America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

2026–2027 YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

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America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

America's Finest Charter School (AFCS) recognizes that suicide prevention is a shared responsibility. School personnel are often in a position to recognize warning signs, connect students with appropriate assistance, and support a safe, caring, and connected school environment.

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for suicide prevention, early identification, intervention, response, follow-up, re-entry, and postvention.

The Executive Director or designee shall maintain age-appropriate measures for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention and shall coordinate these measures with school mental health, safety, wellness, and student-support practices.

This policy applies exclusively to students in **Transitional Kindergarten through Grade 8 (TK–8)**.

All prevention, intervention, re-entry, and postvention procedures shall be age- and developmentally appropriate, with particular sensitivity to elementary and middle-grade students.

AFCS employees shall act only within the scope of their authorization, credential, or license. Employees shall not diagnose or treat mental illness unless appropriately licensed and employed to provide those services.

2. POLICY DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW, AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Executive Director or designee shall consult, as appropriate, with:

- School personnel;
- School-employed mental health professionals;
- Suicide prevention professionals;
- Parents, guardians, and caregivers;
- Students;
- Local health and mental health agencies;
- Community organizations; and

- Other appropriate community partners.

When required by law, consultation shall include the applicable county mental health plan. The Board of Directors shall review this policy at least once every five years and update it as necessary. The policy shall be posted prominently and accessibly on the AFCS website.

AFCS shall periodically review school climate, wellness information, and available incident data to identify patterns and inform prevention and support efforts. For a K–6 student who is a Medi-Cal beneficiary and is referred for mental health or related services, the Executive Director or designee shall coordinate and consult with the county mental health plan as required by applicable law.

3. PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

AFCS suicide prevention efforts shall emphasize:

- Student connectedness;
- Help-seeking;
- Protective factors;
- Early identification;
- Safe and appropriate communication;
- Access to appropriate school and community support;
- Positive school climate; and
- Supportive relationships with trusted adults and peers.

3.1 Staff Training

Training and professional learning may address:

- Suicide awareness;
- Warning signs;
- Risk factors;
- Protective factors;
- Referral procedures;

- Crisis response procedures; and
- Available school and community resources.

3.2 Student Wellness

Age- and developmentally appropriate instruction and activities may address:

- Coping skills;
- Resiliency;
- Problem-solving;
- Mental and emotional wellness;
- Help-seeking;
- Self-advocacy; and
- Identifying trusted adults.

3.3 School Climate

AFCS shall promote positive school-climate practices that strengthen:

- Student connectedness;
- Supportive relationships;
- Student belonging;
- Positive relationships with adults; and
- Positive relationships among students.

3.4 Family Education

Parents, guardians, and caregivers may receive information regarding:

- Risk and protective factors;
- Warning signs;
- How to seek assistance;
- AFCS procedures;
- School and community resources; and
- Crisis resources.

3.5 Protective Factors and Student Connectedness

AFCS shall encourage protective factors that support student safety and wellness, including meaningful relationships with trusted adults, positive peer relationships, school connectedness, help-seeking, coping skills, resiliency, and access to appropriate support.

4. STUDENTS WHO MAY NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

AFCS shall consider the individual needs of students who may experience increased risk or barriers to receiving support.

These students may include:

- Students bereaved by suicide;
- Students with disabilities;
- Students experiencing mental health concerns;
- Students experiencing substance-use concerns;
- Students experiencing homelessness;
- Students in foster care or other out-of-home settings;
- LGBTQ+ students; and
- Other students who may require additional support.

Supports shall be individualized and provided without discrimination.

5. STAFF TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AFCS shall provide appropriate suicide-prevention and response training to employees who regularly interact with students.

Training may include:

- Teachers;
- Interns;
- Counselors;
- Administrators;

- Substitute teachers;
- Coaches;
- Expanded-learning staff;
- Tutors;
- Volunteers; and
- Other school personnel.

Training should be directed or supported by an appropriately trained mental health professional and may be coordinated with county or community mental health partners.

5.1 Recognizing Warning Signs

Staff shall receive information regarding:

- Warning signs;
- Risk factors;
- Protective factors; and
- Significant changes in student behavior.

5.2 Responding to a Student in Distress

Staff shall respond calmly and directly when a student:

- Is experiencing significant emotional distress;
- Expresses thoughts of suicide;
- Communicates thoughts of self-harm; or
- Exhibits behavior suggesting an immediate safety concern.

5.3 Maintaining Supervision

A student believed to be at imminent or significant risk shall not be left alone while the student remains in AFCS custody.

5.4 Referral Procedures

Staff shall use established school referral and emergency procedures and identify appropriate school and community mental health resources.

5.5 Confidentiality and Mandated Reporting

Staff shall understand:

- Confidentiality requirements;
- Limits of confidentiality;
- Mandated reporting responsibilities; and
- The importance of timely parent/guardian notification when appropriate.

