

## **Attendance Policy**

Spark Charter believes that regular school attendance is vitally important to a learner's academic achievement and development of social skills. However, we understand that emergencies do arise.

### **Absence**

When a student is absent, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the office by e-mail or telephone as to reason why. Parents may leave a message on voicemail when the office is closed. All absences are recorded and will be reported on progress reports and cards.

A letter would be sent to the parent/guardian of the student to meet Principal/Superintendent, who has 7 (seven) days of unexcused absence in a trimester.

A pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

- Due to his/her illness. If the illness continues for 3 days or more, a doctor's note is required for submission at office.
- For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic services rendered.
- For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of his/her immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than a day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California.
- For the purpose of an appearance in court
- Participation in religious instruction or exercises.

### **Tardies**

Students who are not in attendance by 8:40 am will be considered late and will be permanently recorded as such. If a student is more than ten (10) minutes late than school beginning time, he/she must report to the office (with a parent/guardian when possible) for a tardy slip. All tardies are recorded and will be reported on progress reports and cards. Consistent tardiness will result in students needing to make up missed time and work at the discretion of the educators and staff. A letter will be sent home to the parents of students who are tardy seven (7) or more times in a three-month period and the Superintendent /Principal will meet with the family and student. If there is a unique family situation that prohibits a child from attending school on time, please speak with

the Superintendent/Principal.

**Students Sign In and Sign Out Procedures**

In the event a student must leave during class hours, a parent/guardian or authorized adult (as listed on the emergency card) must sign him/her out. The parent/guardian will need to go directly to the school office to pick up students. Office personnel will then call the class to have the student meet the parent in the office. There is a Sign- in/ Sign-out binder in the office where the parent/guardian signs the student out and states the reason. For safety reasons, a student must never leave the school premises unless an authorized adult has checked in with the office first and accompanies the student off campus.

Adopted:

Amended:

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are recognized as integral to student's learning. Field trips provide opportunities for students to explore new things and supplement and enrich classroom learning. They also help students relate their educational experience to the outside world.

### **Field trip planning and approval:**

Field trips are to be planned and carried out with safety as a priority and in a manner, that minimizes Spark Charter School's legal liability and financial cost.

The Executive Director shall monitor the effectiveness of field trips and continually evaluate them to ensure that they promote the goals and objectives of Spark Charter School's educational program. Teachers are to have a considerable degree of flexibility and innovation in planning field trips.

All trips that take place during school hours must receive prior written approval by the Executive Director. The executive Director provides the teachers with document templates that will record in writing the objective of the activity and how it relates to the curriculum. Teachers should provide the filled documentation to the Executive Director for approval.

If the Executive Director does not approve the field trip, the reasons for not approving must be stated in writing.

### **Permission slips:**

Every field trip needs permission slips signed by parents or guardians allowing their child to participate in the trip. The permission slip shall include a waiver of all claims against the charter school and its employees for injury, accident, illness or death occurring during or by reason of the field trip. In addition, the permission slip shall include an emergency telephone number for the student; any medications the student is required to take, along with the time and dosage required; and any medications the student is allergic to or other medical information necessary to ensure the student's safety.

Permission slips shall be with the teacher to take on the field trip.

### **Insurance:**

Spark charter school does not provide student accident or medical insurance.

### **Supervision of field trips:**

The teacher must be present and supervise the students during the field trip. The teacher can recruit parent volunteers to accompany the group and help chaperone the students.

Teachers will carry with them a first aid kit during the field trip. The teacher will be certified in a first aid course.

Teachers who are on field trips shall not consume alcohol or use controlled substances (except for medications taken under a physician's orders) while accompanying and supervising students on a field trip.

Any injuries or unusual incidents occurring during the field trip will be documented in writing by the teacher in charge of the field trip.

### **Parents/guardians participating in field trips:**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in field trips to assist with supervision of students. Parents/guardians accompanying the student group shall receive clear information regarding their responsibilities from the sponsoring teacher.

Parents/guardians will be assigned a specific group of students and shall be responsible for the continuous monitoring of these students at all times. Parents/guardians shall not consume alcohol or use controlled substances (except for medications taken under a physician's orders) while accompanying and supervising students on a field trip. Parents/guardians participating in field trips and excursions are required to pass a criminal background check (fingerprint clearance) and a tuberculosis screening in advance of the field trip/excursion.

**Transportation for field trips:  
Provided by parents/guardians:**

If transportation for the field trip or excursion is provided by parents/guardians, such parents/guardians shall provide all required documentation put forth in the policy. All said documents should be in office and checked to be valid at least 2 days before the trip.

Listed documents are a must for every volunteer driver. Any exceptions must be approved by the Executive Director and recorded in writing and signed by the Executive Director.

Documents required of a parent/guardian proving transportation:

1. Fingerprint clearance
2. TB negative result (4yrs validity for skin/blood test, 7yr for chest X-ray)
3. CA Drivers License copy
4. Vehicle insurance copy (page with coverage particulars, asking minimum \$50,000 property damage coverage per occurrence and bodily injury coverage of \$5,000 per person) [The document provided by the parent must show coverage amounts, covered persons, covered vehicles and coverage period](#)
5. Vehicle registration
6. Spark Driver application form (provided in Enrollment Packet and available in Spark Charter School Office. Signed forms need to be refreshed once every school year)
7. CA DMV drivers record, online request can be printed out instantly (required to submit latest copy once every school year - <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/dmv/detail/online/dr>)  
All documentation required of parents/adult drivers is to be submitted in the office, even if they are driving their own children.

