Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

# Postvention:
## A guide for schools after a 'suspected suicide'

## Whakatauki

**Mā te whakātu, ka mōhio**

**Mā te mōhio, ka mārama**

**Mā te mārama, ka mātau**

**Ma te mātau, ka ora.**

With discussion comes knowledge

With knowledge comes light and understanding

With light and understanding comes wisdom

With wisdom comes wellbeing.

This best practice guidance has been developed collaboratively with the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident Service, National Support and Guidance Team, Learning Support and partners Te Aho, Suicide Prevention Office, Ministry of Health, Auckland University. The resource builds on the knowledge from previous editions of the Preventing and responding to suicide resource kit for schools 2013, 2019 where the Ministry of Education made the commitment to undergo further reviews and development to align with Every Life Matters – He Tapu te Oranga o ia Tangata: Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019-2029.

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1 The Terrace, Mezzanine floor
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# Introduction

## *Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa*

*We would like to acknowledge all those who have lost a loved one to suicide in Aotearoa New Zealand. We also acknowledge the many communities who have experienced the impact of a suicide – and particularly those families, whānau, students, and schools, whom the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident Service has worked alongside. Without your dedication and courage, the collective knowledge in these guidelines would not exist to be shared.*

The Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident team, based in all Ministry of Education offices, are available 24hr/7 days

Call: **0800 TI (0800 848 326)**

# Contents

**Introduction** ... **3**

**Who is this guide for?** ... **6**

**What is a 'suspected suicide'?** ... **7**

**Why is this topic important?** ... **7**

**Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Team - immediate support for schools** ... **8**

**What does the Ministry Traumatic Incident Team do?** ... **8**

**Why should a school contact the Ministry Traumatic Incident Team immediately?** ... **9**

**Language and the law matters** ... **9**

**Emergency Management Plan** ... **11**

Emergency contacts list ... 12

**Emergency response – first 24 hours after a 'suspected suicide'** ... **13**

Emergency rapid response checklists ... 13

Checklist A: A deceased person is located on school grounds - immediate steps ... 14

Checklist B: a 'suspected suicide' takes place outside of school - immediate steps ... 16

Checklist C: First 24 hours after a 'suspected suicide' ... 17

**Communicating with family after a 'suspected suicide'** ... **19**

Checklist D: Communicating with the family and whānau of the student that has died ... 20

Resources to help with understanding and communicating ... 23

**Communicating with staff after a 'suspected suicide'** ... **25**

Checklist E: Informing staff of a 'suspected suicide' ... 25

Checklist F: Follow up staff meetings ... 29

**Communicating with students after a 'suspected suicide' – for teachers** ... **31**

What to say when a student asks 'why' someone ended their life ... 33

Dealing with flippant comments about suicide ... 33

Discuss appropriate ways to handle problems that may occur ... 34

Monitoring social media ... 34

Template 1: draft script for talking with students about a 'suspected suicide' ... 36

Template 2: draft letter to all families and whānau in the school community ... 39

Template 3: draft letter for parents and whānau about social media use ... 41

Template 4: draft key messages which can help with a media statement ... 43

Things to avoid when discussing a 'suspected suicide' ... 44

Stigma and Myths About Suicide ... 45

**Supporting student, staff and whānau wellbeing** ..... **46**
Shrines, gatherings, and other activities of remembrance ..... 46
Planning with sports teams and other activity/interest groups ..... 47
Wellbeing Messages for Students ..... 47
Template 5: Draft message for senior students | Addition to school newsletters ..... 48
Supporting the immediate wellbeing of the most affected staff or students ..... 49
Establish support needed for staff and students ..... 49
Check students, staff and whānau know what to do if they are concerned about someone ..... 49
Some common signs of distress to look out for ..... 50
Some common signs of distress: ..... 50
Some conversational signs ..... 51
Monitoring and managing absences ..... 51

**Sample agenda for family or whānau meeting with community mental health services** ..... **52**
Part 1: School, family and whānau meeting | Providing general information ..... 53
Part 2: School, family and whānau meeting | Small group kōrero and pātai with community mental health professionals ..... 54

**Planning for the funeral or tangi** ..... **56**

**Cultural support** ..... **57**

**Helplines** ..... **58**

**The Mental Health Foundation** ..... **60**

**Suicide Bereavement** ..... **61**

**Other specialist helplines** ..... **62**

**Support for families, whānau and friends** ..... **63**

## Who is this guide for?

This guide, developed by the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident Service with partner input from the Mental Health Foundation, Suicide Prevention Office, and Clinical Advisory Services Aotearoa (CASA) to Te Aho, is to support schools after a 'suspected suicide'.

This guide supports school leaders to provide a caring, well considered response to a 'suspected suicide' that affects their school community. It should be noted that this resource is not intended to replace any strategies or tikanga that kura may currently have in place to deal with 'suspected suicide', however kura are welcome to use any of the information contained in it. Students and staff may experience a range of emotions (including grief and loss) and reactions in the immediate aftermath. To limit the harmful impacts on students following a 'suspected suicide' requires a response that is carefully planned. Research[1] shows that support in schools from teachers and whānau can support the processes of grief and loss, as well as preventing further youth suicides.

This best practice guideline can be used to support schools after a 'suspected suicide' and to promote student resilience and help-seeking in difficult times. These guidelines should be used alongside existing school guidance, the *Working Together: A guide for schools to support students who self-harm*[2] (Te Ata Hāpara Centre for Suicide Prevention Research, The University of Auckland 2025) and in conjunction with local mental health services.

It's important that school staff consider cultural concepts, values and practices that may apply to students impacted by 'suspected suicide'. Staff should deepen their understanding of Māori worldviews on the issue of suicide prevention and postvention. To learn more, use the links listed throughout this resource and access information available through organisations like Te Rau Ora, Kia Piki Te Ora and Pasifika primary prevention organisation, Le Va.

Seek the cultural advice and expertise of others around you - in your school and community. Talk to local leaders and mana whenua about appropriate protocols to understand and follow when a 'suspected suicide' has occurred in a school setting in their area.

This understanding is critical to addressing and promoting the wellbeing of all students and staff, and ensuring school settings effectively respond to the needs of those closely impacted by a 'suspected suicide'.

1 Suicide Postvention in Schools: What Evidence Supports Our Current National Recommendations? - PMC
2 Working Together: A guide for schools to support students who self-harm https://bpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.auckland.ac.nz/dist/4/1059/files/2025/06/Self-Harm-Guidelines-FINAL-9-5-25.pdf

## What is a 'suspected suicide'?

When someone dies by 'suspected suicide', the cause of their death won't be determined until after the coroner has made a ruling, which may not occur until two or three years **after** the person has died.

Under the Coroners Act 2006, section 71 (3)[3], the death can be reported publicly as a 'suspected suicide' **before** the coroner's office releases its ruling, following an investigation. The words we choose to use has an impact on the deceased person's life and those bereaved by suicide. The Ministry of Education suggests that schools discuss the terminology with the family and whānau of the deceased person before using the term 'suspected suicide' or another term like 'sudden death' in communications to students, staff and the school community. On **page 10** of this resource is a helpful chart about language and that words matter.

## Why is this topic important?

The reasons that young people take their own lives are complex and informed by multiple factors. This includes structural determinants such as racism and discrimination towards indigenous peoples resulting from colonisation, poverty, violence of all kinds and lack of access to health and mental health care. In this context, factors that are associated with suicide include violence of all types, alcohol-related harm, stand-down and exclusion from school and harmful communication about self-harm and suicide (Te Mauri, 2020[4]; Fortune et al, 2023[5]).

*The Ministry of Education is committed to improving suicide prevention efforts, which involves a whole-of-government approach to address the structural determinants affecting affecting the suicides rates in Aotearoa New Zealand[6].*

3 Coroners Act 2006 https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2006/0038/latest/whole.html
4 Te Mauri report, 2020 https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/te-mauri-the-life-force-i-rangatahi-suicide-report-i-te-purongo-mo-te-mate-whakamomori-o-te-rangatahi/
5 Fortune S, Sharma V, Papalii T, et al. 2023. *Evidence Synthesis of the Research on Suicide Prevention and Postvention: Aotearoa New Zealand and International Perspectives*. Wellington: Ministry of Health
6 https://tewhatuora.shinyapps.io/suicide-web-tool/

## Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Team - immediate support for schools - 0800 TI (0800 848 326)

The Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident team, based in all Ministry of Education offices, are available 24hr/7 days so schools can immediately talk with and access support after an emergency. This expertise means you and your school are well supported with handling any traumatic event.

Contact the Ministry's Traumatic Incident team, after a critical incident or emergency such as a 'suspected suicide'. These staff have a range of experiences and knowledge, including cultural knowledge. The Traumatic Incident Team information is on the Ministry website[7].

## What does the Ministry Traumatic Incident Team do?

After a critical incident, the Ministry's Traumatic Incident Team helps develop processes alongside the school or early learning service leadership team to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, their family and whānau, and staff.

We help by providing:

- the consideration of possible cultural needs and known cultural supports that the school may need.
- a compassionate supportive, flexible and adaptive approach for the school leadership.
- practical assistance to ensure safety and confidence to make decisions that address the immediate needs of those affected in the learning setting, including whānau and community.
- information on access to available resources and coping strategies, empowering those affected to make informed decisions and regain a sense of control over changes.
- leadership support to return the early learning service or school as much as possible to normal operations, so children and young people are supported by those they know and trust through regular routines, which help students and teachers' emotional wellbeing.
- support to communicate to minimise harm and stigma.
- information to support a school to understand the coronial process.

7 https://www.education.govt.nz/education-professionals/schools-year-0-13/health-and-safety/respond-school-emergency-or-traumatic-incident

## Why should a school contact the Ministry Traumatic Incident Team immediately?

A school leader should contact the Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Team for support for dealing with a 'suspected suicide'. This support includes communicating key information to students, families and the school community including linking in with local and national support agencies.