5.6 Postvention Responsibilities

Staff shall receive information regarding appropriate communication following a suicide or suicide attempt and strategies designed to reduce the risk of suicide contagion.

6. STUDENT INSTRUCTION AND HELP-SEEKING

AFCS health, wellness, and social-emotional learning efforts shall support healthy mental, emotional, and social development and shall be aligned with applicable California requirements.

Instruction shall be age and developmentally appropriate.

Students may be taught to:

- Recognize signs of emotional distress;
- Recognize when adult assistance is needed;
- Develop coping skills;
- Develop resiliency;
- Develop problem-solving skills;
- Develop self-advocacy skills;
- Identify trusted adults;
- Identify school and community resources;

- Seek help for themselves; and
- Respond safely when a peer expresses suicidal thoughts.

Students shall be encouraged to seek assistance from a trusted adult rather than attempting to manage a serious crisis independently.

7. MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION AND REQUIRED NOTICES

AFCS shall notify students and parents/guardians, no less than twice during the school year, regarding how to initiate access to available pupil mental health services on campus, in the community, or both, using methods required by applicable law.

For students in Grades 6–8, AFCS shall provide and prominently display appropriate pupil mental health resource information using age-appropriate language and current site-specific resources.

AFCS shall review mental health resource information periodically to ensure that contact information remains current.

8. STUDENT HEALTH, WELLNESS & MENTAL HEALTH

AFCS recognizes that student health, wellness, and mental health are important components of a safe and supportive learning environment. AFCS shall provide students and families with appropriate information regarding suicide prevention, mental health, wellness, crisis services, health services, and available resources.

8.1 Youth Suicide Prevention Policy

AFCS maintains this comprehensive Youth Suicide Prevention Policy to address prevention, identification, intervention, crisis response, parent/guardian follow-up, re-entry, postvention, documentation, and resources.

AFCS suicide prevention efforts shall emphasize:

- Student safety;

- Student connectedness;
- Help-seeking;
- Protective factors;
- Early identification;
- Safe communication;
- Access to appropriate support;
- Positive school climate;
- Supportive relationships;
- Coping skills;
- Resiliency;
- Problem-solving;
- Self-advocacy; and
- Identifying trusted adults.

Every statement, communication, or behavior suggesting suicidal intent or self-harm shall be taken seriously.

8.2 Suicide Prevention Response Procedures

When a staff member learns that a student may be suicidal or may be at risk of self-harm, the staff member shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator, counselor, designated crisis responder, or other designated personnel.

The student shall not be left alone when there is a significant or imminent safety concern.

The response may include:

1. Maintaining continuous adult supervision.
2. Providing a calm and supportive environment.
3. Notifying the Principal or designee.
4. Obtaining emergency medical or mental health assistance when necessary.
5. Calling 911 when there is an immediate threat to life or safety.
6. Contacting the parent/guardian as soon as reasonably appropriate, unless doing so would create a safety concern or another legal exception applies.
7. Providing appropriate referrals.

8. Documenting the incident and response.
9. Developing a follow-up or re-entry plan when appropriate.

8.3 Mental Health Services Information

AFCS shall provide students and parents/guardians with information about available pupil mental health services.

Services and referrals may include:

- School-based student-support services;
- Counseling resources;
- Community mental health services;
- County behavioral-health services;
- Crisis intervention;
- Emergency services;
- Family support resources; and
- Other appropriate community resources.

AFCS shall provide required information regarding how students and families may initiate access to available mental health services.

AFCS shall periodically review all published mental health information to ensure that contact information remains current.

8.4 Crisis Resources

Emergency – 911

Call **911** when there is an immediate life-threatening emergency or immediate threat to the safety of the student or another person.

Mental Health Crisis

Students, families, and staff may access the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** for suicide, mental health, or emotional distress support.

AFCS shall maintain current local and county behavioral-health resources and review the information periodically.

8.5 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988 — Call or Text

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is available for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis, emotional distress, or thoughts of suicide or self-harm.

Students should be encouraged to seek help from a trusted adult when experiencing emotional distress or a crisis.

Parents/guardians and staff may also use 988 when seeking crisis support or assistance concerning a student.

When there is an immediate threat to life or safety, **911 should be contacted**.

AFCS shall periodically review its crisis-resource information to ensure that information provided to students and families remains current.

8.6 Student Wellness Resources

AFCS shall promote student wellness through age- and developmentally appropriate information and activities addressing:

- Mental and emotional wellness;
- Coping skills;
- Resiliency;
- Problem-solving;
- Self-advocacy;
- Help-seeking;
- Positive relationships;
- Student connectedness;
- Belonging;
- Identifying trusted adults;
- Recognizing emotional distress;

- Recognizing when adult assistance is needed; and
- Accessing school and community resources.