**Transportation by buses:**

Insurance Requirements: The bus company has to provide proof of auto liability insurance, naming the school as additional insured. In most cases the transportation of passengers for compensation requires operating authority from the CA Public Utilities Commission. Prior to the trip, the transportation company's license or registration with the PUC needs to be verified. Here is the website link: [https://delaps1.cpuc.ca.gov/pls/public\\_cpuc/f?p=203:35:25541374408661::NO:RP::](https://delaps1.cpuc.ca.gov/pls/public_cpuc/f?p=203:35:25541374408661::NO:RP::)

Detailed Chaperone and Driver responsibilities will be outlined in parent volunteer guide and revised by the Executive Director.

Adopted:  
Amended:

## **Freedom of Expression Policy and Procedures**

Students attending Spark Charter School have the right to exercise free expression including, but not limited to the use of bulletin boards, distribution of printed materials or petitions, wearing buttons, badges and other insignia and the right of expression in official publications, whether or not the publications or other means of expression are supported financially by the school or by use of school facilities. The Board of Directors (“Board”) respects students’ rights to express ideas and opinions, take stands and support causes, whether controversial or not, through their speech, their writing, their clothing, and the printed materials they choose to post or distribute.

Student liberties of expression shall be limited only as allowed by law in order to maintain an orderly school environment and to protect the rights, health and safety of all members of the school community.

Students will not be disciplined solely on the basis of speech or other communication that would be constitutionally protected when engaged in outside of school, but may be disciplined for harassments, threats, or intimidation unless constitutionally protected.

Students may not use these rights to belittle, bully or disrespect peers, staff, faculty or administration.

### **Freedom of Expression Procedures**

#### **Circulation of Petitions and Other Printed Matter**

Students shall be allowed to distribute petitions and other printed matter subject to these procedures.

The time of distribution shall be limited to the half hour before school begins, during the lunch period, and the half hour after school is dismissed.

The manner of distribution shall be such that coercion is not used to induce students to accept the printed matter or to sign petitions. Materials are not to be left undistributed or stacked for pick-up while unattended at any place in the school or on school grounds.

#### **Buttons, Badges and Other Insignia of Symbolic Expression**

Students will be permitted to wear buttons, badges, armbands, and other insignia as a form of expression.

Students will be subject to disciplinary action when expressive activities such as the distribution of materials, wearing of buttons or displays, or posting of notices or other materials:

1. Are obscene, libelous or slanderous;

2. Ban the distribution of literature because it contains advertising, unless the advertising creates belittling, harassment, bullying, against peers, staff/ faculty or administration.
3. Create regulations that discriminate against non-School-sponsored publications or interfere with the effective distribution of non-sponsored publications provided such publications abide by time, place and manner regulations.

### **Official School Publications**

Pupil editors of official school publications shall be responsible for assigning and editing the news, editorial and feature content of their publications subject to the limitations identified above. It shall be the responsibility of a journalism advisor(s) of pupil publications within the School to supervise the production of the pupil staff, to maintain professional standards of English and journalism and to maintain the provisions provided in the Education Code relating to student expression.

### **Other Forms of Student Expression**

Forms of student expression may include, but are not limited to speech, debate, assemblies, posters, bulletin board announcements, and the wearing of buttons, badges and armbands. In general, the laws pertaining to all forms of student expression are the same. The rights of students to express their opinions are recognized by law and are not limited to verbal expression. The basic guidelines listed above for publications apply to all forms of student expression. No teacher or administrator shall interfere with such expression on the grounds that the message may be unpopular with students or faculty.

In conforming to state and federal laws, student expression must obey copyright laws; for example, student posters cannot use nationally registered and copyrighted characters such as those from Walt Disney or “Peanuts” publications.

A student shall be subject to discipline for off-campus expression, including expression on off-campus Internet web sites, when such expression poses a threat to the safety of other students, staff, or school property, or substantially disrupts the educational program. The School director will document the impact the expression had or could be expected to have on the school program.

### **Distribution of Procedures Governing Student Rights**

Site administrators will distribute copies of this Administrative Procedure to all teachers who are advisors of students who produce publications or present public performances. It is the responsibility of the School and site administrators to see that these guidelines are kept up-to-date and accurate.

### **Appeals**

The pupil and a School staff member shall attempt to resolve the problem before consulting the administrative staff. If the issue cannot be resolved between the staff member and the pupil, the

2. Incite students so as to create a clear and present danger of the imminent commission of unlawful acts on school premises or of the violation of lawful School regulations or of the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the School;
3. Express or advocate racial, ethnic or religious prejudice so as to create a clear and present danger of imminent commission of unlawful acts on School premises or of the violation of lawful School regulations or of the substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the School;
4. Are distributed in violation of the time, place and manner requirements;
5. Are in violation of current federal, state and local laws.

### **Unofficial School Publications**

School officials may not ban the distribution of non-School-sponsored publications on school grounds. Writers and editors of unofficial student publications who violate any state or federal law may be disciplined after distribution. Students distributing or posting any materials that are obscene, libelous or slanderous, or which demonstrably incite students to commit unlawful acts on School premises, violate School rules, or substantially disrupt the School's orderly operation will be subject to disciplinary action.

The following points apply to unofficial student publications:

1. Spark Charter School and its employees may disassociate themselves from the material printed inasmuch as it is not an official publication of the School.
2. School officials may reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of distribution. This distribution will be limited to:
  - a. One half hour before school begins, during the lunch period, or the half hour after dismissal.
  - b. In locations that do not obstruct the normal flow of traffic within the School or at entrances.
  - c. Without undue noise.
3. No student shall use coercion to induce students or any other persons to accept printed matter or to sign petitions.
4. "Distribution" means dissemination of a publication to students at a time and place of normal school activity, or immediately prior to or subsequent thereto, by means of handing out free copies, selling or offering copies for sale, accepting donations for copies of the publication, or displaying the student publication in areas of the school which are generally frequented by students.

