not tolerated at B.E.S.T. Academy:

- Cheating on tests or assessment
- Plagiarism (passing off others' work as your own)
- Copying and pasting work from online sources as your own
- Fabrication (making up sources that do not exist)
- Theft or alteration of academic materials

First offense: A student committing any of the above offenses one time will lose all credit for assignment/assessment, and will not be given an opportunity for makeup. This offense will result in a meeting with the parent/legal guardian, student, teacher.

Second offense: A student committing any of the above offenses on two separate occasions in the same course will receive a failing semester grade in that course and a meeting will be held with parent/legal guardian, student, teacher, and Program Lead. A student committing any of the above offenses on two separate occasions in two separate courses will result in a meeting with the above attendees, and a decision will be made regarding next steps. This may result in a failing grade in both courses

Third offense: A student committing any of the above offenses on a third occasion will result in an immediate failing semester grade in ALL courses that have been affected by cheating/plagiarism. A meeting with parent/legal guardian, student, teacher, Program Lead, and B.E.S.T. Academy Counselor will follow, and the student's continued enrollment will be discussed. This may result in disenrollment from the program.

District Level Complaints

B.E.S.T. Academy students and their parents tend to maintain very close communication with their teachers. Such communication is vital to each student's academic success. In some cases, the student or parent may have a concern that they wish to bring to the attention of the Director. Discussing such issues with the Director will routinely result in a satisfactory resolution. Concerns not resolved at this level may be submitted in writing to the B.E.S.T. School Board.

Conduct, Grievance, Due Process, and Communication

Freedom of Speech: B.E.S.T. Academy respects students' rights to express ideas and opinions, take stands, and support causes – whether controversial or not – through their speech, writings, printed materials and/or the wearing of buttons, badges and other insignia. B.E.S.T. Academy will limit students' freedom of expression as allowed by law, in order to maintain an orderly school environment and to protect the rights, health and safety of all members of the school community. For the purposes of this policy, "school premises" includes online (internet) as well as the School's physical premises. In addition, any venue where a school event is held, including but not limited to such places as state testing sites, field trip locations, school social event venues, school dance venues or graduation venues, will also be considered "school premises" while that school activity is taking place and while school personnel and students are there.

Limitations on student expression include the following:

- Students are prohibited from expressing ideas, or distributing or posting any materials which are obscene, libelous, or slanderous.
- Students are prohibited from expressing ideas, or distributing or posting any materials, which demonstrably incite students to commit unlawful acts.

- Students are prohibited from expressing ideas, or distributing or posting any materials, which violate school rules or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the School.
- Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct in any school setting or activity, which for any reason materially disrupts school work or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the rights of others.
- The use of "fighting words" or epithets is not constitutionally protected if the speech, considered objectively, is abusive and insulting rather than a communication of ideas, and the speech is used in an abusive manner in a situation that presents a danger that it creates a hostile environment.

Written Publications Code: Students are free to post or distribute handbills, leaflets and other printed or electronic material, as long as they comply with the above guidelines, and bear the name and the address or contact location of the sponsoring organization or individual. Students may collect signatures on petitions concerning either school or out-of-school issues.

Printed materials or petitions may be distributed only:

1. Before or after any school sponsored activity;
2. In locations that do not obstruct the normal flow of traffic to or from any school sponsored activity; and
3. Without undue noise.

Students must not use any form of coercion to convince students or any other person to accept printed matter or to sign petitions. No funds or donations shall be collected for any material distributed.

Students have a right to express their opinions in school publications such as newsletters, written assignments, and other school publications that are distributed, but must follow the limitations listed above regarding the legally allowable limits on student expression in a school setting. If there are pupil editors of official school publications who may be responsible for assigning and editing the news, journalism advisers (school employees) still remain ultimately responsible for supervising and maintaining professional standards of English and journalism.

There shall be no undue delay in publishing student materials unless there are valid concerns that the material violates these guidelines.

