



Acton Chinese Language School
P. O.Box 2239
Acton, MA 01720-6239

ACLS Student Safety & Mental Health Concern – School Policy

1. Purpose

The safety and well-being of students are a top priority at **Acton Chinese Language School**. While we are not a licensed mental health provider, we take all concerns seriously and follow a structured approach to ensure student safety while respecting legal obligations and organizational limitations.

2. Responding to Mental Health Concerns

A. Identifying Concerns

If a student **expresses suicidal thoughts, self-harm behaviors, or emotional distress**, or if another student, teacher, or volunteer reports concerns, staff must take the following steps immediately.

B. Immediate Response

1. Stay Calm & Listen Carefully

- Do not dismiss, downplay, or promise confidentiality regarding safety concerns.
- Acknowledge the student's feelings and reassure them that help is available.

2. Remove the Student from Class for a Private Conversation

- A designated **staff member or administrator** will talk to the student in a **calm and non-judgmental manner** in a private space.
- **DO NOT leave the student alone.**

3. Assess Immediate Risk

- If the student expresses **immediate intent and means to harm himself or herself or others**, call **911** or escort them to the nearest hospital.
- If there is **no immediate danger**, proceed to **contact the parent/guardian**.

C. Notifying Parents/Guardians

1. **Call the parent/guardian immediately** to inform them of the situation.
2. **Use factual, neutral language** (e.g., *"Your child expressed thoughts of distress, and we wanted to notify you so you can follow up accordingly."*)
3. **Encourage parents to seek professional support** and provide local mental health resources if needed.

D. Mandatory Reporting Considerations

- **Acton Chinese Language School** is not a mandated reporting entity under Massachusetts law. However, if staff suspects **child abuse, neglect, or an unsafe home environment**, they must report it to the **Massachusetts Department of Children & Families (DCF)** at 1-800-792-5200.

3. Documentation & Confidentiality

1. Incident Documentation

- The staff member who handled the situation should keep information
 - What was said/reported.
 - Actions taken.
 - Parent/guardian notification.
- This record will be kept **confidential** and stored securely.

2. Confidentiality

- While student privacy is respected, **safety concerns override confidentiality**.
- Only essential personnel will have access to incident records.

4. Student Re-entry & Continued Participation

- If a student has **expressed suicidal thoughts or self-harm**, **Acton Chinese Language School** reserves the right to **require a mental health clearance** from a licensed professional before allowing the student to return.
- The organization may request a **parent meeting** to discuss any necessary accommodations.
- A parent should accompany the student in the classroom if requested

5. Training & Prevention

1. Staff Training

- All teachers, volunteers, and administrators will receive **basic training** on recognizing and responding to student distress.
2. **Providing Mental Health Resources**
- **Acton Chinese Language School** will maintain a list of local and national mental health resources to share with parents as needed.

Emergency Mental Health Resources:

- **Samaritans (24/7 Hotline):** 1-877-870-4673
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Dial 988
- **Massachusetts Department of Mental Health:** 1-800-221-0053
- **Emergency Services Program/Mobile Crisis Intervention (ESP/MCI):**
<https://www.mass.gov/emergencycrisis-services>

6. Organizational Liability & Limitations

- **Acton Chinese Language School** is not a mental health provider and does not offer professional counseling.
- Our role is limited to **notifying parents and referring to appropriate resources.**
- The organization **does not assume responsibility for ongoing mental health care** but remains committed to **providing a safe learning environment.**

7. Policy Review & Updates

- This policy will be **reviewed annually** and updated as needed to align with best practices and legal guidelines.