School officials cannot:

1. Prohibit the distribution of anonymous literature or require that literature bear the name of the sponsoring organization or author.

pupil may appeal the decision to the site administrator, and then to the Charter School Director or his/her designee. As a final step, the pupil may follow the school's complaint procedures as outlined in the school policy.

Adopted:

Amended:



## **Infection Control Policy**

Spark Charter School will provide an environment for the safe conduct of its mission in education. This policy is intended to provide reasonable protection for students and employees of Spark Charter School against the transmission of infectious diseases within the school environment.

### **Infection Control Program**

The infection control plan is designed to protect employees and students from possible infection due to contact with blood borne viruses, including human immunodeficiency virus (“HIV”) and hepatitis B virus (“HBV”). Whenever exposed to blood or other bodily fluids through injury or accident, staff and students shall follow the latest medical protocol for disinfecting procedures.

The program outlines the procedures for the safe handling of biologically hazardous agents/waste to assure protection of all students and employees of the school. The school’s Executive Director and office staff are responsible for assuring adherence to these guidelines by employees and students.

At times, students and staff members may come in contact with human blood. Safe handling practices apply to contact with human blood and other potentially infectious materials including saliva when visibly contaminated with blood. All employees and students are to follow these procedures:

- Standard precautions shall be followed at all times. All body fluids are assumed to be infected with hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and all employees and students exposed to direct contact with body fluids must be protected as though such body fluids are known to be infected.
- Disposable vinyl or latex gloves shall be worn by employees when there is a possibility of blood contact. All such used gloves shall be discarded and hands washed immediately. Infections can occur through contact of chapped or cut skin with infected blood or through a splash of infected blood to the eye, nose or mouth of the employee.
- Masks and eye protection shall be worn when helping a hurt person with profuse bleeding.
- Immunization requirements will be enforced as applicable to ensure protection against infectious diseases like Hepatitis B from spreading.

The following is to be implemented for employees or students exposed to suspected contacts with blood.

- The affected person’s health provider should be immediately contacted.

- In case of employees coming into contact with someone else's blood, the Executive Director shall be notified and a signed incident report filed. A copy will be saved in the school's files as well as the employee's files.
- If it is student coming in contact with someone else's blood, the Executive Director and the student's parents/guardians must be notified. A signed incident report should be filed in the school's records and a copy placed in the student's file. Signature requirements: Executive Director and person (if an adult) whose blood came in contact.

The incident report should document the following:

- a. Date, time and location of injury
- b. The circumstances of the exposure
- c. The identity of the source patient
- d. Information on the use of protective equipment when injury occurred

### **Students with Infectious Diseases**

Parents/guardians of any student diagnosed as having an infectious disease must inform the school authorities. The student will need to be absent from school pending a health care provider's statement regarding: 1) the vulnerability of the student to a secondary infection from being in the school, and 2) the potential for infection of others by the student in his/her present medical state. The Executive Director will review the documentation and make a determination regarding the student returning to the school.

The Executive Director must inform all parents of students who might have been potentially exposed to the infection.

### **Employee with Infectious Disease**

Employees should notify the Executive Director of the school that he or she has been diagnosed as having an infectious disease. The Executive Director will make the decision regarding the employee returning to work depending on 1) the vulnerability to a secondary infection and 2) the potential for infection of others by the employee's present medical state. A statement from the employee's health care provider is required.

### **Implementation of CDC Guidelines**

Spark Charter School employees will comply with current CDC guidelines for infectious diseases. CDC guidelines protecting individuals from exposure to HIV will be followed. Current guidelines are available for access to all at <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/index.html>

Adopted:

Amended:

## NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

*The combined non-discrimination notice should contain 2 basic elements: 1) a statement of non-discrimination that specifies the basis for non-discrimination; and 2) identification by name or title, address, and telephone number of the employee(s) responsible for coordinating the compliance efforts.*

*Claims of discrimination by students in programs or activities conducted by the School must be processed in accordance with the School's Uniform Complaint Procedures ("UCP") required by the California Code of Regulations.*

SPARK Charter School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other legally protected category in its school, programs and/or activities. The following person(s) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Title: SPARK Charter School  
Address: 739 Morse Ave, Sunnyvale CA 94086  
Telephone No.: 1-408-752-2631

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <http://wdcrobcop01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Adopted:

Amended:

## **Parent and Family Participation Policy**

### **Overview**

One of the key components of Spark Charter School's educational program is family involvement. Numerous studies have shown that parental involvement in their child's education improves academic outcomes. A 2002 report by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, which synthesized research on parental involvement over the prior decade, found that regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school. The results also show that they earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs.

Parents sign an agreement form of understanding during enrollment, that outlines the various volunteering activities for parents to take part in, enabling Spark Charter School to deliver on the education program.

### **Development of the plan**

Parents and family members of participating children will be involved in the development of the parent participation plan. **On an annual basis, the plan will be reviewed by ?? and suggested changes recorded and shared with the school community.**

### **Annual School meetings**

Spark Charter School will have annual meetings at various times of the year to which all parents are invited and encouraged to attend. There will be additional meetings that will provide information to ensure, encourage and maximize parental involvement during and after school times in various capacities. One of the school wide meetings will be conducted with back-to-school night meeting. In this meeting, the Executive Director will present the goals and plans for the school in the upcoming year and facilitate PTA presentations describing various opportunities for parents to be involvement in the school.

