



Preventing Suicide in Schools

School communities play an important role in preventing youth suicide.

Providing a safe school environment, while promoting connectedness and emotional well-being, can support students' academic performance and protect individuals against suicide.

According to the 2016 Minnesota Student Survey, 11.8 percent of ninth-graders in Minnesota had thoughts of suicide in the last year and 3.7 percent attempted suicide. It is important to note that most youth considering suicide find help and hope and do not attempt or die by suicide. Schools need to be able to identify students at risk for suicide and get them help.

When a suicide does happen, it affects the entire school community. Being prepared to respond to a suicide death (postvention), including safe messaging and media coverage, can increase healing and decrease risk within the school and community; thus preventing future or "copycat" suicides.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) want you to know about the resources available in your community.

Suicide prevention within schools:

- [Promote social emotional learning](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/safe/social/imp/) (https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/safe/social/imp/)
- [Preventing suicide: A toolkit for high schools](https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/preventing-suicide-toolkit-high-schools) (link to https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/preventing-suicide-toolkit-high-schools)
- [Safe and effective suicide prevention messaging](http://suicidepreventionmessaging.org/) (http://suicidepreventionmessaging.org/)
- [The role of high school teachers in preventing suicide](https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/role-high-school-teachers-preventing-suicide-sprc-customized-information-page) (https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/role-high-school-teachers-preventing-suicide-sprc-customized-information-page)
- Schedule a [gatekeeper training](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/preventsuicidetrainings.html#qpr) (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/preventsuicidetrainings.html#qpr) for teachers and staff to identify youth at risk for suicide and connect to resources
 - [Community Partners Preventing Suicide](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/schoolsuicideprevention.html) (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/communities/schoolsuicideprevention.html)
 - Contact MDH State Suicide Prevention Coordinator Amy Lopez at amy.lopez@state.mn.us or 651-201-5723 to connect with state suicide prevention grantees
 - [Crisis Text Line Regional Coordinators](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/crisis-text-line/) (https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/adult-mental-health/crisis-text-line/)
- Tribal school specific resources
 - [Bureau of Indian Education](https://www.bie.edu/Resources/SuicidePrevention/index.htm) (https://www.bie.edu/Resources/SuicidePrevention/index.htm)
 - Contact Charles "Lee" Pelley Health Systems Specialist at Indian Health Services Bemidji Area Office at Charles.pelley@ihs.gov or 218-444-0512 for additional support.

Crisis response services available:

- [National Crisis Textline](#), text “MN” to 741741
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) – 1-800-273-8255
- [Local mobile crisis response](https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/people-with-disabilities/health-care/childrens-mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp) (https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/people-with-disabilities/health-care/childrens-mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp)
- [Prevent Suicide Posters to promote crisis resources.](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidepreventposter.pdf) (https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/suicide/documents/suicidepreventposter.pdf)

After a suicide death:

- [Safe media reporting guidelines](http://reportingonsuicide.org/) (http://reportingonsuicide.org/)
- [After a suicide: A toolkit for schools](https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/after-suicide-toolkit-schools), second edition (https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs/after-suicide-toolkit-schools)
- Postvention planning support (prior to a suicide death) available to schools
 - Contact MDH State Suicide Prevention Coordinator Amy Lopez at amy.lopez@state.mn.us or 651-201-5723 to connect with state suicide prevention grantees.

Governor Tim Walz’s budget supports programs within education to prevent suicide including:

- Expanding grant funds for community-based programming and training (\$625,000 per year).
- Provide schools with evidence-based training for educators and suicide prevention curriculum for schools (\$913,000 per year).
- Fund National Suicide Prevention Line Minnesota network (\$1.322 million per year).
- Expand Zero Suicide to more health/behavioral health care organizations (\$205,000 per year).