

ATTACHMENT 4.28

MONITORING SOCIAL MEDIA | SUICIDE / PERMITTED TO DISCLOSE

While we cannot control what other people say on social media, we can work in partnership with students to identify and monitor relevant social media sites. By doing so, schools can strategically disseminate information, share prevention-oriented messaging, offer support to students who may be struggling, and identify and respond to students who could be at risk.

GENERAL MONITORING GUIDANCE

- Monitor social media posts from students and staff members related to the death.
 - Look for warning signs of suicide.
 - Provide grief resources if you see a need for that unrelated to suicide-risk.

ENGAGING SCHOOL SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

- Do **not** announce the death of a student or staff member on school social media accounts.
- Schools can acknowledge when the community is experiencing adversity, without sharing any details about specific events.
- Schools should regularly share information related to protective factors, hope, and resources for mental health support.

WHEN SOMEONE IS PLACING BLAME

It is common for people to place blame as a way of trying to make sense of why this happened. Keep in mind that people who are engaging in this behavior are in a lot of pain, which means it's important to respond with compassion and offer support.

Below is a general example of how you might respond:

We understand that this loss is incredibly painful, and that it feels like there should be an explanation for why this happened. However, we know that there is never just one cause of suicide and we want to make sure we are sharing accurate information about this topic. Please look at these resources for more information and remember that support is available to you at this time.

WHEN SOMEONE IS AT RISK OF SUICIDE

There may be an uptick in suicide risk after a suicide loss. It's important to take all information about students being at-risk of suicide seriously, whether it is coming directly from a student asking for help, a student exhibiting warning signs, or a peer expressing concern for someone else. Be sure to alert the school mental health team so they can follow up.

Below is an example of how you might respond directly on social media:

Your safety and well-being are important to us. If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out for support. You can call or text the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 9-8-8 or you can call Headquarters Kansas at (785) 841-2345. These hotlines are available 24/7 for free and they are confidential. You can call or text for any reason at anytime.

For more guidance regarding monitoring social media after a suicide, please review pages 32–36 of *After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools*.¹⁹