### **Back-to-School night meetings**

Spark Charter School will conduct back-to-school night meetings within 6 weeks of school opening. These meetings present an opportunity for the teachers to present their goals for the class and their students in the upcoming year. It will be adult only meeting for parents and families to get to know their child's teacher and learn more about what the classroom has to offer for their child.

### **Parent volunteering training**

The Executive Director or PTA will conduct trainings for parents and/or guardians regarding the importance of parent involvement for teachers in the classroom and the school as a whole. The trainings will cover classroom volunteering procedures and guidelines for parent-child interactions during volunteering.

There will be a parent volunteer handbook shared with the school community, that details all the elements covered in training, to serve as a guide for parents.

### **Volunteering Opportunities**

Spark Charter School will provide its parent community with various opportunities to stay involved with the school. Parents or guardians can avail volunteering opportunities in the classroom like helping small groups of students with their assigned work, help teachers with preparation for classroom activities. For those who cannot volunteer in classroom or volunteer regularly, opportunities will be provided during field trips, fundraising events, community get-togethers and other short-term volunteer programs like FAB, etc.

### **Campus Workdays**

There will be at least 2 annual school work days and other classroom level work days organized by the teachers and PTA of specific classrooms.

**Annual Survey**

Online surveys will be conducted annually to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the parent participation program. The information will be used to improve and enhance parent involvement and improving the program in the area of trainings and effectiveness of the volunteering program in and out of the classrooms.

Addendum – Spark Parent Classroom Volunteer Guide (Spark Website: Parent Resources / Forms)

Adopted:

Amended:

## **Registration of Visitors/Guests**

### Posting of Notice

There will be a notice posted on Spark Charter School entrance gate that all persons entering the school must register at the school office. Separate registration binders are maintained for visitors/guests and for parent volunteers.

### Procedures for Visitors to Charter School Premises

1. Any person who is not a student of Spark Charter School or Spark Charter School officer or employee shall report his or her presence and the reason for visiting the Charter School in Sparks Charter School's main office.
2. All visitors registering with in the office, when asked will provide the office manager with his or her name, address, occupation, age, if less than twenty-one years-old, his or her purpose for entering Spark Charter School premises, and present proof of identity.
3. The office personnel shall provide identification to be used by all visitors at all times while on Charter School premises. The visitor shall make this identification visible at all times.
4. No person who furnishes the information set forth in this policy and who provides proof of identity shall be denied registration except if the Executive Director or designee has reasonable basis for concluding that the visitor's presence will or is likely to disrupt the school, its students, its teachers, or its other employees or volunteers or result in damage to property or will result in the distribution or use of unlawful or controlled substances.
5. The Executive Director or designee may revoke a visitor's registration if the Executive Director or designee has reasonable basis for concluding that the visitor's presence on school premises would likely interfere or is interfering with the peaceful conduct of school activities or is disrupting the school, its students, its teachers, or its other employees or volunteers.
6. Spark Charter School employees and volunteers should at all times watch for strangers on the school premises. Employees or volunteers who encounter a visitor not displaying the appropriate identification should ask the visitor whether he or she has registered with the Executive Director or designee. Employees and volunteers should immediately inform the Executive Director or designee of any visitor who refuses to comply with registration requirements.
7. Any possession of unauthorized dangerous instruments, weapons, or devices on school grounds shall be reported immediately to the Executive Director or designee and may be reported to the local law enforcement agency.
8. Any person who fails to register within a reasonable time after entering Spark Charter School premises, who fails to leave upon the request of the Executive Director or designee, or who returns after leaving pursuant to such a request has committed an unlawful act and may be prosecuted according to law.

Adopted:

Amended:

## STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY

### Notification

It is the intent of SPARK Charter School to integrate conflict resolution skills into the curriculum. In accordance therewith, students that have complaints against other students are encouraged to first address the issue with the person directly using the learned conflict resolution skills without the intervention of a school employee. If, however, the student does not feel comfortable with this approach or the complaint involves sexual harassment or discrimination, the student may notify a teacher or other school staff member. The teacher or staff member will notify the Executive Director of the complaint, if it cannot be resolved immediately at that level and will also notify the student's parent/guardian/caregiver of the complaint.

Students who have complaints against school personnel or program may notify a teacher or the Executive Director. If a teacher, or any other staff member, is notified of a student complaint against school personnel or program, the teacher shall notify the Executive Director.

### Procedures

Depending upon the nature of a complaint, the pupil will be provided information concerning the applicable policy and procedures to be followed. For instance, if the complaint is one of sexual harassment or other discrimination, the student & their parent/guardian/caregiver will be provided with a copy of the School's policy against harassment and discrimination and provided a complaint form and apprised of the procedures under the current policy.

### Confidentiality

All information obtained from the pupil and thereafter gathered will be maintained in a manner of confidentiality appropriate to the circumstance.

### Non-Retaliation

Complainants will be advised that they will be protected against retaliation as a result of the filing of any complaints or participation in any complaint process.

### Resolution

The administration will investigate student complaints appropriate to the circumstance using applicable procedures taking proper remedial measures to ensure effective resolution of any complaint and pursuant to the applicable procedures, and if necessary, take appropriate remedial measures to ensure effective resolution of any complaint.