A 'suspected suicide' can have a significant impact and affect the wellbeing of family, whānau, school and community. Getting immediate support from the Ministry's Traumatic Incident Team can ensure that the school people leading the response, can focus on the contexts that support wellbeing such as learning routines, school connectedness, sensitive, culturally informed communication to lessen the impacts of the loss.

## Language and the law matters

'Suspected suicide' is the term used in the Coroners Act 2006[8] until the coroner has confirmed the cause of death which may occur two to three years later.
This Act:

> **Restricts making public the method or any suspected method; or any detail (for example the place of death) that suggests the method** or any suspected method. Anyone who publicises this information about a suicide or 'suspected suicide' without the coroner's permission is committing an offence and may be fined.

The way we communicate after a sudden death can have an impact on a person's life and those bereaved by suicide. The words we choose to use can make all the difference. This is why in this resource we highlight the term 'suspected suicide' as the best practice term to use. Mindframe Australia has developed a practical, research-informed guideline[9] to support and empower people to use words in ways that minimise stigma and harm and maximise diversity of representation and support help-seeking.

The table on the next page is adapted from Mindframe Australia's *Our words matter: Guidelines for language use.*

8 Coroners Act 2006 https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2006/0038/latest/whole.html
9 Mindframe Australia: Our words matter: Guidelines for language use - Mindframe

The following table is adapted from Mindframe Australia's *Our words matter: Guidelines for language use.*

| How to make a difference | Problematic | Preferred |
|---|---|---|
| Ensure words about a death by suicide are not inadvertently positive or have a desired outcome | Successful suicide, completed suicide | Died by 'suspected suicide' |
| Avoid language that refers to a crime or sin as this can be stigmatising | The use of the word committed or commit suicide indicates a crime which it is not. | Died by 'suspected suicide' |
| Avoid details or any language that relates to methods or location of a death or suicide attempt | Any mention of method or location | Died by 'suspected suicide' but do not identify the location of death |
| Remove language that could be seen as sensationalising suicide | Suicide epidemic | Over time, there can be fluctuations in the increase or decrease rates of suicides |
| Avoid glamourising suicide | Set free from demons, finally at peace, can rest at last | Tragic death, a tragedy |
| Avoid using the term suicide out of context | Political suicide, suicide mission, suicide pass (in sports) | Use in context of a 'suspected suicide' |
| There is conflicting evidence on content advice | Trigger or trigger warning. | Content advice: the content includes discussion of suicide |

# Postvention: prior planning

## Emergency Management Plan

Incorporate this postvention guide into your school's emergency management plan and identify additional ways to respond to the needs of your specific communities when dealing with a 'suspected suicide' e.g., how to link with the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incident team specialist support services in your area.

All staff should be familiar with your school's emergency management plan and understand their roles and responsibilities in the event of a 'suspected suicide'. Every school should have a emergency response management team and staff should know the members of this team. It's good practice to regularly review your school's emergency management plan with staff, including a run through as part of your induction for new staff. An up-to-date emergency contact list is essential for use by emergency management team members in rapid responses to serious situations. Your school may wish to assign someone to this role and to have a regular review built into your school calendar.

## Emergency contacts list

**Police/Ambulance**

111

**Board Chair**

[provide your board chair's name and number here]

**School Principal**

[provide your principal's name and number here]

**School Counsellor/s**

[provide the name and number of your school's staff member assigned to support students in distress]

**School Nurse/Health Services**

[provide the name and number of your school's nurse/health services providers]

**School emergency response management team**

[provide the name and number of the school response team's lead person and the rest of the team]

**Local Kaumatua, Hapū, Iwi Liaison**

[provide the names and numbers - have a rep/s on the EMT team]

**Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident service**

0800 TI Team / 0800 848 326

**Oranga Tamariki**

0508 FAMILY / 0508 326 459

**Te Whatu Ora Postvention Coordinator**

**Media spokesperson if not principal**

**School family contact person if not Principal**

**Person on the front desk taking calls**

## Emergency response — first 24 hours after a 'suspected suicide'

It's usual for the school principal to lead emergency management planning implementation, as part of, or with the support of your school's emergency management plan. So, your school's response to a 'suspected suicide' is rapid and cohesive, your emergency management plan should account for key people being away at the time of an event, including the principal.

These immediate actions need to be taken:

- your school's emergency response management team is immediately activated when there is a 'suspected suicide'.
- your school contacts your local Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Team to support your response to manage the wellbeing of your school community.
- your team coordinates the emergency response and helps the school community manage its wellbeing which includes connecting with mana whenua regarding cultural protocols. These also need to be timely in order for wellbeing and the return as soon as possible to teaching and learning routines.

Be vigilant about student non-attendance at school, during this time, especially for those students who may be friends or relatives of the deceased student or may have experienced an earlier suicide in their family and whānau. Their absence may be a sign of distress, and they may not have family with them during school hours, so need support.

### Emergency rapid response checklists

Emergency response checklists are designed for emergency management team members to rapidly respond to 'suspected suicides'. The checklists can help to ensure time is not lost as every one already knows their roles and responsibilities and can immediately follow agreed processes.

Your school may wish to develop its own emergency response checklists or compare your existing ones with the checklists in this guide in case they can be improved. The templates Checklist A, B & C listed below with links to the next few pages, have priority sequenced actions that can be tailored with information specific to your school/area and to support existing information in your school's Emergency Management Plan.

- Checklist A: A deceased person is located on school grounds - immediate steps for staff to take (page 14).
- Checklist B: A deceased person is located off school grounds - immediate steps for staff to take (page 16).
- Checklist C: First 24 hours - led by the Emergency Management Response Team (page 17).

A

**Checklist A:** A deceased person is located on school grounds - immediate steps

| A deceased person is located | Person or role responsible | Time/date completed |
|---|---|---|
| Call emergency services on 111 and provide them with a key contact number and appropriate entrance point to school area. | | |
| Secure the area until police arrive. Know that police have the responsibility to notify the deceased's family and whanau. | | |
| Check no one else is in immediate danger. | | |
| Move any students away from the area. | | |
| Check that staff or students do not have access to the site or area. If this is not possible, consider other physical barriers to prevent others becoming distressed by what they see. | | |
| Inform the school principal. | | |
| Check with kaumatua that tikanga is observed. | | |
| Decide who can support those who witnessed the deceased person. | | |
| Attend to the wellbeing of those who witnessed the deceased person e.g. those who may have discovered the deceased, and those who were close friends or colleagues. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Give the people mentioned above the opportunity to ask questions or express their own reactions. | | |
| Talk with them about next steps the school will take and ask what they need to happen next for their own emotional wellbeing. | | |
| If any student/s witnessed the death contact their family.<br><br>Give them the option of being collected by their family or staying at school. | | |
| Connecting students with supportive others is important such as parents (student), or a partner or friends (staff). Don't leave them alone to cope with the initial emotional distress. Focus on helping to find an important person in their lives to connect them with. Do not send them home if no adult is home. | | |
| Offer a drink or something warm if needed. | | |
| Assure staff that if they feel that they can't handle some of their usual responsibilities that additional help can be discussed. | | |
| Talk to students about culturally important practices/ considerations to help support wellbeing, including the recording and sharing of information about the person's death online. | | |

B

**Checklist B:** a 'suspected suicide' takes place outside of school - immediate steps

| If the death takes place outside of school: | Person or role responsible | Time/date completed |
|---|---|---|
| Inform the school principal. | | |
| Inform the school board. | | |
| Convene the school emergency management response team.<br>Share facts with this team (when, where, how, what has been confirmed).<br>Discuss what the cultural needs are and how they are going to be met. Bring in cultural advisors, if needed. | | |
| Contact the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incidents team. **0800 TI Team / 0800 848 326)**. | | |

C

**Checklist C:** First 24 hours after a 'suspected suicide' – led by Emergency Management Response Team

| A 'suspected suicide', next 24 hours: | Person or role responsible | Time/date completed |
|---|---|---|
| Inform the school board. | | |
| Contact the Ministry of Education Traumatic Incidents team **0800 TI Team / 0800 848 326**. | | |
| Convene to school emergency management response team. | | |
| Share known facts with the school emergency management response team (when, where, how, what has been confirmed, including police process of contact with whānau and when information can be released). | | |
| Assign roles, including who will be the key communicator with media (usually the principal); and family (principal or guidance staff); and spokesperson for front desk and phones. | | |
| Verify/confirm and check information about the death through Health New Zealand - Te Whatu Ora, Suicide Prevention \ Postvention Facilitator. | | |
| Confirm cultural representation. | | |
| Decide how teachers and staff will be informed to ensure privacy of the deceased and their whānau. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Decide who will collect the deceased person's property from the learning environment, how and when this will occur, and where it will be stored in a culturally safe way for return to whānau. | | |
| Decide when the staff meeting will be held and what information can be shared. | | |
| Develop resources needed for scripts (teachers, students and community) and write these if templates are not in your school's emergency management plan. | | |
| Determine who will take phone enquiries and what will be said, including to media. | | |
| Organise temporary support rooms for students to relocate to if they are finding it hard to stay in the classroom environment while distressed, and if relief staff are needed. | | |
| Set up systems to identify and support students or staff who might be experiencing distress. Pay particular attention to those staff or students with previous incidents of extreme distress. | | |

# Communicating with family after a 'suspected suicide'

All information communicated about a person's 'suspected suicide' should be respectful, sensitive, compassionate, timely, accurate, in plain language and updated as needed. The Ministry's Traumatic Incident team can help you plan and prepare this. In the first 24 hours, alongside expressions of condolence, information could include the next steps or actions that will be taken so people feel as informed as possible during this difficult time. This may also include appropriate and often practical opportunities for the school community to support the grieving family and whānau.

