Suicide Awareness & Prevention Policy

The Charter School of Wilmington is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its students and school community. This policy supports federal, state and local efforts to provide education on youth suicide awareness and prevention; to establish methods of prevention, intervention, response to suicide or suicide attempt and reporting procedures; and to promote access to suicide awareness and prevention resources. The Charter School of Wilmington recognizes that youth suicide in the United States accounts for approximately 4,600 deaths annually of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The Charter School of Wilmington:

- Requires that each school employee shall complete 90 minutes of professional development in the area of youth suicide awareness and prevention and that the material contained in that professional development shall be developed and/or approved by the Department of Education.
- Requires a Suicide Awareness and Prevention Team to meet the requirements set forth in 14 Del 4124.
- Prohibits retaliation against an employee, school volunteer or student for reporting the warning signs of suicide.
- Requires a procedure to be established for the confidential and anonymous reporting of the warning signs of suicide and for communication between school staff members and health care professionals who are involved in the treating of students for suicide issues.
- Requires a Suicide Prevention Program that is to be presented to the student body during the academic school year.

Responsibility: The Vice-President shall ensure that the Suicide Prevention Policy is enforced.

References: Title 14 Delaware Code 4124 Youth Suicide Prevention.

Updated Post Date: September 2019 on school website and posted in student and staff handbook.
Procedure for Confidential and Anonymous Reporting for School Staff Members and Healthcare Professionals

- Any student thought to be demonstrating the warning signs of suicide should be referred to a school counselor, school nurse or administrator. A school employee, school volunteer or student is individually immune from a cause of action for damages arising from reporting warning signs of suicide in accordance with these procedures unless that reporting constituted gross negligence and/or reckless, willful or intentional conduct.

- For a student who has not reached the age of 18, Release of Information forms shall be signed by the parent, guardian, or relative caregiver in order for the primary care physician or medical professional or School-Based Health Center to communicate with school personnel regarding any treatment of a student. Notwithstanding the foregoing, communications between healthcare professionals and school staff regarding any treatment of a student may occur for any student 14 years or older who has provided consent for voluntary outpatient treatment in accordance with 16 Del. C. § 5003. In accordance with HIPAA and FERPA guidelines, releases shall be signed before communication may take place. Communications without signed releases in emergency situations may occur in accordance with HIPPA and FERPA regulations and guidelines.

- If a parent refuses to sign a release form, the school will review this policy with them, explaining the reasons the release would be advantageous to the student.

- After confirmation that a student has been involved in a suicide ideation or suicidal behavior, the student shall be evaluated by a licensed healthcare professional or a non-licensed healthcare professional working under the supervision of a licensed healthcare professional.

- The recommendations from the healthcare evaluation which are pertinent to managing the student’s risk in school shall be shared at a meeting between the student, parent/guardian, school counselor, school nurse, Vice-President, the School-Based Health Center representative (when relevant), prior to the student’s return to school. Recommendations will be shared with school personnel who are responsible for their implementation.

- Emergency evaluations can be obtained from hospital emergency departments; a licensed healthcare professional; a physician; or nurse practitioner; or from the state’s Child Priority Response Mobile Crisis Service if the student is under 18 years of age, or from the Adult Mobile Crisis Service if student is between the ages of 18-21.
Suicide Awareness and Prevention Team

To be assembled when needed to assess or respond to a suicidal situation or review the policy:

Counseling Department
Nurse
Vice-President
School-Based Health Center