Adopted:

Amended:

# **SPARK Charter School Youth Suicide Prevention Policy**

## **Introduction**

California *Education Code (EC)* Section 215, as added by Assembly Bill 2246, (Chapter 642, Statutes of 2016) mandates that the Governing Board of any local educational agency (LEA) that serves pupils in grades seven to twelve (while the mandate does not apply to private schools or students below grade seven, we do encourage them to consider adopting a suicide prevention policy as a safety net for all students), inclusive, adopt a policy on pupil suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention. The policy shall specifically address the needs of high-risk groups, including suicide awareness and prevention training for teachers, and ensure that a school employee acts within the authorization and scope of the employee's credential or license. Although elementary and private schools are not legally required to adhere to AB 2246, they may want to consult with their legal staff about the advisability of adopting such a policy.

Additionally, the CDE encourages each LEA to work closely with their county behavioral health department to identify and access resources at the local level.

## **A. SPARK Charter School's Role**

The Governing Board of Spark Charter School recognizes that suicide is a leading cause of death among youth and that an even greater amount of youth consider (17 percent of high school students) and attempt suicide (over 8 percent of high school students) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015).

The possibility of suicide and suicidal ideation requires vigilant attention from our school staff. As a result, we are ethically and legally responsible for providing an appropriate and timely response in preventing suicidal ideation, attempts, and deaths. We also must work to create a safe and nurturing campus that minimizes suicidal ideation in students.

Recognizing that it is the duty of the district and schools to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its students, this policy aims to safeguard students and staff against suicide attempts, deaths and other trauma associated with suicide, including ensuring adequate supports for students, staff, and families affected by suicide attempts and loss. As it is known that the emotional wellness of students greatly impacts school attendance and educational success, this policy shall be paired with other policies that support the emotional and behavioral wellness of students.

This policy is based on research and best practices in suicide prevention, and has been adopted with the understanding that suicide prevention activities decrease suicide risk, increase help-seeking behavior, identify those at risk of suicide, and decrease suicidal behaviors. Empirical evidence refutes a common belief that talking about suicide can increase risk or "place the idea in someone's mind."

In an attempt to reduce suicidal behavior and its impact on students and families, the Executive Director and the Board of SPARK Charter School shall develop strategies for



suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention, and the identification of the mental health challenges frequently associated with suicidal thinking and behavior. These strategies shall include professional development for all school personnel in all job categories who regularly interact with students or are in a position to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, including substitute teachers, volunteers, expanded learning staff (afterschool) and other individuals in regular contact with students.

## **Overall Strategic Plan for Suicide Prevention**

The Executive Director and the Board of SPARK Charter School involve school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, etc.), administrators, other school staff members, parents/guardians/caregivers, students, local health agencies and professionals, law enforcement, and community organizations in planning, implementing, and evaluating the district's strategies for suicide prevention and intervention. Districts must work in conjunction with local government agencies, community-based organizations, and other community supports to identify additional resources.

Resources:

- The K–12 Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention has been created to help schools comply with and implement AB 2246, the Pupil Suicide Prevention Policies. The Toolkit includes resources for schools as they promote youth mental wellness, intervene in a mental health crisis, and support members of a school community after the loss of someone to suicide.

Additional information about this Toolkit for schools can be accessed on the Heard Alliance Web site at <http://www.heardalliance.org/>.

## **Prevention**

### **A. Messaging about Suicide Prevention**

Messaging about suicide has an effect on suicidal thinking and behaviors. Consequently, SPARK Charter School will continue to review all materials and resources used in awareness efforts to ensure they align with best practices for safe messaging about suicide.

Resources:

- For information on public messaging on suicide prevention, see the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Web site at <http://suicidepreventionmessaging.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/>
- For information on engaging the media regarding suicide prevention, see the Your Voice Counts Web page at <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/making-headlines-guide-engaging-media-suicide-prevention-california-0>

- For information on how to use social media for suicide prevention, see the Your Voice Counts Web page at <http://resource-center.yourvoicecounts.org/content/how-use-social-media>

## **B. Suicide Prevention Training and Education**

Training shall be provided for all school staff members and other adults on campus (including substitutes and intermittent staff, interns, coaches, and expanded learning [afterschool] staff).

### Training:

- At least annually, staff shall receive training on the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, suicide prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention.
- All suicide prevention trainings shall be offered under the direction of school-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, or social workers) who have received advanced training specific to suicide and may benefit from collaboration with one or more county and/or community mental health agencies. Staff training can be adjusted year-to-year based on previous professional development activities and emerging best practices.
- At a minimum, staff shall participate in training on the core components of suicide prevention (identification of suicide risk factors and warning signs, prevention, intervention, referral, and postvention) at the beginning of their employment. Previously employed staff members shall attend a minimum of one-hour general suicide prevention training (at the local county office of education or via an online course). Core components of the general suicide prevention training shall include:
  - Suicide risk factors, warning signs, and protective factors;
  - How to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide;
  - How to respond appropriately to the youth who has suicidal thoughts. Such responses shall include constant supervision of any student judged to be at risk for suicide and an immediate referral for a suicide risk assessment;
  - Emphasis on immediately referring (same day) any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide for assessment while staying under constant monitoring by staff member;
  - Emphasis on reducing stigma associated with mental illness and that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide;
- In addition to initial orientations to the core components of suicide prevention, future professional development for staff should include the following components:
  - The impact of traumatic stress on emotional and mental health;
  - Common misconceptions about suicide;
  - School and community suicide prevention resources;
  - Appropriate messaging about suicide (correct terminology, safe messaging guidelines);
  - The factors associated with suicide (risk factors, warning signs, protective factors);
  - How to identify youth who may be at risk of suicide;