Before communications are shared with the wider community, whānau or family of the deceased should be consulted in a sensitive way. Who from your school community is best placed to provide the appropriate cultural support, if needed, alongside key staff? Māori protocols provide guidance, protection and a structure to grief, loss, and healing. When suicide impacts Māori, seek advice from a respected leader or kaumātua about a te ao Māori approach to suicide prevention. It will be important to check with the family or whānau on how they want this death to be named? 'Suspected suicide' or sudden death? They may not want their child's name mentioned, if this is the case their wishes should be respected.

The school community will want to help the grieving family and whānau. It may be appropriate to have someone from the same community as the grieving family or whānau community who can ask the whānau how they would like to be supported or suggest the type of practical support that may be needed. Grieving family and whānau may not be in a position to ask for it, but may need help.

Include a checklist (Checklist D) in your emergency management plan that considers when and how to communicate with an affected family. This is a chance to be more prepared, including incorporating tikanga appropriate to the family, and language that respects the deceased person and their family.

- Checklist D: Communicating with the family and whānau of the student that has died (page 20).

D

**Checklist D:** Communicating with the family and whānau of the student that has died

| Communicating with the family and whānau of the student who has died | Person or role responsible | Time/date completed |
|---|---|---|
| Prior to contacting the family or whānau consider: | | |
| Any recent history/incidents involving the deceased student that may impact on the communication with the family (e.g. bullying). | | |
| Do you need to contact cultural advisors? Māori protocols provide guidance, protection and a structure to grief, loss, and healing. When suicide impacts Māori, seek advice from a respected leader or kaumātua about a te ao Māori approach to suicide prevention. There may be cultural and/or religious practices regarding death and suicide that need to be followed or are wanted. | | |
| Who is the best person to liaise with the family sensitively and in the most culturally appropriate way? There may be a great variation in the accessibility of the family and their capacity to communicate. | | |
| How will the accuracy of the information be checked? This is critical as it is extremely distressing for a family and whānau to be given inaccurate information (e.g. assuming their child has died based on unverified information sources when this is not the case). | | |

| When you contact the family or whānau of the young person who has died consider: | | |
|---|---|---|
| If parents live separately, contact both if there is permission to do so. (Be aware of privacy/safety issues if parents separated due to violence or if there are protection or non-contact orders etc in place against one parent). | | |
| If there are challenges speaking directly to immediate family, check if you could talk with an extended family member or close friend. | | |
| Give information on the school's emergency plan that you have activated. | | |
| Seek permission to state the death as a 'suspected suicide' and name the deceased student in communications with the school community.<br><br>The parents and whānau may not want this information shared. This may be because they need more time to process what's happened, cultural or religious beliefs about suicide, or belief the person couldn't have killed themselves. If this is the case discuss with them:<br>• the potential damaging impact of misinformation and rumours<br>• how it can help others, including close friends and students, to discuss the truth about 'suspected suicides' or other risks openly with them at school so they can be supported.<br>• how it can support other parents so they can help their own child's responses or concerns. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Establish whether siblings or family, whānau members attend another school and whether it is appropriate to contact that school or who should let the school know. | | |
| Discuss funeral arrangements and determine the family's wishes about school representation at the funeral. If there is a marae on school site, then follow the lead of the school's Kaumatua who may be working with whānau. | | |
| Alert the family of media contact. The Comment or No Comment information supports whānau to decide if they want to talk to media or what to do if they are approached: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/comment-or-no-comment<br><br>Highlight NZ guidelines on reporting of suicide are available here: https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/hp7766_-_suicide_reporting_guidelines_media_guidelines_for_reporting_on_suicide.pdf | | |
| There will be a need to also discuss the return of the student's belongings and learning materials. | | |
| Discuss what's being done to support the family and whānau during this time and ask about support for siblings (and supply information on Aoake Te Rā and Huarahi Ora, grief counselling services, or other available resources as needed).<br><br>Huarahi Ora: https://terauora.com/huarahi-ora-national-bereavement-triage-and-coordination-service/<br><br>Aoake Te Rā: https://www.aoaketera.org.nz | | |

## Resources to help with understanding and communicating

- **Connecting through Kōrero** | Mental Health Foundation - A guide for having safe, open, honest and compassionate kōrero about suicide with young people - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-prevention/connecting-through-korero
- **Tihei Mauri Ora** – Supporting whānau through suicidal distress - https://centreofmaorisuicideprevention.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Tihei-Mauri-Ora-2019.pdf or: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/tihei-mauri-ora
- **Ngā Rauemi Centre of Māori Suicide Prevention** – which has other useful resources - https://centreofmaorisuicideprevention.com/support/resources/
- **Supporting Pacific communities bereaved by suicide** | Le Va - https://www.leva.co.nz/resources/?category=suicide-prevention&posttype=resource
- **Aoake te Rā** free therapeutic support service - https://www.aoaketera.org.nz/
- **A guide for workplaces: Responding to a staff member's suicidality** | Mental Health Foundation - https://shop.mentalhealth.org.nz/product/629-a-guide-for-workplaces-responding-to-a-staff-member-s-suicidality?categoryId=64
- **Grief after a Sudden or Unexpected Bereavement** | Mental Health Foundation - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/grief-after-a-sudden-or-unexpected-bereavement
- **Suicide Loss resources** | Mental Health Foundation - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-loss
- **A guide for workplaces** | Mental Health Foundation - Supporting your staff and organisation after a suspected suicide free mental health resources

### The role of the coroner

- **When someone dies suddenly, a guide to coronial services in New Zealand** | Ministry of Justice - https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/

### Media comment

- **Comment or No Comment** | Mental Health Foundation - a resource for family about talking to the media - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/comment-or-no-comment
- **Media guidelines for reporting on suicide** | Ministry of Health - https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/media-guidelines-for-reporting-on-suicide
- **Reporting and portrayal of suspected suicide** | Mental Health Foundation - media guidelines - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/media/reporting-and-portrayal-of-suicide

### Funeral arrangements

- **Funerals in Aotearoa after a death by suicide: Guidance for whānau** | Mental Health Foundation - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-loss/funerals-in-aotearoa-after-a-death-by-suicide

### Suicide prevention

- **Suicide prevention resources** | Mental Health Foundation - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/our-work/mhf-resources
- **Voices of Kaumātua and kuia on suicide prevention** | Mental Health Foundation - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcHfwxDupDIg1vzJnLD4nQaBRnjHwH2yIInforming staff of a 'suspected suicide'

# Communicating with staff after a 'suspected suicide'

Tailor information specifically for staff, for students and for the wider community, taking account of the wishes of the family, those who will be more impacted by the 'suspected suicide', and anyone not at school that day who will also need to be informed and supported. Two checklists that follow show a suggested process for informing staff and a process for follow-up staff meetings to get updates and check wellbeing.

- Checklist E: Informing staff of a 'suspected suicide' (below)
- Checklist F: Follow up staff meetings (page 29)

E

**Checklist E:** Informing staff of a 'suspected suicide'

| Communicating with the family and whānau of the student who has died | Person or role responsible | Time/date completed |
|---|---|---|
| If the death occurred outside school hours, school's emergency management team to convene a meeting of all staff including time and place. | School's emergency management team as in the school's emergency plan | |
| Inform who the team is working on the response if not covered in emergency management plan. | Principal or School's emergency management team as in the school's emergency plan | |
| Share what is ***known and confirmed*** about the 'suspected suicide'. Ask staff to share any new or relevant information. | | |

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| Discuss important ways to communicate about suicide (see communicating about suicide) and talk about how important it is not to discuss the death where students are likely to overhear and risk the inadvertent spread of rumours. | | |
| Share who is liaising with the family and tell staff about any family wishes regarding information to be shared or withheld. | | |
| Confirm media spokesperson role including that they are the sole person with authority to talk with media – and any other media guidelines. Use resources identified in this document or on the Mental Health Foundation website. | | |
| Clarify how phone enquiries should be managed. | | |
| Explain plans for the day and how it is important for teachers to support students and each other. | | |
| Explain how students will be informed and share the template script for talking with students.<br>Give teachers time to ask questions and express their own reactions. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Let teachers know it's OK to allow some time and flexibility in class and during the day for students to talk about the death and their feelings of shock and grief.<br><br>After the initial information is given, a range of reactions is likely.<br><br>Be aware of teachers who may need additional support to deliver this information to students. | | |
| Share and discuss information on how to talk about suicide and how teachers can talk about this with students. | | |
| Invite teachers to discuss what impacts this might have on their classrooms or groups of students or individuals and what adaptions might be needed in support. | | |
| Ask staff to collect the deceased student's schoolwork, assignments, artwork, equipment, and anything else relevant at an appropriate time to cause the least amount of attention or distress to other students, and outline how these will be returned to whānau. | | |
| Ensure all relevant parties are appropriately informed of the student's death e.g. bus drivers, hostel managers, canteen staff, coaches, outside agencies etc, and if any further planning is required with them e.g. prior to a sports match or a school event. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| If a support room has been set up for students, have a clear system for staff so they know what room is assigned as the support room, how to send students to go to and from the room if they are not managing, a system in place to monitor their attendance. Also check that there are appropriate staff, supports and activities for a small number of students in the room. | | |
| Discuss any changes to responsibilities or routines e.g. staff on duty. | | |
| Inform staff about signs of distress and risk factors for suicide and remind them about referral systems for anyone they may be worried about. | | |
| Ask staff to keep a record of students they might be concerned about and any actions they have taken. | | |
| Tell staff about follow-up meetings to provide further information to support them. | | |
| Provide information for staff who were not part of the meeting. | | |
| Contact staff who were not present to inform them of the death and provide information about the ongoing emergency response plan. | | |
| Notify any staff members on leave, overseas or who have recently resigned or retired that you feel should be informed and/or may require support. | | |

**Checklist F:** Follow up staff meetings

| Usually at the end of the first day and ongoing as needed | Person or role responsible | Time/date completed |
|---|---|---|
| Check on everyone's wellbeing. | | |
| Give any additional information regarding the death or funeral arrangements. | | |
| Discuss what went well and what didn't. | | |
| Discuss future activities and any changes or cancellations. | | |
| Talk about activities that may be challenging for some students. | | |
| Discuss any media requests and how these are being handled. | | |
| Remind staff about family and whānau right to confidentiality. | | |
| Ask staff to share observations of student reactions including what helped and what didn't. | | |
| Talk about how staff can support each other and remind staff about support services available. | | |
| Talk about stress management techniques such as sleep, engaging in enjoyable activities, physical exercise, relationship techniques, talking with others, letting people know if things are too much. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Outline what will happen tomorrow; provide a date and time of next meeting. | | |
| During or following the meeting, Identify staff who may need additional support and/or additional time. | | |
| Discuss additional relief staffing or guidance staffing support. | | |
| Discuss referral systems and responses from services. | | |
| Discuss how tikanga is being observed and cultural supports. | | |

# Communicating with students after a 'suspected suicide' – for teachers

Read the Mental Health Foundation's guide for talking to young people about *Connecting Through Kōrero*[10]. This can be included in your emergency management plan. Additional resources are on the Mental Health Foundation website. The Ministry of Education's Traumatic incident team can help school leaders prepare communication.

