

Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School

STUDENT CRISIS ASSESSMENT

Policies, Practices and Procedures

“Each school district shall develop and implement comprehensive plans, procedures and mechanisms that provide for the safety and security in the public elementary and secondary schools” that “shall provide for: (1) the protection of the health, safety security and welfare of the school population; (2) the prevention of, intervention in, response to and recovery from emergency and crisis situations; [and] (3) the establishment and maintenance of a climate of civility.” N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1

Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School (TEECS)’s Board of Directors has approved and adopted this Student Crisis Assessment Policy and Procedure document in an effort to establish “best practices” protocols to respond and address crisis situations involving TEECS’ students.

Steps for policy enforcement:

1. TEECS’ Child Study Team and Guidance Counselor will assess the situation and gather the following information to determine next steps:
 - Student’s name, age, grade
 - Presenting problem/incident
 - Student statement
 - Witness statements
 - Medical and family history, if applicable
 - Mental status exam (C-SSRS), if applicable
 - Triggers for reoccurrence, if applicable
 - Recommendations for follow-up services
2. If student or others are **not** in immediate danger, certified members of TEECS’ Child Study Team and Guidance Counselor may conduct the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) to determine if crisis exclusion is necessary. Rating scale attached. (<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Suicide-Risk-Assessment-C-SSRS-Lifeline-Version-2014.pdf>). This scale will assess for depression, suicidal ideation, intent and overall level of risk. Once a determination is made on the next steps, parents will be notified.
3. If student or others are in immediate danger and parents **cannot** be reached, TEECS’ Child Study Team and Guidance Counselor may contact one of the following for immediate help:
 - 911
 - Bridgeway (Somerset County’s Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services) mobile unit at (908) 526-4100
 - Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Unit (JFCIU) through the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (855) 463-6323

Attempts to reach the parents will continue until they have been contacted or a message has been left about where their child has been transferred.

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Immediate danger includes the following:

- Student's actions pose imminent danger to him/herself or others
- Student's verbalizations or other actions indicate the intent or plan to harm him/herself or others
- Student's verbalizations or other actions indicate the student may be at risk of causing harm to him/herself or others

4. If crisis exclusion is necessary, TEECS' Lead Person, member of TEECS' Child Study Team or Guidance Counselor will recommend the student receive a psychiatric evaluation before returning to school. Parents will be referred to Bridgeway, a free county crisis service, for their student's psychiatric evaluation or parents may choose to go to a facility of their choice at their own expense. With the parent's permission, a member of the Child Study Team or Guidance Counselor may contact the professional completing the assessment and provide any background information relevant to the situation.

If parents assume the cost of the assessment through a provider of their choosing, the resulting report is their property and will require their consent before being released to the school. However, a School Clearance Letter will be required before the student can return to school. The letter **must** include the following:

- Evaluator's name and license number
- Student's name and date of birth
- Confirmation that the evaluator assessed the student following and in connection with the precipitating school-based incident
- The date of the assessment
- A specific statement that the student does not present a danger to him/herself or others and is able to return to school

During a period of crisis exclusion, the student will be provided with appropriate home or other out-of-school instruction in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10.1. TEECS will incur the cost of providing this alternate instruction.

Parents may choose to dispute the requirement of a psychiatric evaluation. A dispute must be done in writing to the Board. Documentation about the incident from both the parents and the school are required. For the safety of the student and the school population, the student will be asked to refrain from attending school until a decision has been rendered. The student will be provided with the appropriate school material until the Board has rendered a decision. The parent will incur the cost of providing alternate instruction if needed during the dispute period. The Board's decision is final.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the student may also be subject to disciplinary consequences as a result of his or her conduct.

5. After receipt of the School Clearance Letter and upon reentry into school, the parents will meet with TEECS' Child Study Team and Guidance Counselor to discuss follow-up treatment and/or plan moving forward.

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6. Should the same student have a repeat event, TEECS' Child Study Team and Guidance Counselor may conduct the C-SSRS to determine if crisis exclusion is necessary once again and the same steps will be repeated.

*Joking suicide threats by children, or even imitative "fooling around" can turn out to have very serious consequences. TEECS is justified in taking each threat very seriously. If the final determination by an outside evaluation determines that the student is not in any immediate physical or mental jeopardy, this will not diminish or invalidate TEECS' legitimate concern or the need to implement this policy. The requirement of a psychological clearance in the context of satisfying TEECS' obligation to ensure school safety is not arbitrary or capricious.