- Appropriate ways to interact with a youth who is demonstrating emotional distress or is suicidal. Specifically, how to talk with a student about their thoughts of suicide and (based on district guidelines) how to respond to such thinking; how to talk with a student about thoughts of suicide and appropriately respond and provide support based on district guidelines;
- School-approved procedures for responding to suicide risk (including multi-tiered systems of support and referrals). Such procedures should emphasize that the suicidal student should be constantly supervised until a suicide risk assessment is completed;
- School-approved procedures for responding to the aftermath of suicidal behavior (suicidal behavior postvention);
- Responding after a suicide occurs (suicide postvention);
- Resources regarding youth suicide prevention;
- Emphasis on stigma reduction and the fact that early prevention and intervention can drastically reduce the risk of suicide;
- Emphasis that any student who is identified to be at risk of suicide is to be immediately referred (same day) for assessment while being constantly monitored by a staff member.

#### Resources:

- Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) teaches a 5-step action plan to offer initial help to young people showing signs of a mental illness or in a crisis, and connect them with the appropriate professional, peer, social, or self-help care. YMHFA is an 8-hour interactive training for youth-serving adults without a mental health background. See the Mental Health First Aid Web page at <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/take-a-course/course-types/youth/>
- Free YMHFA Training is available on the CDE Mental Health Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/cg/mh/projectcalwell.asp>
- Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) is a gatekeeper training that can be taught online. Just as people trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the Heimlich Maneuver help save thousands of lives each year, people trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. See the QPR Web site at <http://www.qprinstitute.com/>
- SafeTALK is a half-day alertness training that prepares anyone over the age of fifteen, regardless of prior experience or training, to become a suicide-alert helper. See the LivingWorks Web page at <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/safetalk/>
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is a two-day interactive workshop in suicide first aid. ASIST teaches participants to recognize when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. See the LivingWorks Web page at <https://www.livingworks.net/programs/asist/>
- Kognito At-Risk is an evidence-based series of three online interactive professional development modules designed for use by individuals, schools, districts, and statewide agencies. It includes tools and templates to ensure that the program is easy to disseminate and measures success at the elementary, middle, and high

school levels. See the Kognito Web page at <https://www.kognito.com/products/pk12/>

### **C. Employee Qualifications and Scope of Services**

Employees of the SPARK Charter School must act only within the authorization and scope of their credential or license. While it is expected that school professionals are able to identify suicide risk factors and warning signs, and to prevent the immediate risk of a suicidal behavior, treatment of suicidal ideation is typically beyond the scope of services offered in the school setting. In addition, treatment of the mental health challenges often associated with suicidal thinking typically requires mental health resources beyond what schools are able to provide.

### **D. Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers Participation and Education**

- To the extent possible, parents/guardians/caregivers should be included in all suicide prevention efforts. At a minimum, schools shall share with parents/guardians/caregivers the SPARK Charter School suicide prevention policy and procedures.

### **E. Student Participation and Education**

SPARK Charter School will carefully review available student curricula to ensure it promotes the mental health model of suicide prevention and does not encourage the use of the stress model to explain suicide.

Under the supervision of school-employed mental health professionals, and following consultation with county and community mental health agencies, students shall:

- Receive developmentally appropriate, student-centered education about the warning signs of mental health challenges and emotional distress;
- Receive developmentally appropriate guidance regarding the school's suicide prevention, intervention, and referral procedures.

Student-focused suicide prevention education can be incorporated into classroom curricula (e.g., health classes, science, and physical education).

Resources:

- More Than Sad is school-ready and evidence-based training material, listed on the national Suicide Prevention Resource Center's best practices list, specifically designed for teen-level suicide prevention. See the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Web page at <https://afsp.org/our-work/education/more-than-sad/>
- Coping and Support Training (CAST) is an evidence-based life-skills training and social support program to help at-risk youth. See the Reconnecting Youth Inc. Web page at <http://www.reconnectingyouth.com/programs/cast/>

- Students Mobilizing Awareness and Reducing Tragedies (SMART) is a program comprised of student-led groups in high schools designed to give students the freedom to implement a suicide prevention on their campus that best fits their school's needs. See the SAVE Web page at <https://www.save.org/what-we-do/education/smart-schools-program-2/>
- Linking Education and Awareness for Depression and Suicide (LEADS) for Youth is a school-based suicide prevention curriculum designed for high schools and educators that links depression awareness and secondary suicide prevention. LEADS for Youth is an informative and interactive opportunity for students and teachers to increase knowledge and awareness of depression and suicide. See the SAVE Web page at <https://www.save.org/what-we-do/education/leads-for-youth-program/>

## **Intervention, Assessment, Referral**

### **A. Staff**

The Executive Director and another Administrator should receive advanced training in suicide intervention. One staff member will be designated as the primary and secondary suicide prevention liaisons. Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the primary designated suicide prevention liaison. If this primary suicide prevention liaison is unavailable, the staff shall promptly notify the secondary suicide prevention liaison.

If the student is in imminent danger (has access to a gun, is on a rooftop, or in other unsafe conditions), a call shall be made to 911.

- Whenever a staff member suspects or has knowledge of a student's suicidal intentions, they shall promptly notify the primary or secondary suicide prevention liaisons.
- A school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, or nurse shall then be notified
- If appropriate and in the best interest of the student, the student's parents/guardians/caregivers as soon as possible and shall refer the student to mental health resources in the school or community.
- Determination of notification to parents/guardians/caregivers should follow a formal initial assessment to ensure that the student is not endangered by parental notification.
- Students experiencing suicidal ideation shall not be left unsupervised.
- A referral process should be prominently disseminated to all staff members, so they know how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the school and community-based resources.
- SPARK Charter School will select a Designee to establish the crisis intervention procedures to ensure student safety and appropriate communications if a suicide occurs or an attempt is made by a student or adult on campus or at a school-sponsored activity.