Talking to a young person about a 'suspected suicide' is one of the hardest things teachers, school leaders or specialist staff might ever have to do. It is normal to feel uncomfortable, unprepared, uneasy, or anxious, telling teenagers that someone they have known or loved has died. This is especially hard when it is a 'suspected suicide'.

If adults shield the truth to try and protect students, keep in mind that students often see or hear information from other sources such as social media, texting, a conversation they have overheard, or from a neighbour, a relative, or another student. Students may also post information online, which could be unintentionally distressing to the deceased student's whānau, other students and the school community. You have better control over information when you are open, honest and relay the facts to students yourself and can talk through the consequences .

Research[11] has shown that responsible discussion of suicide with students does not lead to any increased thinking about suicide or to suicidal behaviours. In addition, discussion can allow students to identify others who may exhibit suicidal thinking or behaviours and give them support.

The following points may also be helpful.

- **Be open and honest and communicate at the student's level of understanding**

'Suspected suicide' is a traumatic form of death and requires honesty with students but also restraint, depending on their level of understanding. It's important to answer students' questions honestly and it's okay not to provide information beyond their questions. These types of questions and conversations will likely only occur in the classrooms or during the activities the deceased student previously attended.

It's also important to inform students that, although they may have heard it's a 'suspected suicide', the cause of death won't be known until after the coroner has made a ruling. It's not helpful if rumours circulate after a death. Ask students to be respectful of the family and whānau and also of the law, which states that it is a 'suspected suicide' until confirmed and they should only discuss known facts to avoid upsetting the family and friends of the student who died.

10 Connecting Through Kōrero | Mental Health Foundation
11 Does asking about suicide and related behaviours induce suicidal ideation? What is the evidence? - PubMed

- **Sensitively encourage conversation about the person who has died**

Consider what a student may already know or have personally experienced, as this can guide you in helping them talk about what happened and what they know. For example, they may have been previously impacted by suicide.

After giving students' opportunities to ask questions, ask them what they would like to do after talking together. They may want to talk more, stay close to a relative, do an activity, play a game, or get some emotional distance from the event.

Follow the student's lead. Observe their body language. Remember that everyone grieves differently and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. All feelings or reactions are normal for them. Some students need to be involved and want lots of information and other students may not want to be involved and want little information.

It is okay to ask students if they would like to talk more and if they do, listen to their thoughts and feelings carefully. Let them know it's okay to feel how they feel (even if you can't relate to their experiences and feelings).

Take care not to make them feel judged or shamed for how they think or feel. Do your best to be available to talk about the 'suspected suicide' and let them choose their own way of coping and grieving. Remind them about how to access the school student support system or other support available.

It's also okay to not know what to say or do - be honest with students and say, 'I don't know.' Let them know that although you may not have answers to all their questions right now, it's because you are also learning. Let them know you understand this is a tricky topic, and that it can be hard for you to understand too.

It's important to draw attention to the student's life **before** they died. Suicide may be the **suspected cause of death**, but it is **not** who the student was to their friends and family while they were alive. Talk about memories and what that person meant while they were alive, because this is what will be left for the student to remember in the years to come. If you are worried about a student, discuss your concerns with the school's emergency response team and student support services or other support available.

## What to say when a student asks 'why' someone ended their life

If the Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident team is involved, they can help you to provide appropriate responses. Respond in a way that feels the most comforting for you both. Remember it's not a suicide until the coroner confirms the cause of death. The following are some suggested phrases to use:

*There isn't an easy answer to that question. There can be all sorts of reasons, but people who take their own life may have not been able to think clearly at the time and get help. It is always important to reach out for help when problems seem big. Problems may be able to get fixed over time with support from others, so it's important to talk to someone if your problems feel too big to deal with.*

*Problems are often temporary, not permanent, and with support, problems can often be addressed.*

## Dealing with flippant comments about suicide

Just like anyone, students can use careless language about 'suspected suicide' that might be hurtful to someone who is going through a difficult time. When a student uses these phrases, they may not be thinking through what they're saying. Or they may be using dark humour to cope with tough things happening in their life. It's important to follow up in either situation.

Respond directly to students to help the student communicate sensitively, safely and effectively:

- *It's not okay to make jokes about suicide. I know you didn't mean to be hurtful; words can really hurt though. What else could you have said in that situation?*
- *I've heard you make quite a few jokes about killing yourself lately, and I'm worried. Can we talk?*
- *Instead of saying 'KYS', what else could you have said?*
- *It seems like you're going through a tough time. How can I help?*

It may be helpful to prepare friends of the deceased student in case others make judgmental or hurtful comments about the person who has died. Ask them for suggestions on how they could react if this happens and try to come up with some responses together. This may ease the burden of them feeling unprepared if they are put on the spot. Being prepared may help build confidence that they are not attracting more attention to what happened or disrespecting their friend who has died. They are instead making their own choices about what to say to others and sharing only what they are comfortable sharing.

## Discuss appropriate ways to handle problems that may occur

- Emphasise the importance of students talking about and working through their feelings and seeking help from others.
- Be aware of your students' stressors and talk about them.
- Provide a listening ear and be a support so they can openly talk with you about how they feel. Students deal much better with tough circumstances when they have at least one person who listens and believes in them.
- Help your students learn to manage negative thinking and challenge thoughts of hopelessness, so they don't become overwhelmed with negativity. Emphasise that alcohol and drugs are not helpful.
- Check if they are staying involved with others and encourage them to participate in supervised activities they enjoy. If needed, treatment or therapy can help a student deal with negative or unhelpful thoughts.
- Students need to know that when someone they know dies by 'suspected suicide', there is available help for them, and anyone who needs it, to cope with the range of feelings and emotions they might be experiencing.

## Monitoring social media

Students use a range of social media and messaging platforms. These are important communication tools for students and may be used as part of your school's response to a 'suspected suicide', including advising students about posting online. Although your school may have a 'phones away for the day' policy, it may be adjusted during this period, according to your student needs.

By working in partnership with senior students and teachers, your school can identify and therefore monitor relevant social networking sites. You may then wish to use these to share prevention-oriented safe messaging and engage with, and offer support to, students who may be struggling to cope.

### Incitement to suicide

Messages inciting suicide or self-harm can be very distressing and it is important students and teachers know what to do and how to get help if they receive them or see someone else receiving them. Inciting messages of suicide or self- harm is also illegal.

### What can incitement to suicide look like?

Messages, comments or posts such as "You are worthless, why don't you just kill yourself" or "Just go and kill yourself" are examples of encouraging suicide. Sometimes, students may see this happening to someone else, or they may come across content online that shows images of self-harm.

Students, teachers, whānau can report any upsetting or harmful content directly to the platform, and to Netsafe's website: https://netsafe.org.nz/online-abuse-and-harassment/incitement-to-suicide

Netsafe advises:

- **Do not respond:** Avoid responding to the person sending the communications.
- **Collect evidence:** Take screenshots or save the URL of the content if it is still live. Follow Netsafe's advice on how to record digital evidence. https://netsafe.org.nz/online-abuse-and-harassment/how-to-record-digital-evidence
- **Report:** Report the content and the account responsible to the platform it's on.
- Contact Netsafe for further advice and to talk about the options available to you. We can offer advice if this is happening to you or someone you know.
- If anyone is concerned about the immediate safety of someone, call 111.

It's recommended that your school has a social media plan and talks with experts in the field such as Netsafe whose role it is to keep people safe online by providing free information and expert incident advice.

Templates 1 and 3 provide additional support for teachers and others talking with students after a 'suspected suicide'.

- Template 1: draft script for talking with students about a 'suspected suicide'
- Template 3: draft letter for parents about social media use after a 'suspected suicide'

**Template 1: draft script for talking with students about a 'suspected suicide'**

This template provides suggestions for staff to use as relevant when talking with students about a 'suspected suicide'. The language used should be changed and adapted to suit your school and students. The wording 'suspected suicide' is consistent with the Coroners Act 2006. The words in italics are intended as guides and prompts for teachers or others talking with students about a 'suspected suicide'. This template is best used after consultation with the family and whānau of the deceased and accurate information about their wishes is available.

*Staff: We have had a tough time deciding what to say to you today, as one of our students – [student's name] – has died. We are affected by this news, just as you are.*

*From what I know:*

Briefly review the known facts, actions that are going to be taken, arrangements that have/are being made and any other information that seems relevant and important.

*Staff: The cause of death has not yet been determined by the coroner's office. We'll do our best to give you accurate information as it becomes known to us.*

*Apart from what you have just been told, is there other information that we should know about? Can you tell me about this?*

Ask for clarification or correction of the facts to allow students to participate – but only if they want to. Take care to check clarification is age and culturally appropriate. If students have heard that the death is a 'suspected suicide' and teachers are aware of this, then the following statement may be helpful.

