# Superintendent’s Memo #174-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: July 10, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Update on the Revised Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools

On June 18, 2020, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the revised [*Suicide Prevention Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools*.](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/boe/meetings/2020/06-jun/item-c-attachment-a.docx) The final version of the newly revised guidelines will be posted to the Virginia Department of Education’s [Suicide Prevention Resources](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/prevention/suicide/index.shtml) [webpage.](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnmk13107%5CDownloads%5C04-03-20%20%20Memos.docx)

The revised *Guidelines* incorporate the recommendations made by the Governor Northam’s Children’s Cabinet Student Safety Workgroup, reflect current research, align with partner state agency efforts, and link to a variety of resources available to schools to support implementation. The *Guidelines* are a major revision in content and form and reflects current research on effective practice in approaches to suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention.

The revised *Guidelines* address:

* Suicide prevention and intervention;
* Screening;
* Risk factors;
* Messaging to students, staff, and parents and caregivers about recognizing and reporting behaviors;
* How and where to report concerning behaviors;
* Engaging students during key transitional periods when data indicate that suicide rates are higher;
* How to engage students who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts;
* How to support students returning to school after treatment;
* Postvention; and
* How to engage with students after a member of their community has died by suicide.

For further information about Suicide Prevention, please contact Martha Montgomery by email at Martha.Montgomery@doe.virginia.gov, or by telephone at (804) 692-0396.

JFL/MFM/rge