## **B. Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers**

A referral process should be prominently disseminated to all parents/guardians/caregivers, so they know how to respond to a crisis and are knowledgeable about the school and community-based resources.

## **C. Students**

Students shall be encouraged to notify a staff member when they are experiencing emotional distress or suicidal ideation, or when they suspect or have knowledge of another student's emotional distress, suicidal ideation, or attempt.

## **D. Parental Notification and Involvement**

Each school within the SPARK Charter School shall identify a process to ensure continuing care for the student identified to be at risk of suicide. The following steps should be followed to ensure continuity of care:

- After a referral is made for a student, school staff shall verify with the parent/guardian/caregiver that follow-up treatment has been accessed. Parents/guardians/caregivers will be required to provide documentation of care for the student.
- If parents/guardians/caregivers refuse or neglect to access treatment for a student who has been identified to be at-risk for suicide or in emotional distress, the Executive Director will meet with the parents/guardians/caregivers to identify barriers to treatment (e.g., cultural stigma, financial issues) and work to rectify the situation and build understanding of the importance of care. If follow-up care for the student is still not provided, school staff should consider contacting Child Protective Services (CPS) to report neglect of the youth.

## **E. Action Plan for In-School Suicide Attempts**

If a suicide attempt is made during the school day on campus, it is important to remember that the health and safety of the student and those around him/her is critical. The following steps should be implemented:

- Remain calm, remember the student is overwhelmed, confused, and emotionally distressed;
- Move all other students out of the immediate area;
- Immediately contact the Executive Director or Admin in charge;
- Call 911 and give them as much information about any suicide note, medications taken, and access to weapons, if applicable;
- If needed, provide medical first aid until a medical professional is available;
- Parents/guardians/caregivers should be contacted as soon as possible;

- Do not send the student away or leave them alone, even if they need to go to the restroom;
- Listen and prompt the student to talk;
- Review options and resources of people who can help;
- Be comfortable with moments of silence as you and the student will need time to process the situation;
- Provide comfort to the student;
- Promise privacy and help, and be respectful, but do not promise confidentiality;
- Student should only be released to parents/guardians/caregivers or to a person who is qualified and trained to provide help.

## **F. Action Plan for Out-of-School Suicide Attempts**

If a suicide attempt by a student is outside of SPARK Charter School property, it is crucial that the LEA protects the privacy of the student and maintain a confidential record of the actions taken to intervene, support, and protect the student. The following steps should be implemented:

- Contact the parents/guardians/caregivers and offer support to the family;
- Discuss with the family how they would like the school to respond to the attempt while minimizing widespread rumors among teachers, staff, and students;
- Obtain permission from the parents/guardians/caregivers to share information to ensure the facts regarding the crisis is correct;
- Designate a staff member to handle media requests;
- Provide care and determine appropriate support to affected students;
- Offer to the student and parents/guardians/caregivers steps for re-integration to school.

## **G. Supporting Students after a Mental Health Crisis**

It is crucial that careful steps are taken to help provide the mental health support for the student and to monitor their actions for any signs of suicide. The following steps should be implemented after the crisis has happened:

- Treat every threat with seriousness and approach with a calm manner; make the student a priority;
- Listen actively and non-judgmental to the student. Let the student express his or her feelings;
- Acknowledge the feelings and do not argue with the student;
- Offer hope and let the student know they are safe and that help is provided. Do not promise confidentiality or cause stress;
- Explain calmly and get the student to a trained professional, guidance counselor, or designated staff to further support the student;

- Keep close contact with the parents/guardians/caregivers and mental health professionals working with the student.

## **H. Re-Entry to School After a Suicide Attempt**

A student who threatened or attempted suicide is at a higher risk for suicide in the months following the crisis. Having a streamlined and well planned re-entry process ensures the safety and wellbeing of students who have previously attempted suicide and reduces the risk of another attempt. An appropriate re-entry process is an important component of suicide prevention. Involving students in planning for their return to school provides them with a sense of control, personal responsibility, and empowerment.

The following steps shall be implemented upon re-entry:

- Obtain a written release of information signed by parents/guardians/caregivers and providers;
- Confer with student and parents/guardians/caregivers about any specific requests on how to handle the situation;
- Inform the student's teachers about possible days of absences;
- Allow accommodations for student to make up work (be understanding that missed assignments may add stress to student);
- Mental health professionals or trusted staff members should maintain ongoing contact to monitor student's actions and mood;
- Work with parents/guardians/caregivers to involve the student in an aftercare plan.

Resource:

- The School Reentry for a Student Who Has Attempted Suicide or Made Serious Suicidal Threats is a guide that will assist in school re-entry for students after an attempted suicide. See the Mental Health Recovery Services Resource Web page at [http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted\\_suicide\\_resources\\_for\\_schools-9/](http://www.mhrsonline.org/resources/suicide%5Cattempted_suicide_resources_for_schools-9/)

## **I. Responding After a Suicide Death (Postvention)**

A death by suicide in the school community (whether by a student or staff member) can have devastating consequences on students and staff. Therefore, it is vital that we are prepared ahead of time in the event of such a tragedy. SPARK Charter School shall ensure that each school site adopts an action plan for responding to a suicide death as part of the general Crisis Response Plan. The Suicide Death Response Action Plan (Suicide Postvention Response Plan) needs to incorporate both immediate and long-term steps and objectives.