*Staff: We're aware there's been talk about the possibility that this was a 'suspected suicide'. We ask you not to spread this kind of talk as it could be very distressing for everyone who knew and loved [student's name].*

*It is hard to hear this sort of news. We need to respect one another's emotions at this time, no matter how differently we might feel or act. Each of us has our own way of reacting to and coping with this kind of news.*

*It's okay if you want to cry, or if you don't want to cry. Some of you may not have known [student's name] very well and may not be as affected. Others might experience a great deal of sadness. Some may feel angry.*

*Staff: We all have our own way of dealing with our feelings and reactions; there is no one right or wrong way.*

*Some of you might find you're having difficulty concentrating on your schoolwork, and we can understand that. Others may find it helpful to get on with schoolwork, or sport, or other activities.*

*Any time you want to talk about what happened, we're here to listen.*

*Some of you may feel responsible, like you could have done something to save [student's name]. It's important to understand that none of you are responsible for someone else's actions including someone's death, no matter what the circumstances are.*

*We will need to pull together to support each other to get through this tough time. To help us with this, [I/we] would like to make some suggestions.*

Keeping busy can make it easier to manage emotions and reactions, so today, we will [activities, options]. Are there any other things we could arrange for you that might be helpful?

Support the natural cohesion and resiliency of the class group through the structure of teaching and classroom activities during the day. Keep emphasising the potential role that class members can play in supporting one another. Care needs to be taken not to disrupt the natural supports that a classroom can provide.

*Staff: Some of you might feel it's difficult to be in class today and I understand that, but I believe this really is the best place for you to be – with friends and people you know. We can support each other by being together. If for any reason you need to leave the classroom, even if it's just to go to the bathroom, please let me know If you feel like you can't stay in class and need some space or extra help, let me know and we can talk about where you can go to get this. Thanks for doing this.*

*By the end of the day, your family and whānau will be made aware of the death of [insert student's name] and you may be given a letter to take home to them. We encourage you and your family and whānau to ask us for more information or help if needed.*

In some communities when there has been more than one death, the community comes together to support their students and develop additional interventions. If this is happening, mention family, whānau and community meetings and when they are scheduled.

*Staff: After you've given the letter to your family and whānau, spend time with them or try to do activities that you enjoy, such as playing sports, video games, listening to music, and being with friends. Share things with others. Being active and thinking about and doing things you enjoy, and spending time with family, whānau and friends may help everyone. Let your family and whānau know where you are and what you are doing so, they don't worry.*

Talk with students about social media use after a 'suspected suicide' and provide information to support them (see Template 2 which can also be adapted to suit your school and students).

**Informing the wider school community**

Consult with the family of the deceased young person before sharing information with the wider school community. Consider the most appropriate way to disseminate information, bearing in mind fast moving social media and word of mouth usually outpaces all other forms.

Consider how students and their family could be affected on receiving the information. Outline how you are supporting students at school and include options for seeking additional help, if required.

Template 3 is a draft letter you can send to inform families in your school community, if relevant. It includes information about warning signs of suicide and details about how to seek support if they have concerns.

It's only appropriate to send if the family of the student who has died has been consulted, as they may not want the letter released.

If it isn't appropriate to send the letter, you can work with other supporting professions for advice on how best to communicate with students' families, so you are doing everything possible to safeguard the wellbeing of young people in the wider school community.

With permission from the family, and if appropriate, you as principal or a nominated emergency response team member should also contact the principal or senior leadership member of other schools that may be affected e.g., where siblings or family members attend another school.

- Template 2: draft letter to all families and family in the school community
- Template 3: draft letter for parents about social media use after a 'suspected suicide'

**Template 2: draft letter to all families and whānau in the school community**

Dear families and whānau

It is with great sadness that I advise you that one of our students, *[insert name if family have approved]*, has died. We want you to know that we are here to support you and your children in any way we can.

*Identify the student if consent given, but DO NOT state the method of suicide or provide details about the death.*

We have expressed our sympathy to the family and our thoughts are with them at this difficult time.

*If appropriate, identify any actions being taken to assist and/or support the family* and *whānau of the deceased.*

Our school is committed to supporting the wellbeing of our students and our school community and we have included information at the bottom of this letter which you might find helpful.

We are aware there has been some talk about the possibility that this was a 'suspected suicide'. The cause of death has not yet been determined by the coroner's office. We ask that you ask your children not to spread rumours about the cause of death, either in person or by social media, as this would be deeply hurtful to [insert name]'s family and friends. Please respect the family's privacy, both in person and on social media, during this time. We'll do our best to give you accurate information about the family's wishes and funeral arrangements, as we become aware of them.

If you would like some guidance about how to talk to your child about what has happened, you may find the Mental Health Foundation's resource 'Connecting through Kōrero' useful. It includes ways to answer common questions, and how to have safe, open and compassionate conversations about a 'suspected suicide': https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/connecting-through-kōrero

{student's name] death will create a void in our school. During times such as this, it is critical that we look to our teachers, family, whānau and friends for guidance and support. Spending time and talking with people we trust can help us through difficult periods like this.

We encourage students to keep regular routines (sleeping, eating, attending school) and taking part in activities that they would normally enjoy such as playing sports, video games, listening to music, being with friends and family. Helping at home and being together doing things you all enjoy allows time for talking and supporting each other. At a time like this, we know you will want to know where your child is and what they are doing, and we encourage you to monitor them closely. Things might be difficult now, but we will help you support your child now and as they work their own way through what has happened.

If there is anything school staff can do to assist you or your child to cope with this death, or you are concerned about aspects of your child's wellbeing, such as their eating, sleep, social isolation, or emotional state, please let us know by contacting your child's teacher or the school counsellor.

Contact details for support services are listed below:

*(Insert the contact names, addresses and phone numbers of specific supports available.)*

The Mental Health Foundation website has links to community services that offer support and helplines: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines

*Consider handing out copies of (and the link to) the Mental Health Foundation's brochure which has details of helplines and support services:* https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/Helplines-and-local-mental-health services/MHF-Helplines-A4-WEB-FINAL.pdf

If you have immediate concerns, a trained counsellor is available any time by calling or texting **1737** or on the Aoake Te Rā website: https://www.aoaketera.org.nz/

We understand from the family that the following arrangements [are being/have been] made to farewell [student's name]:

*Insert all available funeral or tangi information here.*

With your permission, we will allow your child to be absent from school to attend the *[funeral/tangi/other activity]*. However, we do advise that they are accompanied by an adult. We won't be stopping school for this service because it is important to wellbeing that normal routines continue to be available for students.

I am sure that all of you join me in expressing our sympathy to *[insert student's name]* family, whānau and friends.

### Template 3: draft letter for parents and whānau about social media use

After a death in a learning community, particularly death by 'suspected suicide', young people will naturally want to connect with their peers to work through what's happened – often through social media.

It is important for you to engage your young person in conversations over the next days and weeks about what they are seeing and engaging in online.

The key is to stay involved in a way that makes your young person understand that you respect their privacy but want to make sure they're OK. Talking gives you the opportunity to help your young person through this time. Don't be worried about asking if they are concerned about anything or anyone.

You need to know what social media apps/platforms your young person is using. When a young person has died young people talk about that event – including online. It could be that after a recent death they are engaging in this for many hours of the day and night. Talk to them about what they are communicating about the death of the student with their peers, and when, how and where they are doing this. It is important that they know that friends and family of the deceased student may see and be affected by what they post.

Keep an eye on and discuss the content they are seeing and engaging with.

- The conversation started for this might be something like: *We know you want to talk to your friend(s)/these students, and we know this will be bringing up emotions; we care very much about you and want to make sure you are talking to us about what is happening for you*. Netsafe (https://netsafe.org.nz/parents-and-caregivers) and the New Zealand Classifications Office (https://www.classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/parents-whanau/) has some background information and guidance to help these conversations.
- How is your young person interpreting and making meaning from the content they see? Connecting Through Kōrero is a resource to support safe, open, honest and compassionate kōrero with your young person about 'suspected suicide'.
- Netsafe has some important information about what to do if your young person, or someone they know, receives messages that incite suicide or self harm.

#### Place limits around social media time

Banning social media can be difficult and may not help. Talk to your young person about how important it is that they take a break from social media – when it's reasonable to take a break and what else they could do that they enjoy during a social media break.

**Engaging with activities off-line**

It is important to ensure balance between engaging in discussions about the death of the student and engaging in usual activities. When someone has died by 'suspected suicide', you can honour them through allowing them and their family and whānau dignity and respect and through showing care for others and yourself, including online. Model this for your young people in your own social media activity. Also consider when it's a reasonable time for bed/sleep and where your young person's device should be at this time.

## Media management

The media will be interested if there is a 'suspected suicide' in the school community. The media is also likely to cover the coroner's findings, which may be released two to three years after the 'suspected suicide', so there is potentially a long period of media attention, including naming the school, regardless of whether the 'suspected suicide' took place at a school venue or not. The media may also follow any student or family postings on social media. Template 4 on the next page can help you through the process of preparing information for the media.

The following resources are useful to have in your school's emergency management plan.

- Reporting and portrayal of 'suspected suicide' | Mental Health Foundation - media guidelines: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/media/reporting-and-portrayal-of-suicide
- When someone dies suddenly, a guide to coronial services in New Zealand - https://www.coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/MOJ0047.03-factsheet-SEP22-FINAL-WEB.pdf
- Comment or No Comment - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/comment-or-no-comment
- Safely reporting about suicide A guide for media and digital creators and moderators - https://shop.mentalhealth.org.nz/product/652-safely-reporting-about-suicide?categoryId=64. Online flipping resource: https://online.flippingbook.com/view/119921736/

'Suspected suicide' is the public term used in the Coroners Amendment Act 2016, until the Coroner has confirmed the cause of death, which may occur two to three years later. The Act states that:

- **Any discussion of the means (the method, place or details) of suicide[2] must be avoided** There is a risk that distressed students may consider copying the means of suicide. Anyone who publicises this information about a suicide without the coroner's permission is committing an offence and may be fined.

