

Youth Suicide Prevention Guide for School Staff

Key Warning Signs

Behavioral: withdrawal, isolation, belongings given away, sudden calmness, risky choices, declining energy

Emotional: hopelessness, anger, feeling like a burden, intense mood swings

Social: bullying, harassment, rejection, grief after suicide exposure

Environmental: access to firearms, unsecured medication, family stress, ACEs

How to Ask the Suicide Question

Say: “Are you thinking about suicide?”

- Be honest and direct
- Validate courage
- Avoid judgment

Helpful phrases:

“Thank you for telling me.”

“I am here with you.”

“We will get support together.”

Immediate Safety Actions

High danger: current suicidal thoughts plus a plan, steps already taken, access to lethal means

Respond: stay with the student, contact your crisis team, contact 988 if needed

Lower but still serious danger: suicidal thoughts without a plan

Respond: complete next-step safety procedures, notify staff who handle screening

Protective Factors

- Supportive adults
- Healthy peer connections
- Identity-affirming spaces
- Faith or cultural values
- Hobbies and goals

Quick grounding question: **“What keeps you here today?”**

24/7 Crisis Support Lines

- **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.** Call, text, or chat 988
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HELLO to 741741
- **Trevor Project:** Text START to 678678 or go to www.thetrevorproject.org/