

Creating Conditions for Effective Prevention of Suicide and Substance Use

The purpose of this resource is to clarify the relationship between Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention policy and plans (as required by [ORS 339.343](#) and [OAR 581-022-2510](#)) and Substance Use Prevention and Intervention plans (as required by [ORS 336.222](#) and [OAR 581-022-2045](#)) and to outline overlapping requirements and best practices that support both. Substance use and suicide prevention in schools are closely linked, with [data from the 2024 Student Health Survey](#) indicating that substance use rates were more than twice as high among youth who reported experiencing suicidal thoughts.



Effective, upstream prevention for both begins with school environments grounded in belonging, community connection, and equitable, restorative, and inclusive approaches. These foundational conditions are essential protective factors for students that support comprehensive suicide and substance use prevention efforts. With these conditions in place, the required and recommended components outlined in this resource mutually support districts implementing suicide and substance use prevention policies and plans that are aligned, sustainable, and effective.

How to Use This Tool

This is an optional tool that districts may use to develop, review, and update their Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention and Substance Use Prevention plans. While these plans share many overlapping requirements and best practices, they are often overseen and implemented by different school staff or teams. Districts are encouraged to bring staff together from both areas of focus when using this tool to identify opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary learning. This tool can be used in conjunction with other [Suicide Prevention](#) and [Substance Use Prevention](#) comprehensive planning resources from ODE.



Understanding the Suicide Prevention and Substance Use Prevention District Policy and Plans: Requirements Comparison Tables

Items marked with a  are required by ORS and/or OAR to be included in plans and/or policy

Items marked with a  are recommended and best practices, but not required

District Policy

Districts are **required** to adopt policies that support the prevention of suicide and substance use.

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention	Substance Use Prevention and Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ School board policy requires a suicide prevention plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ School board policy requires a substance use prevention and intervention implementation plan ✔ State that alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use by student is illegal and harmful ✔ In accordance with OAR 581-021-0050 and 581-021-0055, indicate the consequences for using and/or selling alcohol and other drugs, including the specific rule of the school as it relates to law enforcement agencies ✔ Indicate clearly that the school district's jurisdiction includes all school sponsored events including student activities ✔ Include a philosophy statement relating to drug-free schools and the established tobacco-free policies and procedures for students, staff and visitors

District Plan

Districts **must include** certain components per ORS and OAR as part of a **written plan**.

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention	Substance Use Prevention and Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Recommended to be annually reviewed and updated 💡 Recommended to be approved by the School Board 💡 Recommended to get student, family, expert, and community engagement when developing the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Required to be annually reviewed and updated ✔ Required to be approved by the School Board ✔ Required to get student, family, expert, and community engagement when developing the plan



Procedures and Protocols

District Plans include procedures and protocols related to suicide and substance use prevention and intervention. When developing protocols, districts are encouraged to consider including **“no wrong door” approaches for students, staff, and families to request and receive help.**

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention	Substance Use Prevention and Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Medical emergency response ✅ Plan for returning to school after hospitalization ✅ Procedures relating to suicide prevention, intervention and activities that reduce risk and promote healing after a suicide ✅ Procedures for reentry into a school environment following a hospitalization or behavioral health crisis ✅ Identification of the school officials responsible for responding to reports of suicidal risk ✅ Methods to address the needs of high-risk groups. Supports that are culturally and linguistically responsive ✅ A procedure by which a person may request the district review the actions of a school in responding to suicidal risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ Medical emergency response 💡 Plan for returning to school after hospitalization ✅ Define the nature and extent of the district's program, including a plan to access and use federal funds. 💡 Procedures for reentry into a school environment following a substance-related medical emergency or hospitalization 💡 Identification of the school officials involved in substance use prevention and intervention efforts 💡 Methods to address the needs of high-risk groups. Supports that are culturally and linguistically responsive

K-12 Instruction

Prevention of both suicide & substance Use includes [standards-aligned K-12 instruction](#) that utilizes evidence-informed strategies for prevention education and avoids fear- and shame-based language ([SPIP](#), [SUD](#)). Lessons should occur in the context of [safe and inclusive classroom spaces](#) and be built into broader units that involve trust-building to support nuanced conversations.



Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention	Substance Use Prevention and Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Annual instruction in grades 9-12 💡 Focuses on skill-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✅ Annual instruction in grades 9-12 ✅ Focuses on skill-building ✅ Utilizes annually required Opioid Prevention Lessons

Communication

Communication with caregivers is an essential component of preventing youth suicide and substance use. Districts are encouraged to ensure that caregiver-facing materials are available in multiple formats and in all languages spoken by families in the district.

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention	Substance Use Prevention and Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Plan must be made available annually to the community and posted to district's website 💡 A public information program for students, parents, and district staff is recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Plan made available annually to the community and posted to district's website ✔ A public information program for students, parents, and district staff is required

Staff Training

Districts are required to provide training to all staff members as part of their suicide and substance use prevention plans.

Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention	Substance Use Prevention and Intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Plan must include a description of, and materials for, any training to be provided to employees as part of the plan, which must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. When and how to refer youth and their families to appropriate mental health services; b. Programs that can be completed through self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials ✔ A process for designating staff to be trained in an evidence-based suicide prevention program ✔ Plan must be written to ensure that a district employee acts only within the authorization and scope of the employee's credentials or licenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Staff development in the district shall: a. inform all staff of the district plan and their responsibilities within that plan; and b. provide alcohol and drug abuse prevention education to all staff 💡 A process for designating staff to be trained in evidence-based prevention and intervention programs and strategies.

Stay Connected

For more information, technical support, and additional resources please visit our [Suicide Prevention](#) and [Substance Use Prevention](#) web pages or email ode.sis@ode.oregon.gov.