- **Any activities undertaken by the school, students or the community must not intentionally sensationalise the 'suspected suicide'**. There is a risk that distressed students can become focused on suicide.

It's always best to be prepared to deal with media interest. Below are some key messages you can use for responding to media queries. A written response may be the best way to answer questions. Ensure you have a nominated media spokesperson and if it's the principal, as is often the case, check there is a backup in case the principal is away.

All staff need to be aware of the media spokesperson, their role, and understand that they refer all media enquiries to them. Contact the Suicide Media Response Service for support in responding to media contact.

### Template 4: draft key messages which can help with a media statement

Key messages

- School personnel were informed by the [insert] that a student at [insert school] school has died. The cause of death will be confirmed by the coroner's office.
- Our thoughts and support are with their family, whānau and friends at this difficult time.
- Members of the school's Emergency Management Response Team are supporting the school community.
- We have given information to students and their families | whānau to help support them through this time, including information about how adults can help students cope with an unexpected death.
- Families | whānau have been asked to contact the school for more information or support if they need it for students in distress.
- Please strengthen and support the school's response by placing information about crisis and support services, and personal self-care in any media articles.
- I ask that you respect the privacy of staff, students and their family and whānau and do not approach staff or students as they leave school during this distressing time.
- While the *[principal/or designated person]* is the school's media spokesperson, the information released to date is the only information available at this time.

## Things to avoid when discussing a 'suspected suicide'

- **Avoid conversations that makes suicide seem like a reasonable choice or inevitable outcome**

The Mental Health Foundation has developed a resource around talking safely about suicide: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-prevention/connecting-through-korero

**Why to avoid:** When students hear these conversations, they may feel that suicide will bring peace from pain and is a natural response to challenging times. It's important nothing you say could be interpreted by students to suggest suicide is an appropriate way to deal with difficult situations.

- **Avoid speculating about why someone may have tried to take their life**

It's common to try to understand the 'reason' someone died by 'suspected suicide' and to look for a single cause, such as bullying or a relationship ending. Suicide is complex. Many different factors combine, often over a long period, to influence a person's suicidal actions. These factors can include thoughts, perceptions, feelings, circumstances and unwellness. It is never anyone's fault. It is the Coroner's role to determine the cause of death in these circumstances.

**Why to avoid:** Trying to find one single 'reason' for someone's 'suspected suicide' does more harm than good. Family and friends of people who die by 'suspected suicide' can find speculation painful, because it can feel like they are being blamed. Simplifying or speculating about the cause of suicide can make suicide sound like the result of a single cause or an option in response to challenges. It can also put those who identify with the situation at risk and make the bereaved feel blame and shame. Understanding and supporting are key to ensuing safety; whereas judgment can contribute to risk.

- **Avoid talking about methods of 'suspected suicide'**

As much as possible, avoid talking about how or where the person died. If students are already talking about the method, be honest, but avoid any unnecessary details. Instead, focus on helping them support each other, and enabling access to support.

**Why to avoid:** The evidence shows us if you describe methods in print media that this can be distressing, and there can be an association with further subsequent deaths by the same method (Niederkrotenthaler, 2020[12]; Sinyor, 2018[13]).

12 Niederkrotenthaler T, Braun M, Pirkis J, et al. 2020. Association between suicide reporting in the media and suicide: systematic review and meta-analysis. BMJ 368: m575. https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.m575

13 Sinyor, M., Schaffer, A., Nishikawa, Y., Redelmeier, D. A., Niederkrotenthaler, T., Sareen, J., Levitt, A. J., Kiss, A., & Pirkis, J. (2018). The association between suicide deaths and putatively harmful and protective factors in media reports. CMAJ : Canadian Medical Association Journal, 190(30), E900–E907. https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.170698

- **Avoid talking about suicide as a selfish act that harms those left behind**

Although anger, guilt and shame are understandable reactions to a 'suspected suicide', emphasising these feelings can increase the stigma or sense of disgrace. This can make it difficult for family who have lost someone to 'suspected suicide' to share their feelings and can be harmful for people who have had or are having suicidal thoughts.

**Why to avoid:** Stigma around suicide often causes people to hide suicidal feelings and avoid seeking support. Also, family who have been bereaved may be less likely to talk about their feelings and get the support they need. It is important they can access support because those who have recently been bereaved are at a higher risk of suicide themselves.

**Avoid presenting suicide as criminal or sinful or using judgemental words** or words such as committed, threatened, or successful suicide

Suicide is not a crime. The phrase 'committed suicide' can increase shame and stigma comms which can make people less likely to reach out for support. It is also important not to use terms like 'completed' or 'successful' suicide - this implies achievement. Avoid the term 'threatened suicide' as this reinforces stigma around suicide attempts by suggesting it's a ploy to get attention; this prevents people from accessing support. Presenting suicide as sinful or criminal can make people less likely to reach out for help when they're going through difficulties because they think they will be judged.

## Stigma and Myths About Suicide

### Stigma and Myths

Myths and stigma around suicide can frame people's beliefs and attitudes making it harder for people to seek help when they need it. Here's a helpful resource on common myths that clearly outlines the real facts about suicide. Stigma and suicide myths - Mental Health Foundation. Share and discuss this resource with staff, so staff actions are shaped by helpful facts.

# Supporting student, staff and whānau wellbeing

Where possible, support for students and staff should be managed within the daily routine of the school.

Schools can:

- find ways to keep friends of the deceased student attending and participating in school and community activities so they can be supported with their grief.
- review school policies and practices that support positive relationships, address bullying, health, engagement, accomplishment and purpose.
- facilitate access to supports for people identified as being distressed (including staff) e.g. referrals to support services and resources that are culturally and age appropriate.
- regularly inform students about school support systems already in place and how to access them.
- check there is a well-developed system that identifies those who may be distressed (through families and whānau, teachers, and existing school supports) and how together you will monitor and respond to concerns, and
- provide information and resources about suicide bereavement to give students accurate information about their feelings and reactions, and helpful, healthy coping strategies to manage distress.

Affected students and staff may be best supported by being with people they know and trust such as their colleagues, teachers, peers, and families and whānau, in their work and learning environments and observing the spiritual and cultural processes associated with death.

**Shrines, gatherings, and other activities of remembrance**

As a part of their grieving, some students may gather at the place where the death occurred and may also erect a 'shrine' in memory of the person. These gatherings can be intense and very emotional for those attending, especially for students who are already vulnerable. Your Te Whatu Ora Postvention Coordinator can provide community support. The Mental Health Foundation has developed a guide to planning a safe suicide prevention event. See https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/your-guide-to-planning-a-safe-suicide-prevention-event

Some communities have tried prohibiting these activities; however, bereaved family or friends may find this deeply stigmatising, and it can generate intense negative reactions, and may worsen an already difficult situation. It is helpful to work with bereaved family or friends to talk about attendance and time e.g. limits for these types of gatherings, and provide ideas for additional activities that focus on wellbeing such as sharing a meal together, giving to a cause etc. Gatherings should be monitored by adults, and family

made aware of them.

Coronial inquests, birthdays and other events related to the student who has died can be distressing for some time afterwards. It is helpful to monitor affected students closely at these times. This emotional energy can be channelled in a positive direction by proactively meeting with groups or individuals who were closest to the student who died. Talk about any activities planned to remember the student and celebrate their life and promote activities that support wellbeing.

This can provide an important opportunity for students to be heard and for the school to sensitively explain its rationale for permitting certain kinds of activities and not others. It can be helpful to provide constructive suggestions about positive activities, such as raising funds for family or sponsoring a mental health awareness day. See also https://www.casa.org.nz/resources/public/19-memorials-and-remembrance-activities/file

### Planning with sports teams and other activity/interest groups

The student who died may have been a member of a sporting team, an activities/interest group, or some other school activity. After the death, members of these groups may need to be brought together to talk about it and have a plan for next steps. For example, school leaders can discuss with the group how any changes might be addressed, such as what to do at the next team practice, or who will collect the student's equipment.

Discuss with the leaders of these groups, signs of distress and/or conversations that may indicate students need support. Include how to have a conversation if they are worried about a young person and share your school's pastoral care policies and procedures. Discussion can bring changes that will be helpful and allow individuals to acknowledge the death in fitting and culturally appropriate ways. Up-to-date, accurate student management system is important for communicating written information to the right people.

### Wellbeing Messages for Students

On the following page (Template 5) are sample 'wellbeing messages' for students, based on the Flourishing model. These should be used when there is a death in the school community and could also be used before and at the end of each school term.

### Template 5: Draft message for senior students | Addition to school newsletters

Just a reminder to look after yourself over the coming weeks. The information below will help you to do this:

**Stay active**

Staying active makes a huge contribution to wellbeing. Make the most of the great physical environment around [insert notes relevant to your school's location].

**Keep routines**

It's great to relax, just remember to eat at regular mealtimes and to get plenty of sleep.

Have things to look forward to.

What's coming up that you are looking forward to? Keep thinking about what you want to do over the coming year. What are your immediate goals? What do you hope to achieve?

**Keep it in check!**

Students tell us (and research backs this up) that alcohol and/or cannabis use can take a heavy toll on motivation, mood and accident rates! If you know someone who is using drugs or alcohol dangerously or you yourself are – GET HELP!

**How to get help**

Look out for your mates and your whānau. If you are worried about them, tell someone. You can talk to us at school and let us know. Or talk to your GP (doctor), they will also provide a confidential service. Sometimes it also just helps to know when to be worried. Some of the warning signs are unexplained withdrawal from learning and social activities, and declines in attendance or achievement levels, increased risk taking, sudden and unexpected changes in wellbeing (for example, mood, sleep, appetite or appearance).