- Suicide Postvention Response Plan shall include but not limited to:
  - Identify a staff member to confirm death and cause (school site administrator);
  - Identify a staff member to contact deceased's family (within 24 hours);
  - Enact the Suicide Postvention Response Plan, include an initial meeting of the school Suicide Postvention Response Team;
  - Notify all staff members (ideally in-person or via phone, not via e-mail or mass notification).
- Coordinate an all-staff meeting, to include:
  - Notification (if not already conducted) to staff about suicide death;
  - Emotional support and resources available to staff;
  - Notification to students about suicide death and the availability of support services (if this is the protocol that is decided by administration);
  - Share information that is relevant and that which you have permission to disclose.
- Prepare staff to respond to needs of students regarding the following:
  - Review of protocols for referring students for support;
  - Talking points for staff to notify students;
  - Resources available to students (on and off campus).
- Identify students significantly affected by suicide death and other students at risk of imitative behavior;
- Identify students affected by suicide death but not at risk of imitative behavior;
- Communicate with the larger school community about the suicide death;
- Respond to memorial requests in respectful and non-harmful manner; responses should be handed in a thoughtful way and their impact on other students should be considered;
- Identify media spokesperson skilled to cover story without the use of explicit, graphic, or dramatic content (go to the Reporting on Suicide.Org Web site at [www.reportingonsuicide.org](http://www.reportingonsuicide.org)). Research has proven that sensationalized media coverage can lead to contagious suicidal behaviors.
- Utilize and respond to social media outlets:
  - Identify what platforms students are using to respond to suicide death
  - Identify/train staff and students to monitor social media outlets
- Include long-term suicide postvention responses:
  - Consider important dates (i.e., anniversary of death, deceased birthday, graduation, or other significant event) and how these will be addressed
  - Support siblings, close friends, teachers, and/or students of deceased
  - Consider long-term memorials and how they may impact students who are emotionally vulnerable and at risk of suicide

Adopted:

Amended:

## Student Technology Use Policy

Spark Charter School provides students with access to technology to further their education, including Internet access and email accounts. Access to these resources is limited to only activities that enhance delivery of education and requires students to recognize their duty to use the equipment and resources only in the manner specified by the policy and the technology agreement.

All Students agree to use the school resources in the following manner:

1. **Acceptable Use.** The purpose of technology use, including the Internet, is to support education and research by providing access to unique resources. The use of the school's technology resources must support educational objectives of Spark Charter School. Transmission of any material in violation of any national or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secrets.

2. **Privileges.** The use of the computer networks and access to the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in a cancellation of those privileges. The system administrator or sponsoring teacher will determine what is inappropriate and may close a network account at any time. An "inappropriate use" is one that is inconsistent with an educational purpose or that is in clear violation of Spark Charter School policy.

3. **Network Etiquette.** Students are expected to follow the rules of network etiquette, which include, but are not limited to:

a. Students will not post on newsgroups or other message posting systems any communication containing profanity, racially disparaging remarks, or lewd and/or obscene language.

b. Students will use appropriate language and will not be abusive in their communications. Swearing, use of vulgarities or other inappropriate language is forbidden. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden. Access to sites with inappropriate content is forbidden and may result in immediate suspension of privileges and possible discipline as well.

c. Students will not make threats against others.

d. Students will not give their personal information including name, home address, telephone phone number, credit card information and social security numbers to anyone. Nor will they reveal the same personal information about others.

e. Electronic mail (email) is not private. The systems administrators have access to all email. The school will utilize filtering software to scan incoming and outgoing email for objectionable content. Inappropriate email may cause loss of privileges.

f. The network may not be used in a way that would disrupt others.

g. Students will not arrange face-to-face meeting with someone they have met on the internet, during school. Any such information that comes to the school staff's attention will be relayed to the executive director and the student's parent/guardian.

h. Students will not engage in any sort of cyber-bullying or cyber-threats.

4. Warranties. Spark Charter School makes no warranties of any kind for the service it is providing. The school will not be responsible for use of information obtained via the Internet. The school will not take any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained.

5. Security. If a student finds a security problem on the network, it is their responsibility to immediately inform the teacher or system administrator. No student may use another person's network account without written permission. Any attempt by a student to log in as a user other than himself/herself, may cause immediate loss of privileges. Any user defined as a network security risk or having a history of problems with Internet access may be denied access to the Internet.

6. Prohibited use. Users may not use Spark charter School's technology resources to make money or for any illegal purpose.

7. Viruses and Hacking. Users may not upload, transmit, intentionally download or participate in any manner in the creation, promulgation or use of computer viruses, worms, or spyware, or any other type of malware. Users may not engage in any form of "hacking" while using the school's technology resources. Hacking includes, but is not limited to, gaining or attempting to gain access to restricted computer sites and/or viewing, copying, downloading, or altering the computer programs, data files, and other materials contained therein.

8. Use of Private Passwords and Security Devices. Users may not use any passwords, recognition codes, security access information, or physical locking devices on any of Spark's technology resources for private use.

9. Vandalism. Vandalism will result in immediate loss of privileges, disciplinary action and legal referral. Vandalism includes any attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, the Internet or other parts of the network. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. Students who vandalize district computers or systems will be held responsible for the cost of replacement or repair.

10. No software may be loaded to any Spark Charter School's computers. Only Spark Charter School's technology staff is authorized to load any school-approved software onto the school's computers. Students who load unauthorized software will be held financially responsible for the cost to delete the software.

Adopted:

Amended: