

ATTACHMENT 4.27

GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA INTERACTIONS | SUICIDE / PERMITTED TO DISCLOSE

The following guidelines should be used when interacting with media about a death. In this case, “death” refers to a staff or student suicide-death **and** the family has given the school permission to disclose cause of death.

The staff person responsible for working with the media should prepare a written statement for release to those media representatives who request it. The statement should include:

- A very brief statement acknowledging the death that does **not** include details about the death.
- An expression of the school’s sympathy to the survivors of the deceased.
- Information about the school’s postvention response plan.

SAMPLE STATEMENT

(Suicide | Permitted to Disclose)

I am very sad to report that [insert school] has lost a student/staff to suicide this week. On behalf of the entire school district, I want to express our heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the student’s family and friends for this painful loss. Our school is working with mental health professionals to provide suicide postvention services and support to students, staff, and families this week and in the weeks to come.

During this time, we would like to remind the community that help is available. If you or anyone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts or feelings, please reach out for assistance. Trained counselors are available 24/7 by calling or texting the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 9-8-8. You can use this resource for any mental health related crisis, including suicide. You can call or text for any reason, at any time.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

All other staff, including school board members, should:

- Refrain from making any comments to or responding to requests from the media.
- Refer all requests from the media to the designated person responsible for working with the media.

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD:

- Not be permitted to conduct interviews on school grounds.
- Not be allowed to attend parents or student group meetings to protect information shared in those meetings.
- Be provided with a copy of the safe reporting guidelines outlined by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) at <https://afsp.org/safereporting/>