If you are worried that someone you know is harming themselves and needs help, call the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service at your local hospital. You can also ring the hospital and ask to be put through to the Alcohol and Drug Clinic.

Check out the *5 Ways to Wellbeing* here: www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/ and the Mental Health Foundation Top Up website: https://www.topupwellbeing.nz/

There is also some helpful information on youth mental health issues and depression at: https://thelowdown.co.nz/ | https://sparx.org.nz | https://www.youthline.co.nz/

## Supporting the immediate wellbeing of the most affected staff or students

- Give them the opportunity to ask questions or express their own reactions and be mindful of your body language – give them your full attention.
- Talk with them about next steps the school will take and ask what they need to happen next for their own emotional wellbeing.
- Be aware of any staff or student who may have been communicated with about the deceased person's intentions to die, so they get support to talk through their reactions and questions. Discuss what information you can share with a student's parents/whānau including support services for the whānau if needed. Regularly check in and offer ongoing support.
- Connecting staff and students with supportive others is important such as parents (student), or a partner or friends (staff). Don't leave them alone to cope with the initial emotional distress - focus on helping to find an important person in their lives to connect them with.
- Assure staff who feel they can't handle some of their usual responsibilities that additional help can be provided.
- Check in with staff and students about culturally important practices/considerations to help support wellbeing.

### Establish support needed for staff and students

- Most students have the basic skills that allow them to handle strong emotions encountered day to day. These skills may be challenged after a 'suspected suicide'.
- Be mindful of appropriate opportunities and interactions existing in everyday learning environments (classrooms, cultural/sport/activities/interest groups and break times) that help students express their emotions and identify strategies for managing intense emotions.
- Some staff emotions may also be challenged, and they may also need additional support.
- If students or staff have been recently impacted by death including suicide, the support services in this guide may be particularly useful.
- It's normal to have questions around suicide. Discuss these with someone you trust or a counsellor or health professional. We don't often get the opportunity to discuss suicide and its often after a death by suicide that questions may come up.'

### Check students, staff and whānau know what to do if they are concerned about someone

- Check staff, whānau and young people know how to register concerns about someone.
- Check school systems can respond to concerns, and agreements for support are clear

with outside and community organisations.

- Advertise support services and helplines throughout the school, particularly in places where students commonly congregate.
- Check there are systems in place to pay close attention to activities on school grounds and attendance over the next few weeks.
- Consider seeking additional support from cultural or religious advisors.
- Families may need guidance on talking about suicide with their children and how best to support them during this time. They may also need reliable information about mental health and wellbeing and related supports available to them.
- Sometimes offering a drink or something warm can help start the conversation.

### Some common signs of distress to look out for

Families and all school staff need to be mindful of some of the common signs of distress that may indicate students need support. They also need to know how to have a conversation with someone who is experiencing distress e.g. asking someone if they are experiencing suicidal thoughts. It's important that your school's pastoral care policies are visible, and everyone knows how and where to get help for someone.

### Some common signs of distress

- Unexplained decline in academic performance.
- Decrease in engagement/increased isolation.
- New and unexplained physical symptoms.
- Change in mood.
- Increasing levels of self-harm.
- Risky behaviours, including unprotected sex, excessive drinking, taking drugs.

### Some conversational signs

- No future: What's the point? Things are never going to get any better.
- Helpless/hopeless: Nothing I do makes a bit of difference; it's beyond my control.
- Guilt: It's all my fault; I'm to blame.
- Escape: I can't take this anymore.
- Alone: I'm on my own…no-one cares about me.
- Damaged: I've been irreparably damaged…I'll never be the same again.
- Talking about suicide or death.

## Monitoring and managing absences

After a person's 'suspected suicide', it's important the school knows where all absent students are and whether they have adult supervision. Students who are already aware of the death may decide not to attend school or may leave during school hours without explanation or permission. This can be a sign of their distress or not coping. If a student is absent and not under adult supervision, whānau should be notified as soon as possible and the student encouraged to attend school to participate in supportive activities.

## Sample agenda for family or whānau meeting with community mental
## health services

Meetings with families and whānau can provide a helpful forum for providing information and answering questions after a 'suspected suicide'. It's recommended these meetings are run by mental health services or suicide prevention professionals.

Consider convening a meeting if there is continuing and ongoing community distress, such as when two or more young people have died by 'suspected suicide'. The traumatic incident response team leader, school principal and the board's presiding member should attend.

Te Aho works alongside communities when invited to facilitate a postvention response. More detailed information can be found on the website: https://www.teaho.org.nz/

Representatives from community services, cultural representatives, and clergy may also be invited to be present and provide support material.

A caution: large, open-microphone meetings are not advised, as they can result in unwieldy, unproductive sessions that may become focused on scapegoating and blaming. Also, whānau may come with younger children, so plan to run supervised activities for younger siblings in another room or outside.

It may be helpful to plan the meeting in two parts:

1. To provide general information to whānau without opening the meeting up for discussion.
2. Invite whānau to meet in small groups to ask questions and have discussions with community mental health service representatives.

It may be difficult to set a timeframe for a meeting, as the length will depend on community need.

- Part 1: School, family and whānau meeting | Providing general information
- Part 2: School, family and whānau meeting | Small group kōrero and pātai with community mental health professionals

| Part 1: School, family and whānau meeting \| Providing general information | |
|---|---|
| **Hui Convenor**<br>(School Traumatic Incident Response Plan Team Leader or another appropriate team member) | • Discusses how the school will help students cope with their emotions during this time. |
| | • Shares tips for wellbeing, such as: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/five-ways-to-wellbeing |
| | • Considers handing out copies of (and the link to) the Mental Health Foundation's information which has details of helplines and support services: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines |
| | • Shares information on how to talk with students about suicide, such as: https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/get-help/connecting-through-kōrero |
| | • Shares information and reminds concerned families and whānau that help is available for any student who may be struggling with sleep, drugs, alcohol, eating, self-harm, connectedness to school/community or friends, bullying, sexual orientation, mental health issues and/or suicidal feelings. |
| | • Provides contact information (names, telephone numbers, and email addresses) for mental health services at school and in the community, such as:<br>  - school counsellors<br>  - community mental health agencies<br>  - crisis services<br>  - community support services.<br>• Or, downloads and prints the helplines brochure at https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/assets/Helplines-and-local-mental-health-services/MHF-Helplines-A4-WEB-FINAL.pdf which has space at the end to add school or community specific support numbers such as **Aoake Te Rā: 0800 000 053** or for immediate support text/phone: **1737**. |

**Part 2: School, family and whānau meeting | Small group kōrero and pātai with community mental health professionals and Te Whatu Ora Postvention Coordinator**

### Considerations

- Ideally, there should be no more than 20 family and whānau members attend each group.
- Each group should be facilitated by at least two staff (this could include school nurses, social workers, counsellors, GPs and other health practitioners).
- Staff should be available to direct families and whānau to meeting rooms, distribute handouts, and make water and tissues available.
- If possible, staff should be available to meet with families and whānau individually as needed.

### Some additional considerations

- Since some families and whānau may arrive with young children, consideration could be given to onsite childcare.
- As relevant, consider providing separate discussion groups for students who may arrive with families and whānau.
- Media should not be permitted access to the small groups. Arrange for the media spokesperson to meet with any media separately.
- In some cases (for example, when the death has received a great deal of attention) it may be necessary to arrange for security to assist with the flow of traffic, directions to the meeting, and with media.

### Provide accurate information about the 'suspected suicide(s)'

Provide information about 'suspected suicide' that shows it is a complicated behaviour, which usually happens after several factors are combined. 'Suspected suicide' is not usually caused by a single event such as a bad grade, an argument with families and whānau or the break-up of a relationship. It needs to be seen as the result of a state of stressed, impaired or underdeveloped self-control in which mental health, emotional and brain development, alcohol, socioeconomic, and other factors interact to put some students at greater risk.

- Reassure family and whānau that talking about suicide in a calm, straightforward manner isn't seen as a suicide risk factor for other students.
- Hand out some resources to help guide families and whānau in having conversations about suicide, such as the guide *Connecting Through Kōrero* from the Mental Health Foundation: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/suicide-prevention/connecting-through-korero

**Address blaming and scapegoating**

- It is common to try to answer the question 'why?' after a suicide death. Remind those attending that suicide is complex and never the result of one thing only. No-one is to blame for another person's death by suicide. It's part of loss and grief, and how our brains work to process and come to terms with what's happened. Suicide is a uniquely difficult type of death to comprehend and its natural to have questions around it.' Sometimes this can turn into blaming others for the death.
- Do not focus on the method or graphic details. Tell families and whānau that talking in detail about the method can create images that are upsetting and can increase the risk of imitative behaviours by youth who are made vulnerable by a variety of factors.
- If asked, it is not okay to give basic facts about the method. While it is okay to acknowledge the death is a 'suspected suicide', the focus should be not on how someone killed themselves but rather on how to cope with feelings of sadness, loss, anger, etc afterwards.

**Address anger**

- Accept expressions of anger at the deceased and explain that these feelings are normal.

**Address feelings of responsibility**

- Reassure those who feel responsible or think they could have done something to save the deceased.

**Provide information.**

- Let people know how to access help if they it and where to find help in the local community.

## Planning for the funeral or tangi

The resource *Funerals in Aotearoa after a death by suicide (for bereaved whānau)* provides information for bereaved whānau and those supporting them.

https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/funerals-in-aotearoa-after-a-death-by-suicide-for-bereaved-whānau

If the funeral will be live streamed or shared online, check who the whānau would like to share the link with. Remind those who have access to not share it widely or on social media. For additional safety, the whānau may want to enable password access.