Clothing/Buttons and Badges: Buttons, badges, armbands, or clothing bearing slogans or sayings may be worn unless their message falls within the categories prohibited above. No teacher or administrator shall interfere with this practice on the grounds that the message may be unpopular with students or faculty.

Discipline and Appeals: Students may be disciplined for speech or communication which violates the above policies. However, students will not be disciplined solely for activities which are considered to be constitutionally protected speech or communication.

Bullying and Prohibited Behaviors

B.E.S.T. Academy is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. This prohibition includes aggressive behavior; physical, verbal, and psychological abuse; and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected group, such as, but not limited to, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, color, national origin, parenting or marital status, immigration status, disability or any other category protected by state or federal law.

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in assessing whether a particular behavior is a prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether or not a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

Harassment - any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for the other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

Bullying – a course of abusive treatment (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that typically involves the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when habitual and involving an imbalance of power. It may involve verbal, written or cyber harassment, physical assault or coercion and may be directed persistently towards particular victims.

Cyber-bullying – the use of information and communication technologies, such as, but not limited to, cell phone, email, instant messaging, social media websites, Twitter, etc. to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that (i) is intended to harm others or (ii) that an objectively reasonable person would expect to cause harm to others. Cyber-bullying includes the posting or other transmission of text, video, or images that are embarrassing, demeaning, or threatening in nature, regardless of whether the subject of such text, video, or images directed, consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue posting or other transmission.

Hazing – the use of ritual and other activities involving harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, abuse or humiliation for the purpose of initiating a person or persons into a group, regardless of whether such person(s) consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue behavior(s) and action(s).

Intimidation – a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

Violence within a dating relationship - any behavior by a student exhibited towards that student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological, and/or mental abuse.

Sexting - knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another person any photograph or video which depicts nudity and/or text message that is sexually explicit and/or is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another person as described above.

Prohibited behaviors include all of the above.

The School Administration and School Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, caretaker, or other third-party.

This Policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on school property.

This Policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function, such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that a student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation by using the Uniform Complaint Procedure found here:

When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, B.E.S.T. Academy shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to him/her. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the School shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the B.E.S.T. Academy's disciplinary process. This may include expulsion for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for caretakers, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for employees will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in this handbook.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s)' caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such notification, care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, and/or dating violence.

If, after investigation, the act(s) of prohibited behavior by a specific student is/are verified, the school staff or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the caretaker of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying/cyberbullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This Policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by state or federal law).

Complaints: Students and/or their caretakers may file formal written reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by following the Uniform Complaint Procedures available on the

school website. Such reports should be reasonably specific, including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports shall be promptly forwarded to the designated person for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their caretakers may make informal complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including the person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint

Complaints regarding suspected discrimination in any school program based on the protected categories may be directed to the B.E.S.T. Academy's Title IX Coordinator. Contact information may be found on the school website. Complaints are filed using the Uniform Complaint Procedures available on the school website.

B.E.S.T. Academy will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the B.E.S.T. Academy's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

Discipline and Due Process for Students

All students enrolled in B.E.S.T. Academy are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the B.E.S.T. Academy, and caretakers are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this handbook. Students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. B.E.S.T. Academy adheres to the suspension and expulsion guidelines established by the California Education Code Section 48900.

Suspension: When a student is suspended, he/she is temporarily removed from class (Accelerate and other digital curriculum) and/or other school sponsored programs or activities. The length of a suspension is determined by the Director (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing in a timely manner, and will become part of a student's school record. Please see the below Suspension (no more than ten (10) days) section for more information.

During a period of suspension as defined by the Director, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of the digital curriculum is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of digital curriculum may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the caregiver is responsible for logging on to the digital curriculum and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his/her schoolwork during a suspension.

The following list of offenses may result in suspension or expulsion from B.E.S.T. Academy. All cases recommended for expulsion will be investigated and determined on specific facts.

- Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person.
- Unlawfully possessed, used, sold, or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance listed in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 11053-11058, alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind.
- Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance listed as defined in Health and Safety Code, Section 11053-11058, an alcoholic beverage, or an intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered, or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid, substance, or material and represented same as a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant.
- Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
- Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
- Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
- Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes,

smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel. This restriction shall not prohibit a student from using or possessing his/her own prescription products.

- Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.

Unlawfully possessed, or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia, as defined in Section 11014.5 of the Health and Safety Code.

- Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.

- Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.

- Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e. a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.

- Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonable expected effect of materially disrupting classwork, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.

Mandatory Recommendation for Expulsion [California Education Code 48915(c)]

The Executive Director must recommend expulsion for the following:

1. Possessing, selling, or otherwise furnishing a firearm.
2. Brandishing a knife at another person.
3. Selling a controlled substance.
4. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault as defined in Penal Code 261, 266c, 286, 288, 288a or 289 or committed a sexual battery as defined in Penal Code 243.4.
5. Possession of explosives (US Code, Section 921, Title 18)

Expulsion: When a student is expelled, he/she is separated from the School for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented timely and in writing, and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia.

Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

The School will not discipline students protected under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* of

1973, the *Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act* (IDEA), or the *American with Disabilities Act* (ADA) unless the school complies with the requirements of those acts and state law.

Quasi-Mandatory/Permissive Recommendation for Expulsion [California Education Code 48915 (a)]

The Executive Director shall recommend expulsion for the following and The Governing Board is required to make an additional finding that either of the following conditions exists:

- (a) Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; or
- (b) Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the pupil causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.
 1. Causing serious physical injury
 2. Possession of any knife, explosive, or dangerous object of no reasonable use to a student. As used in this section, "knife" means any dirk, dagger, or other weapon with a fixed, sharpened blade fitted primarily for stabbing, a weapon with a blade fitted primarily for stabbing, a weapon with a blade longer than 3 1/2 inches, a folding knife with a blade that locks into place, or a razor with an unguarded blade.
 3. Possession of any controlled substance
 4. Robbery or extortion
 5. Assault or battery on a school employee

Discretionary Recommendation [California Education Code 48900]

The Executive Director may recommend expulsion for the following if:

- (a) Other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; or (b) Due to the nature of the violation, the presence of the pupil causes a continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others.
 - Physical injury to another person
 - Willfully caused physical injury by force or violence upon another person
 - a. Possession of weapons, explosives or dangerous objects
 - b. Possession or use of controlled substance, alcohol or intoxicant
 - c. Offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell a substance represented to be a controlled substance
 - d. Committed robbery or extortion
 - e. Vandalism to school property or private property
 - f. Theft
 - g. Possession of tobacco
 - h. Excessive use of profanity or repeated vulgarity
 - i. Possession of drug paraphernalia
 - j. Defiance or disruption of school activities
 - k. Possession of stolen property
 - l. Possession of an imitation firearm

- m. Commit or attempt to commit sexual assault or sexual battery
- n. Harass, threaten or intimidate a student witness
- o. Selling Soma
- p. Hazing
- q. Sexual harassment
- r. Hate violence
- s. Intentional harassment, threats, or intimidation
- t. Intentional terrorist harassment, threats or intimidation against school staff or property

Jurisdiction [California Education Code 48900, 48915]

All school rules will be enforced:

- While on school grounds
- While coming to or going from school
- During or while coming to or going from a school-sponsored activity.

Expulsion Committee: If the Executive Director finds that a student committed an offense that may justify expulsion, the Executive Director shall refer the matter to the President of the Board of Directors. The Board President has the discretion to determine if the matter will be heard by the Board of Directors or by an Expulsion Committee. Expulsion Committee members will be appointed by the Board President.

The Expulsion Committee shall be composed of a minimum of three members; at least one committee member will also be a member of the Board of Directors. Impartial and neutral committee members will be selected for each instance requiring review of a student's potential expulsion. If a matter is referred to the Expulsion Committee, the committee adjudicates in the place of the Board of Directors. The student shall have the right to present his/her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by counsel. All committee decisions regarding a student's expulsion are final.

