

## 1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-272.1, relating to suicide*  
3 *prevention in public schools.*

4 [S 1250]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-272.1 as follows:**

8 *§ 22.1-272.1. Responsibility to contact parent of student at imminent risk of suicide; notice to be*  
9 *given to social services if parental abuse or neglect; Board of Education, in cooperation with the*  
10 *Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Department of*  
11 *Health, to develop guidelines for parental contact.*

12 *A. Any person licensed as administrative or instructional personnel by the Board of Education and*  
13 *employed by a local school board who, in the scope of his employment, has reason to believe, as a*  
14 *result of direct communication from a student, that such student is at imminent risk of suicide, shall, as*  
15 *soon as practicable, contact at least one of such student's parents to ask whether such parent is aware*  
16 *of the student's mental state and whether the parent wishes to obtain or has already obtained counseling*  
17 *for such student. Such contact shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines*  
18 *required by subsection C.*

19 *B. If the student has indicated that the reason for being at imminent risk of suicide relates to*  
20 *parental abuse or neglect, this contact shall not be made with the parent. Instead, the person shall, as*  
21 *soon as practicable, notify the local department of social services of the county or city wherein the child*  
22 *resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or the state Department of Social*  
23 *Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline, as required by § 63.1-248.3. When giving this notice*  
24 *to the local or state department, the person shall stress the need to take immediate action to protect the*  
25 *child from harm.*

26 *C. The Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health, Mental*  
27 *Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Department of Health, shall develop guidelines for*  
28 *making the contact required by subsection A. These guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to,*  
29 *(i) criteria to assess the suicide risks of students, (ii) characteristics to identify potentially suicidal*  
30 *students, (iii) appropriate responses to students expressing suicidal intentions, (iv) available and*  
31 *appropriate community services for students expressing suicidal intentions, (v) suicide prevention*  
32 *strategies which may be implemented by local schools for students expressing suicidal intentions, (vi)*  
33 *criteria for notification of and discussions with parents of students expressing suicidal intentions, (vii)*  
34 *criteria for as-soon-as-practicable contact with the parents, (viii) appropriate sensitivity to religious*  
35 *beliefs, and (ix) legal requirements and criteria for notification of public service agencies, including, but*  
36 *not limited to, the local or state social services and mental health agencies. These guidelines may*  
37 *include case studies and problem-solving exercises and may be designed as materials for in-service*  
38 *training programs for licensed administrative and instructional personnel.*

39 **2. That the Board of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health, Mental**  
40 **Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Department of Health, shall develop, publish**  
41 **and distribute the guidelines required by § 22.1-272.1 to the local school divisions by October 1,**  
42 **1999.**

43 **3. That, notwithstanding the effective date of this act, no person shall be required to comply with**  
44 **the parental contact requirements set forth in § 22.1-272.1 until the guidelines of the Board of**  
45 **Education are developed, published, and distributed to the local school divisions.**

ENROLLED

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