Wellness information may be provided through classroom instruction, school communications, student handouts, the AFCS website, counseling/student-support services, schoolwide activities, and crisis-resource postings.

8.7 Medication/Health Services Policy

AFCS shall maintain procedures for student health services and the administration, storage, documentation, and handling of medication at school, consistent with applicable law and AFCS health and medication procedures.

Students requiring medication or health services during the school day shall be supported through appropriate school procedures and authorized personnel.

AFCS employees shall act within the scope of their authorization, training, credential, or other applicable legal authority.

Student health information shall be treated confidentially and shared only as permitted or required by law.

When a student's health condition, medication, or health-related need may affect the student's safety or ability to participate in school, AFCS shall coordinate with the parent/guardian and appropriate school personnel as permitted by law.

Nothing in this section authorizes an employee to diagnose or treat a medical or mental health condition outside the employee's legal scope of practice.

8.8 Mental Health Resource Information for Grades 6–8

AFCS shall provide and prominently display age-appropriate mental health and crisis-resource information for students in **Grades 6–8**.

Information may include:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**;
- **911 emergency services**;
- School-based mental health or student-support contacts;
- Local and county behavioral-health resources;
- Community mental health resources;
- Information regarding trusted adults; and
- Other resources required by applicable California law.

Where California law requires specific crisis information on identification cards issued to students in Grades 7 or 8, AFCS shall include the required current information.

AFCS shall review applicable requirements before each school year and update student-facing crisis materials as necessary.

Students shall be encouraged to report concerns about themselves or a peer to a trusted adult.

9. IDENTIFICATION AND IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION

Every statement, communication, or behavior suggesting suicidal intent or self-harm shall be taken seriously.

A staff member who suspects or learns that a student may be suicidal shall promptly notify:

- The Principal;
- School counselor;
- Designated crisis responder; or
- Other administrators identified in AFCS procedures.

A student believed to be at significant or imminent risk shall not be left alone while the student remains in school custody.

When a suicide attempt, threat, or credible concern is reported, the Principal or designee shall take actions appropriate to the circumstances.

These actions may include:

1. Obtaining emergency medical or mental health assistance.
2. Calling 911 when there is an immediate threat to life or safety.
3. Maintaining continuous adult supervision.
4. Providing a calm and supportive setting.
5. Transferring the student to a parent/guardian or appropriate emergency or mental health provider when appropriate.
6. Removing other students from the immediate area when necessary.
7. Notifying the parent/guardian as soon as reasonably appropriate.
8. Documenting the incident and AFCS's response.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY AND MANDATED REPORTING

Student information shall be handled in accordance with applicable confidentiality and student-record laws.

A counselor or other employee may disclose information when authorized or required by law, including when disclosure is reasonably necessary to:

- Protect the health or safety of the student;
- Protect the health or safety of others;
- Make an appropriate treatment referral; or
- Report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Nothing in this policy limits the responsibilities of mandated reporters.

11. PARENT/GUARDIAN FOLLOW-UP AND RE-ENTRY

Following a suicide-related crisis, the Executive Director or designee shall provide timely follow-up and referrals as appropriate.

When a student returns to school following a mental health crisis, the Principal or designee and appropriate student-support personnel may coordinate with the parent/guardian and, when appropriate, the student to establish a re-entry and support plan.

The plan may address:

- Student safety;
- Academic needs;
- Attendance;
- Trusted adults;
- Counseling;
- Community referrals;
- School-based supports; and
- Other reasonable accommodations or supports.

If a parent/guardian does not obtain needed follow-up care, school personnel may work with the family to identify barriers and connect the family with available resources.

If circumstances create a suspicion of neglect, mandated reporters shall follow applicable reporting requirements.

12. POSTVENTION

Following a death by suicide or a serious suicide-related incident, the Executive Director or designee shall activate appropriate postvention procedures.

Postvention procedures are designed to:

- Support students and staff;
- Protect confidentiality;
- Reduce the risk of suicide contagion;
- Identify individuals who may need additional support;
- Connect affected individuals with appropriate services; and
- Review the school's response.

AFCS shall:

1. Communicate with the family with compassion and respect for confidentiality.
2. Determine what information may appropriately be shared.

3. Use safe and non-sensational language.
4. Avoid communication that romanticizes or glamorizes suicide.
5. Avoid unnecessary details regarding the death or method.
6. Identify students and staff who may be significantly affected or at elevated risk.
7. Coordinate counseling, referrals, and community support as needed.
8. Route media inquiries to the school-designated spokesperson.
9. Debrief the response with involved staff.
10. Revise procedures when improvements are identified.

13. CRISIS RESOURCES

13.1 Emergency Services

911

Call 911 when there is an immediate life-threatening emergency or immediate threat to safety.

