

## **Students**

### **MENTAL HEALTH**

**BP 5141.51**

The Governing Board desires to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for its student community. This aim is pursued by evidence-based whole school approaches as well as specialized, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

The World Health Organization defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.... Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

About one in five children have a diagnosable mental health disorder which negatively impacts his/her quality of life, relationships, and academic achievement. As such, the Governing Board recognizes that children’s mental health and social-emotional well-being are crucial factors in their overall wellbeing and recognizes that schools play a critical role in supporting students’ resiliency and mental health. When students have a positive perception of self and are able to positively interact with their peers, adults, and their community, their sense of well-being and the impact on their academic achievement increases. The identification of early warning signs and early intervention and prevention strategies are of critical importance to ensure our students build resiliency, have a sense of safety, and are thriving in a stable, academic environment.

### **Purpose**

1. This policy serves to describe the district’s approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. It is intended as guidance for all staff, including non-teaching staff and governors.
2. This policy should be read in conjunction with Board Policy 5030 – Student Wellness and Board Policy 5141.6 – School Health Services.
3. This policy aims to increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues impacting our students and serves to alert staff to early warning signs. The policy aims to describe the responsibility that all staff have in promoting the mental health and well-being of students and linking students to sources of professional support.

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#### **Staff Development and Responsibility**

1. All staff have the responsibility of promoting positive mental health.
2. Frontline staff must be knowledgeable of and able to identify warning signs and symptoms that indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.
3. Frontline staff must have skills in identifying protective and risk factors which increase or decrease the likelihood of developing or exacerbating a mental health disorder.
4. Frontline staff must have skills in effectively supporting, responding to, and interacting with students with mental health related issues and referring to professional help.
5. Any staff observing warnings signs or symptoms of mental health issues must communicate their concerns with site administrator/designee and professionals from the office of Child Welfare, Attendance, and Safety, and make immediate and relevant referrals.
6. Frontline staff must receive continued training in developing the aforementioned skills through any one of the various modes of training available (in-person, online, etc.) Trainings may be offered in-person, during “A” Monday school site staff meetings, and/or online through the PUSD website. Additional tools will be provided to staff in Google Drive and/or on [www.pusd.us](http://www.pusd.us).

#### **Trauma-Informed Schools**

Pasadena Unified School District takes a district-wide, whole school approach to promoting positive mental health and ensuring student resiliency, success, safety, and academic success. More specifically, the Governing Board recognizes the detrimental effects of trauma on the neurological, biological, psychological, and social development of our students and adamantly provides prevention and early intervention strategies to create school environments that are nurturing and supportive. Traumatic stress can arise from a variety of

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sources and having the tools to effectively manage traumatic stress will lead to improved wellbeing and empowerment for all students.

Trauma-informed schools encompass the following:

1. Whole School Safety and Prevention Planning (school-wide safety planning)
2. Whole School Trauma Programming (school-wide programming)
3. Classroom Based Strategies (staff trauma knowledge)
4. Prevention/Early Intervention Trauma Programming (staff trauma skills)
5. Targeted Trauma-Informed Programming (early intervention)
6. Staff Self Care (staff self-care)

### **Mental Health Consortium**

Mental health professionals are essential in supporting and providing care for students with mental health disorders. Pasadena Unified School District has established community-based partnerships with Los Angeles County contracted Department of Mental Health agencies to coordinate and provide support to all students. The District also has internal clinical and licensed clinical social workers providing support and services to students struggling with their mental and/or social-emotional wellbeing which are impacting their peer and adult relationships as well as their attendance and academics. The District has also established partnerships with a variety of community-based agencies.

### **Crisis Response**

The Governing Board recognizes the need to provide support to students in the event of a crisis. A crisis is a traumatic event that affects students' health, safety, and/or social-emotional wellbeing. The Governing board recognizes the need to provide support to students in the event of a crisis and has developed procedures to be followed in these instances. Immediate counseling, crisis management, and follow-up care are the prescribed plan in the event of a crisis.

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The District has an Active Response to Safety plan. District certificated and classified staffs receive annual training on the school crisis response plan.

The District operates within a two-tier system of response and has established a designated crisis management team at the district level. Each school site has established a designated site-specific crisis management team. The District Crisis Management Team supports the school site crisis management teams.

The school site teams respond to events that lead to:

1. Temporary disruption of regular school functioning.
2. Significant interference to student learning and staff duties.
3. Physical and/or psychological injury to the school community.

The District Crisis Management Team responds when the school site teams are overwhelmed with events and are in need of support and resources. The District team:

1. Helps minimize the negative effects of trauma.
2. Helps students return back to a calm, safe, normal routine.
3. Supports positive coping of students of traumatic events.
4. Ensures student attendance and participation in learning after event.
5. Provides resources and referrals as necessary to promote recovery and to help resume regular school activities.

#### *Management Resources:*

*Sporleder, J., Forbes, H.T. (2016). The Trauma-Informed School; A Step-by-Step Implementation Guide for Administrators and School Personnel*  
*Treatment and Services Adaptation Center: <https://traumaawareschools.org/>*  
*World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/en/>*

## **Policy**

**Adopted:** July 27, 2017

**PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Pasadena, California