



Cedar Tree Academy

Suicide Prevention and Crisis Response Policy

I. Policy Statement

Cedar Tree Academy is committed to protecting the safety, health, and well-being of all students. As a DC Public Charter School serving students in PK3–3rd grade (expanding annually through 5th grade), the Academy recognizes that early intervention, social-emotional education, and strong family partnership are critical components of suicide prevention.

This policy aligns with:

- OSSE guidance on student health and behavioral supports
 - DC mandatory reporting laws
 - PCSB expectations for student safety
 - MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) best practices
 - FERPA confidentiality requirements
-

II. Prevention Framework (MTSS-Aligned)

Tier 1 – Universal Prevention (All Students)

Cedar Tree Academy will:

- Implement developmentally appropriate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Teach emotional identification and coping strategies
- Reinforce help-seeking behaviors
- Promote positive school climate and belonging
- Provide family resources on child mental health

Instruction includes:

- Naming feelings and body cues
- Problem-solving skills
- Identifying trusted adults

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

701 Howard Road S.E, Washington, DC 20020

- Understanding that big feelings are temporary and manageable

Tier 2 – Targeted Support (Some Students)

For students exhibiting elevated emotional distress:

- Small group social skills or emotional regulation support
- Increased check-ins with a designated staff member
- Collaboration with family
- Behavioral or emotional support plan (if needed)

Tier 3 – Intensive Support (High Risk)

Students expressing suicidal ideation, self-harm behaviors, or severe emotional distress will receive immediate intervention following the Crisis Response Protocol outlined below.

III. Crisis Response Protocol (DC Charter Compliant)

Step 1: Immediate Safety

If a student makes statements about wanting to die, disappear, hurt themselves, or exhibits self-harm behavior:

- Do not leave the student alone.
- Escort immediately to a school counselor, mental health designee, or administrator.
- Maintain continuous supervision.
- Remove access to potential hazards when feasible.

If imminent danger is present, call **911 immediately**.

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

701 Howard Road S.E, Washington, DC 20020

Step 2: Developmentally Appropriate Risk Screening

A trained staff member will conduct a brief, age-appropriate screening, including:

- “What did you mean when you said that?”
- “Are you thinking about hurting your body?”
- “Do you have a plan to hurt yourself?”

Document:

- Exact student statements (verbatim)
 - Observed behaviors
 - Risk level (low, moderate, high)
-

Step 3: Same-Day Parent/Guardian Notification

Parent/guardian will be notified the same day in all cases involving suicidal ideation or self-harm.

For moderate to high risk:

- Request immediate parent pickup.
- Recommend same-day mental health evaluation.
- Provide crisis resources including 988.

The student will not be released to walk home alone under any circumstances.

Step 4: Provide Referrals and Crisis Resources

Families will be provided:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call or Text 988
Emergency – 911

Local Resources:

- Counseling & Mental Health – (703) 518-8883
- Thriveworks Counseling & Psychiatry DC – (202) 788-2934
- Capital Hill Counseling & Resource Center – (202) 812-0261
- Suicide Prevention Action – (202) 449-3600

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

701 Howard Road S.E, Washington, DC 20020

The school does not diagnose or provide clinical treatment but supports families in connecting to care.

Step 5: Documentation & Recordkeeping (FERPA-Compliant)

The following must be completed the same day:

- Incident Report
- Mental Health Team notification
- Parent contact log

- Safety plan (if applicable)

Records are stored securely in compliance with FERPA.

IV. Mandatory Reporting (DC Law Compliance)

All Cedar Tree Academy employees are mandated reporters.

If during assessment there is suspicion of:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic violence exposure
- Unsafe home conditions

Staff must follow DC Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) reporting requirements immediately, in addition to implementing the suicide intervention protocol.

Student safety overrides confidentiality.

V. Re-Entry Protocol After Crisis or Hospitalization

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

701 Howard Road S.E, Washington, DC 20020

Before or upon return to school:

1. Meet with parent/guardian.
2. Review discharge recommendations (if provided).
3. Develop a school-based support plan.
4. Identify a daily check-in adult.
5. Monitor student for a minimum of 2–4 weeks.

Academic accommodations may be provided as appropriate.

VI. Postvention (Response to Suicide in School Community)

If a suicide impacts the school community:

- Activate crisis response team.
- Verify facts before communication.
- Provide developmentally appropriate communication to families.
- Avoid sharing method or graphic details.
- Offer counseling support.
- Monitor vulnerable students.

The school will avoid memorials that could unintentionally romanticize suicide.

VII. Staff Training Requirements

Annually, all staff receive training on:

- Warning signs in young children
- Suicide risk indicators
- Crisis response steps
- Mandatory reporting
- Documentation procedures

Training records will be maintained for compliance review.

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

701 Howard Road S.E, Washington, DC 20020



VIII. Annual Review & Charter Accountability

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued alignment with:

- OSSE guidance
- DC public charter safety requirements
- Best practices in elementary suicide prevention

Revisions will be approved by school leadership and maintained for audit purposes.

Learn today. Lead tomorrow.

701 Howard Road S.E, Washington, DC 20020