Due Process for Students: The following actions will be conducted by the School, per each of the disciplinary measures as outlined below:

Suspension (no more than ten (10) days): A meeting will be convened with the student, caretaker, Director, and other staff members as appropriate. The Director will inform the student and caretaker of the allegations and an explanation of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his/her version of the occurrence. If the Director determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, written notice will be provided to the student and his/her caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law. The Director has the authority to make a decision to suspend a student for up to 10 days.

Suspension of more than 10 days (Expulsion): If the Director believes that a student has

committed an offense that might require expulsion, the Director may suspend the student for ten (10) days pending further proceedings and/or a Board or Expulsion Committee hearing. During this time, the Director may then request a hearing by the Board of Directors, or the appropriate Expulsion Committee, to discuss the possible expulsion of the student. If the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time and location of hearing; (2) description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or caretaker have a right to review the student's school records prior to the hearing; (4) description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion. At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present his/her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by counsel. The Board, through the Director, will provide notification to the student and caretaker of the Board or Expulsion Committee's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the Board or Expulsion Committee is final.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities: If a student with a disability violates a code of conduct, he/she will be disciplined according to the discipline measures described above for up to ten (10) days. Upon subsequent violations that result in suspensions that exceed ten (10) days, or exceed ten (10) days cumulatively within a school year, the School will determine if the behavior manifested from the student's disability. If B.E.S.T. Academy determines that the violation is not a manifestation of the student's disability, B.E.S.T. Academy will apply the discipline procedures to the student in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities. However, if it is determined that the violation manifested from the student's disability, B.E.S.T. Academy will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior plan to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

Youth Suicide Prevention Policy

The School Board of B.E.S.T. Academy recognize that suicide is one of the leading causes of death among youth and that an even greater amount of youth consider and attempt suicide. In addition, the educational environment provided in our virtual school setting may attract students who have been bullied or otherwise previously victimized and who may therefore be more vulnerable.

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 215 mandates that the School Board adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The policy must specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including suicide awareness and prevention training for teachers, and ensure that a school employee acts within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license.

The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. As a result, we are ethically and legally responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response when responding to suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths. We also must work to create a safe and nurturing educational environment in order to attempt to minimize suicidal ideation in students.

Recognizing that it is the duty of our school to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy aims to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including ensuring adequate supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss. This policy is part of a comprehensive support system provided by our schools to enhance the emotional and behavioral wellness of our students.

This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention, and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors. Empirical evidence refutes a common belief that talking about suicide can increase risk or "place the idea in someone's mind."

Designation of Responsibility: In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Executive Director will oversee Counseling Services for B.E.S.T. Academy to ensure the development of strategies for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. These strategies shall include professional development for all school personnel in all job categories who regularly interact with students or are in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.

The Director shall involve school-employed credentialed counselors, (administrators, other school staff members, teaching staff, as well as other stakeholders and experts when possible, such as other mental health professionals, health care professionals and community

organizations in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of the strategies for suicide prevention and intervention.

To ensure the policies regarding suicide prevention are properly adopted, implemented, and updated, the Director or Designee will ensure that the policies and procedures are reviewed periodically and revised as needed. The Director will be responsible for development and implementation of training for all appropriate school staff.

Additional comprehensive resources for staff, students, and family members can be found on the Youth Suicide Prevention webpage of the California Department of Education:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/suicideprevres.asp>

Strategic Plan: The Director over Counseling Services shall develop and implement preventive strategies and intervention procedures as follows:

1. Which specifically address the needs of high risk groups of students, including, but not limited to:

- Youth bereaved or otherwise affected by suicide.
- Youth with a history of suicide ideation or attempts.
- 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.
- Youth who have suffered traumatic experiences.
- Youth who have been bullied or harassed.