13.2 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

988 Call or Text

13.3 Local and County Behavioral Health Resources

AFCS shall maintain current local and county behavioral-health resources and review the information regularly.

13.4 School-Based Resources

AFCS shall identify current school-based student-support personnel and appropriate procedures for requesting assistance.

13.5 Community Mental Health Resources

AFCS shall provide families with appropriate community mental health and crisis-resource information when referrals are needed.

14. DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDS

AFCS shall maintain documentation related to suicide-prevention interventions and responses in accordance with applicable law and school recordkeeping requirements.

Documentation may include:

- Date and time of incident;
- Student referral;
- Staff response;
- Parent/guardian notification;
- Emergency response;
- Referrals provided;
- Re-entry planning;
- Follow-up activities; and
- Other information required by law or AFCS procedures.

Documentation shall be maintained securely and shared only with individuals authorized or permitted to receive the information.

15. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

15.1 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall:

- Review and approve the policy;
- Review the policy as required;
- Support implementation; and
- Provide oversight consistent with its governance responsibilities.

15.2 Executive Director

The Executive Director or designee shall:

- Oversee implementation;
- Coordinate prevention and response procedures;
- Ensure appropriate staff training;
- Coordinate with appropriate school and community resources;
- Oversee postvention procedures; and
- Ensure the policy remains accessible and appropriately reviewed.

15.3 Principal or Designee

The Principal or designee shall:

- Implement school-level procedures;
- Respond to reports of student risk;
- Ensure appropriate supervision;
- Contact parents/guardians when appropriate;
- Coordinate referrals;
- Support re-entry planning; and
- Maintain appropriate documentation.

15.4 School Staff

Staff members shall:

- Take concerns seriously;
- Report concerns promptly;
- Follow established crisis procedures;
- Maintain appropriate supervision;
- Protect student confidentiality within legal requirements; and
- Refer students to appropriate school personnel.

15.5 Mental Health Personnel

Mental health personnel shall operate within their professional scope and applicable legal requirements and shall coordinate with appropriate school personnel, families, and community providers when permitted and appropriate.

15.6 Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- Communicate concerns regarding their child's safety;
- Participate in appropriate follow-up;
- Work with the school regarding support plans; and
- Utilize available school and community resources.

16. LEGAL AND GUIDANCE REFERENCES

This policy is based on applicable California law and guidance, including:

- California Education Code §§ 215, 215.5, and 216;
- California Education Code § 234.6;
- California Education Code §§ 32280–32289.5;
- California Education Code §§ 49060–49079;
- California Education Code § 49428;
- California Education Code §§ 49602 and 49604;
- California Education Code § 51925, as applicable;
- California Penal Code §§ 11164–11174.3, Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act;
- California Department of Education Model Youth Suicide Prevention Policy;
- California Department of Education youth suicide prevention and mental health guidance;
- California Department of Education guidance implementing applicable pupil identification-card crisis-resource requirements; and
- Applicable school safety, nondiscrimination, student-record, comprehensive health education, and mental health policies and procedures.

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17. APPENDICES

Appendix A – AFCS Suicide Prevention Response Form

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time:** _____

Staff Member Reporting Concern: _____

Nature of Concern

☐ Student statement
☐ Student behavior
☐ Peer report
☐ Parent/guardian report
☐ Staff observation
☐ Other: _____

Immediate Action Taken

☐ Administrator notified
☐ Counselor/crisis responder notified
☐ Continuous supervision provided
☐ Parent/guardian contacted
☐ Emergency services contacted
☐ Mental health referral provided
☐ Other: _____

Description of Concern/Incident:

_____
_____
_____

Administrator Response:

_____
_____

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Parent/Guardian Notification:

Date: _____ Time: _____ Method: _____

Follow-Up Needed:

_____

Staff Signature: _____

Administrator Signature: _____

_____

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Appendix B – Student Re-Entry and Support Plan

Student: _____

Grade: _____ **Date of Re-Entry:** _____

Support Team

_____

Trusted Adult at School

_____

Student Supports

☐ Counseling referral
☐ Community mental health referral
☐ Academic support
☐ Attendance support
☐ Check-in/check-out
☐ Other: _____

Parent/Guardian Communication Plan

_____

Follow-Up Date

_____

Additional Notes

_____
_____
_____

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Appendix C – Crisis Resources

Emergency: 911

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 — Call or Text

AFCS shall maintain a current list of local and county behavioral-health resources and review the information regularly.

BOARD APPROVAL

Adopted by the AFCS Board of Directors: _____

Date: _____

Board President: _____

Executive Director: _____

Next Scheduled Review: _____

America's Finest CHARTER SCHOOL

BOARD ADOPTION

This policy shall become effective upon approval by the America's Finest Charter School Board of Directors.

Date of Adoption: October 19, 2026

Secretary of the Board: _____

Board Meeting Date: October 19, 2026