If young people are attending from school, they should be supervised by an adult in case they are overwhelmed or have any questions. Links to relevant helplines and support information can be included in the livestream or be made available following the service.'

The next page has some key cultural considerations to include in your planning.

## Cultural support

### Consider seeking cultural support

- To liaise sensitively and appropriately with the bereaved family and whānau about their wishes about the funeral/tangi process and school representation.
- To identify how best to support students. Culture and faith are protective factors for students.

### Funeral requests or allowing deceased on school sites

- Handle with extreme sensitivity.
- Be mindful of students (and their families' choice) not to attend funeral events.
- Consider other types of cultural or spiritual activities that should take place in the school community. For example: for Māori, a blessing or karakia could be held to farewell the student or staff member who has died. This needs to be discussed with school kaumatua or mana whenua to help guide what/when/who and how?
- Religious observances on school grounds are outlined in the Education and Training Act 2020[14].

### Students seeking meaning and understanding about the death

- Confirm parental oversight and permission is given for school absences related to funeral or tangi.
- Consider staff attendance at the funeral or tangi and the relief staff that may be needed if this occurs during a school day.
- Schools cannot be closed for funeral purposes. Conditions for closure are outlined in the Education and Training Act 2020, section 659.

### Schools need to know local, regional and national supports

- It is important that the emergency management and school health team members are aware of the range of local, regional and national supports available for students, their whānau, and how to access them.
- School policies should also establish referral protocols with local services, including the eligibility criteria for the service and the intake and assessment protocols.
- Ensure your school community is aware of the resources and supports available through school noticeboards, websites and in communications.
- Remember to be human and compassionate first and teachers second.

14 Education and Training Act 2020 https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2020/0038/latest/LMS170676.html

## Helplines

### National helplines

- **Need to talk? Free call or text 1737** any time for support from a trained counsellor.
- **Lifeline** – **0800 543 354** (**0800 LIFELINE**) or free text **4357** (HELP).
- **Suicide Crisis Helpline** – **0508 828 865** (**0508 TAUTOKO**).
- **Healthline** – **0800 611 116**.
- **Samaritans** – **0800 726 666**.

### Depression-specific helplines and tools to heading: Depression-specific helplines and tools

- **Depression Helpline** – **0800 111 75 7** or free text **4202** (to talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions).
- www.depression.org.nz – includes The Journal online help service.
- SPARX.org.nz – online e-therapy tool provided by the University of Auckland that helps young people learn skills to deal with feeling down, depressed or stressed.

### Helplines for young people

- **Youthline** – **0800 376 633**, free text **234** or email **talk@youthline.co.nz** or online chat.
- thelowdown.co.nz – or email **team@thelowdown.co.nz** or free text **5626**.
- **What's Up** – **0800 942 8787** (for 5–18-year-olds). Phone counselling is available Monday to Friday, midday–11pm and weekends, 3pm–11pm. Online chat is available from 5pm–11pm 7 days a week, including all public holidays.

### Sexuality or gender identity helpline

- OUTLine NZ – **0800 688 5463** (OUTLINE) provides confidential telephone support.

### Free Counselling Services

- **Aoake te Rā** - For anyone impacted by a loss by suicide: https://www.aoaketera.org.nz
- **Youthline** – For Rangatahi aged 12-24: https://youthline.co.nz/get-help/counselling-your-way/

**Helplines for consumers of mental health services**

Free peer support services for people experiencing mental illness, or those supporting them:

- **Canterbury and West Coast** – **03 379 8415** / **0800 899 276** (1pm to midnight, seven nights).
- Wellington – **0800 200 207** (7pm–1am, Tuesday to Sunday).
- Auckland Central – **0508 927 654** or **0508 WARMLINE** (8pm to midnight, seven nights).

**School resources**

- **Te Ata Hāpara** - is a research centre, with nationally and internationally recognised expertise in suicide prevention research. Their research is informed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the lived experience of whānau: https://suicidepreventionresearch.auckland.ac.nz/
- **Working Together: Te Ata Hāpara** - A guide for schools to support students who self-harm: https://bpb-ap-se2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.auckland.ac.nz/dist/4/1059/files/2025/06/Self-Harm-Guidelines-FINAL-9-5-25.pdf
- **NHS England: Staying safe from suicide** - https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/staying-safe-from-suicide/#resources
- Guidance and resources for employers and organisational leaders following the 'suspected suicide' of a staff member: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/suicide-postvention-support-for-a-workplace

## The Mental Health Foundation

The Mental Health Foundation provides resources to support people who are worried about their own suicide risk or the suicide risk of someone close to them.

Resources can be downloaded from their website or ordered free from their online store: https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/34/suicide-prevention?utm_source=PDF&utm_medium=A-ZResList&utm_campaign=SPR

- The most up to date list of services that offer support can be found on their website; **Find Support** - https://mentalhealth.org.nz/helplines
- **After a suicide postcard with a list of resources and selfcare tips** – https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/after-a-suicide
- **Comment or no comment** - a resource for whānau who may be speaking with media after a suicide: https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/comment-or-no-comment

The Foundation has a range of resources to support mental wellbeing. These can be accessed by:

- visiting their site – https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz.
- calling the resource centre on **09 623 4812**.
- emailing **info@mentalhealth.org.nz**.

All services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week unless otherwise specified. These could be widely advertised throughout the school network. Information needs to be available in a variety of school contexts, so all students know and have access to these supports.

**Other resources include:**

- **'Connecting through Kōrero** – Talking about suicide with taiohi/young people' – https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/connecting-through-korero
- **'Are you worried someone is thinking of suicide?'** – https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/are-you-worried-someone-is-thinking-of-suicide
- **'How to get heard'** – https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/how-to-get-heard
- **'What happens now?'** – https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/what-happens-now. This offers information to help people stay safe in the days and weeks after they survive a suicide attempt or serious self-harm. The resource also provides information to friends, whānau, counsellors or support people about how to help.
- Apps, e-therapy & guided self-help.

## Suicide Bereavement

- **Aoake Te Rā** - a free service that provides support and manaaki to individuals, whānau and communities who have lost someone to suicide: aoaketera.org.nz
- '**After a suicide**' – a website providing practical information for people bereaved by suicide: https://afterasuicide.nz/.
- **'When someone dies suddenly: A guide to Coronial Services in New Zealand**' – All sudden unexpected deaths are referred to the coroner. Read their brochure to find out what to expect: https://coronerscourt.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/MOJ0047-SEP22-FINAL-V2-WEB.pdf
- **Media Guidelines for Reporting on Suicide** – https://www.health.govt.nz/publications/media-guidelines-for-reporting-on-suicide
- **Every Life Matters** – He Tapu te Oranga o ia Tangata: Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019–2029 and Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2019–2024 for Aotearoa New Zealand https://www.health.govt.nz/strategies-initiatives/programmes-and-initiatives/mental-health-addiction-and-suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention-strategy-and-action-plan
- **Tūturu Student Well-Being website** – https://tuturu.org.nz/
- **Five Ways To Wellbeing Resources (in multiple languages)** – https://mentalhealth.org.nz/five-ways-to-wellbeing

## Other specialist helplines

- **Alcohol and Drug Helpline** – **0800 787 797** or online chat.
- **Are You OK** – **0800 456 450** family violence helpline.
- **Anxiety phone line** – **0800 269 4389** (**0800 ANXIETY**).
- **Asian Family Services** – **0800 862 342** (Monday-Friday 9am-8pm). Text **832** (Monday-Friday 9am-5pm) Asian Helpline provides nationwide free and confidential services from Monday to Friday between 9am-8pm. Our Helpline is available in eight languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese, Hindi and English.
- **Rape Crisis** – **0800 883 300** (for support after rape or sexual assault).
- **0508MUSICHELP** – The Wellbeing Service is a 24/7 online, on the phone and in-person counselling service fully funded by the NZ Music Foundation and provided free of charge to those in the Kiwi music community who can't access the help they need due to hardship and other circumstances. Call **0508 MUSICHELP**.
- **National Pacific Helpline** – **0800 Ola Lelei** - (**0800 652 535**) is a FREE national Pacific helpline anyone can call if they are feeling worried, stressed or concerned about anything and need someone to talk to, for help and support. The helpline runs Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm. The Ola Lelei team speaks Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori and English. All conversations are confidential.
- **Quit Line** – **0800 778 778** smoking cessation help.
- **Vagus Line** – **0800 56 76 666** (Mon, Wed, Fri 12 noon – 2pm). Promote family harmony among Chinese, enhance parenting skills, decrease conflict among family members (couple, parent-child, in-laws) and stop family violence.

## Support for families, whānau and friends

- **EDANZ** – improving outcomes for people with eating disorders and their families. Freephone **0800 2 EDANZ** or **0800 233 269**, or in Auckland **09 522 2679**. Or email **info@ed.org.nz**.
- **Parent Help** – **0800 568 856** for parents/whānau seeking support, advice and practical strategies on all parenting concerns. Anonymous, non-judgemental and confidential.
- **Family Services 211 Helpline** – **0800 211 211** for help finding (and direct transfer to) community-based health and social support services in your area.
- **Supporting Families towards Mental Wellbeing** – The Yellow Brick Road organisation provides support for whānau who have a loved one experiencing mental health challenges.
- **Aunty Dee** – A Pasifika-based free online tool for anyone who needs some help working through a problem or problems: https://www.auntydee.co.nz/.
- **Te Rau Ora** - support Māori individuals, whānau, iwi, hapū and communities to promote well-being and prevent suicide through developing local leadership and community-led wellbeing programmes: https://terauora.com/wellbeing-prevention/
- **Le Va** - Aotearoa's Pasifika primary prevention organisation working with mental health and addiction, public health and disability, suicide and violence prevention and youth wellbeing: https://www.leva.co.nz

He mea tārai e mātou te mātauranga
kia rangatira ai, kia mana taurite ai ōna huanga.

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