2. Which cover:

- Suicide Prevention
- Suicide Intervention, Assessment and Referral
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- Suicide Response Action Plans for suicide or suicide attempts by students or staff members
- Responding After a Suicide Death (Postvention)

3. Which include training for all appropriate employees.

4. Which include information, resources and roles for students, parents and family members/friends and which includes students and families to the greatest extent possible in the development and implementation of the policies and procedures. Information about the suicide prevention program and policies will be included in the Student Handbook .

5. Which will demonstrate support for the creation and implementation of programs and/or activities within the school environment that raise awareness about mental wellness and suicide prevention.

6. Which will examine ways to incorporate developmentally appropriate and student- focused suicide prevention education into classroom curricula (e.g., health classes, freshman orientation classes, science, and physical education).

Suicide Prevention and Intervention Training Education: B.E.S.T. Academy along with its partners carefully reviews available staff training to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Messaging about suicide has an effect on suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, B.E.S.T. Academy along with its partners has critically reviewed and will continue to review all materials and resources used in awareness and training efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe messaging about suicide.

Training shall be provided for all school staff members unless the Director over Counseling determines that a staff member does not have any significant interaction with students.

Training will take place at least annually, and all staff will receive training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention and referral procedures, and postvention.

All suicide prevention trainings shall be offered under the direction of school-employed credentialed counselors who have received advanced training (as determined by the school) specific to suicide and may benefit from collaboration with one or more county and/or community mental health agencies. Staff training can be adjusted year-to-year based on previous professional development activities and emerging best practices.

Additional professional development in suicide risk assessment and crisis intervention will be provided to mental health professionals (e.g. school counselors or psychologists) employed by B.E.S.T. Academy.

Materials provided for training shall include how to identify appropriate mental health resources, both within the school and within the larger community, and when and how to refer youth and their families to those services.

The training will include access to a list of resources for staff and families, including where additional programs that allow further self-training can be accessed.

The training also will include additional information regarding groups of students regarded to be at elevated risk for suicide, such as the groups listed above.

Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services: Employees of B.E.S.T. Academy and their partners must 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, and to prevent the immediate risk of a suicidal behavior, ongoing treatment of suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting. In addition, treatment of the mental health challenges often associated with suicidal thinking typically requires mental health resources beyond what schools are able to provide.

Intervention, Assessment, Referral: The Director over Counseling Services or Designee will be the primary suicide prevention liaison for B.E.S.T. Academy.

All staff members will be informed about the notification process in case of a suicide crisis. A referral process should be disseminated to all staff members, so they know how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the school and community-based resources.

Determination of notification to parents/guardians/caregivers should follow an assessment to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification.

If the student is in imminent danger (has access to a gun, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), a call shall be made to 911.

All attempts will be made to make sure that students experiencing suicidal ideation are not left unsupervised.

The Director over Counseling Services, in coordination with the Executive Leadership Team, have established crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications if a suicide occurs or an attempt is made by a student or adult at a school office or at a school-sponsored activity.

Students shall be encouraged to notify a staff member when they are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or attempt.

If parents/guardians/caregivers, after notification by the school, refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at-risk for suicide or in emotional distress, the Director over Counseling (or other appropriate designated school staff member) will meet with the parents/guardians/caregivers to identify barriers to treatment (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues) and work to rectify the situation and build understanding of the importance of care. If follow-up care for the student is still not provided, school staff should consider contacting Child Protective Services (CPS) to report neglect of the youth.

A student who threatened or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well planned re-entry process ensures the safety and wellbeing of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of

another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention. Involving students in planning for their return to school provides them with a sense of control, personal responsibility, and empowerment.

The School Board recognizes the right of all students, including those who are homeless, to receive a free appropriate public education and to be given meaningful opportunities to succeed in schools. B.E.S.T. Academy will ensure that homeless children and youth are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment.

Information regarding this policy, including the educational rights of homeless children and youth, will be available to all students through the handbook and at any school office location.

Definitions

The McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes children and youth who are: sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);

- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

If a child or youth’s living situation does not clearly fall into the situations described above, the school should refer to the McKinney-Vento definition of “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence” and consider the relative permanence of the living arrangements. Determinations of homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis. Note that incarcerated children and youth and children and youth in foster care are *not* considered homeless.

Unaccompanied Youth means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as defined above. The more general term youth also includes unaccompanied youth.

Enroll and *enrollment* means attending school and participating fully in all school activities.

Immediate means without delay.

School of Origin means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Local Liaison is the staff person(s) designated by our School organization as the person(s) responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the local homeless education liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Identification: Homeless children and youth will be identified. Data will be collected on the number of enrolled students identified as homeless children; where they are living; their academic achievement (including state and local assessments); and the reasons for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education, or school transfers.

School Selection: Each homeless child and youth has the right to remain at his or her school of origin or to attend any school that houses students who live in the attendance area or area of eligibility in which the child or youth is actually living. As a charter school, B.E.S.T. Academy is a school of choice and eligibility of students to attend depends on student age and the county in which the student resides or has permanent residency. Therefore, in selecting a school, homeless children and youth will remain at their school of choice to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent's or youth's wishes. Eligibility for homeless students enrolling for the first time in the school will be based on the location of the student at the time of enrollment. At the time of first enrollment, the student must be residing in a county served by one of the B.E.S.T. Academy. Once enrolled, students may remain at their school of choice the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. This also applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing during the summer, in which case eligibility and continued enrollment is based on the location that was last documented for the student when they were deemed eligible to enroll. Homeless students who become permanently housed during the school year or during the summer before the school year starts will only be able to attend B.E.S.T. Academy at the start of that following school year if the location of the permanent housing is in a county served by B.E.S.T. Academy. Services that are required to be provided, including services under federal and other programs, will not be considered in determining feasibility. Because continued eligibility for homeless students is determined in accordance with federal law, the school will claim state pupil funding for any homeless student who decides to remain enrolled even if they are not residing in a county served by B.E.S.T. Academy, but as long as they are still residing in the state of California.

Enrollment: The school shall immediately enroll the eligible homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, or other documentation. The Master Agreement is required by California law and will be collected as part of the application process. School staff will expedite collection of the Master Agreement so that it does not delay enrollment.

Transportation: Homeless children and youth will be provided with transportation services as the need arises and on a case-by-case basis if extraordinary barriers or circumstances exist that would otherwise impair the student's successful participation in academically required or meaningful opportunities.

Services: Students experiencing homelessness must be provided with services that are comparable to the services offered to other students not experiencing homelessness. These services include educational programs or services such as programs for children with disabilities, programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational education, and programs for gifted and talented students, for which a student experiencing homelessness meets the eligibility criteria. Homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services.

Training: The local liaison(s) will participate in, and share information with staff, regarding McKinney- Vento Title X requirements and sensitivity/awareness regarding homeless issues.

Coordination: A local liaison(s) will be appointed as the school's primary contact between homeless families, school personnel, and other service providers. The liaison is responsible for coordinating services to ensure that homeless students enroll in school and have an opportunity to succeed academically. The liaison(s) shall also collaborate and coordinate as needed with the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and community personnel who work with these students and their families.

Disputes: If there is a dispute regarding any issue covered in this policy, the student will have the rights of a homeless child or youth to all appropriate educational services, transportation, and Title I, Part A services while the dispute is pending. The school will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision regarding any dispute, and the right to appeal, and will refer the parent or unaccompanied youth to the appropriate local liaison immediately.

Such notice will be in language the parent or unaccompanied youth can understand, and include a summary of the dispute resolution process. Detailed dispute resolution procedures are included in the school's Homeless Education Procedures. Complaints about how the school is generally complying with or adhering to the legal requirements for homeless students are handled through the Uniform Complaint Procedures, found on the school website.

Sexual Health And HIV/AIDS Prevention Instruction

The Governing Board desires to provide a well-planned, integrated sequence of medically accurate and inclusive instruction on comprehensive sexual health and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention. The school's educational program shall provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect them from sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancy and to have healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors. The school's educational program shall also promote understanding of sexuality as a normal part of human development and the development of healthy attitudes and behaviors concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family. (cf. 5030 - Student Wellness) (cf. 6142.8 - Comprehensive Health Education)

Comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education shall be offered to all students at least once in high school. (Education Code 51934)

The school's curriculum shall support the purposes of the California Healthy Youth Act, as specified in Education Code 51930-51939, shall be unbiased and inclusive of all students and be aligned with the state's content standards. The school shall respect the rights of parents/guardians to supervise their children's education on these subjects and to impart values regarding human sexuality to their children. (cf. 5141.22 - Infectious Diseases) (cf. 5141.25 - Availability of Condoms) (cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students) (cf. 6143 - Courses of Study)

The Director or designee may appoint a coordinator and/or an advisory committee regarding the school's comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention curriculum. The advisory committee shall represent a divergence of viewpoints and may participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's program. (cf. 1220 - Citizen Advisory Committees)

Parent/Guardian Consent: Annually, parents/guardians shall be notified, in the manner specified in the accompanying administrative regulation, that they may request in writing that their child be excused from participating in comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education. Students so excused by their parents/guardians shall be given an alternative educational activity. (Education Code 51240, 51938, 51939) (cf. 5022 - Student and Family Privacy Rights)

A student shall not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty, or other sanction if the student's parent/guardian declines to permit the student to receive the instruction (Education Code 51939).

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE
220 Prohibition of discrimination

48980 Notice at beginning of term
51202 Instruction in personal and public health and safety
51210.8 Health education curriculum 51240 Excuse from instruction due to religious beliefs
51513 Materials containing questions about beliefs or practices
51930-51939 Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act
33544 Inclusion of sexual harassment and violence in health curriculum framework
51225.35 Instruction in sexual harassment and violence; districts that require health education for graduation
67386 Student safety; affirmative consent standard

HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE 1255.7 Parents surrendering physical custody of a baby PENAL CODE 243.4 Sexual battery 261.5 Unlawful sexual intercourse 271.5 Parents voluntarily surrendering custody of a baby UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 20 1232h Protection of student rights 7906 Sex education

Intervention Process

A student's continued enrollment at B.E.S.T. Academy is based on maintaining adequate progress in courses. Students are expected to complete **a minimum of 25-30 hours of work each week**. If a student does not complete his/her assignments or meet regularly with the teacher as expected, the following steps will be taken after week two of a student's enrollments:

1. **Week Two: Initiate the Academic Success Plan (ASP)** – Teacher and student outline problems and solutions and work to resolve issues. The ASP form is used and kept in the student folder.
2. **Week Three: Schedule Parent Meeting** – If a student has not improved, a parent must meet with the teacher and student to review the Academic Success Plan (ASP) to discuss new intervention strategies to support student achievement.
3. **Week Four: “Notice of Lack of Progress”** -- If the student has not been able to comply with the expectations of the ASP a notice of lack of progress will be mailed to the home. A “student contract” meeting will be scheduled and the Program Lead, Teacher, and family will meet to discuss the expectations of the student contract.
4. **Week Five: Failure to meet the expectations of the student contract--**
Counselor/Principal and teacher will determine if a student can be successful in the program and determine if a student can continue in our school. If the student continues enrollment, the Counselor/Principal will prepare and sign a probationary contract with the student and provide copies to the teacher, parent and student. The details of the contract and the effective time period (from two weeks to one semester) are left to the discretion of the Program Lead.
5. **Failure to Meet with Program Lead** – If the parent/guardian or student fails to attend the meeting with the Program Lead, or if they fail to contact the Program Lead to reschedule the meeting, a final attempt will be made by the Program Lead to contact the student and parent(s) to determine the reason for missing the meeting. If the parent/guardian does not contact the Program Lead within two-three days of the phone call, the student will be dropped.
6. **Drop Letter** – If a student is not meeting the probationary contract requirements, the teacher will notify the Program Lead, who will have a disenrollment letter mailed to the student's home.