Dear Sir/Madam,

Being residential Co-educational Senior Secondary Institutions providing free education including boarding and lodging facilities, NVS is responsible for taking care of safety and security of students enrolled in JNVs under NVS. Children from the rural areas and varied backgrounds are admitted in JNVs. They take time in adjusting to the new environment, new people, facilities and residential culture. Once a child has been admitted to the school, it is our prime responsibility to ensure his or her safety and security right up to the time the child finally passes out of the school. Accordingly, the Principal and staff of each Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya are expected to ensure that the safety, security and good health of students is given paramount importance.

In spite of detailed and repeated instructions, the Samiti is getting reports on cases of deaths, accidents, suicides and missing of children from the Vidyalayas. Due to lack of proper supervision and control over children, unfortunate incidents have taken place in some of our Vidyalayas resulting in the loss of precious lives. Samiti has time and again given necessary guidelines regarding preventing steps to be taken to avoid such unfortunate incidents.

Suicide deaths of students in recent years in JNVs reveal that NVS instructions are not being implemented with sincerity and seriousness in some of the JNVs. Such unfortunate incidents are tarnishing the image and reputation of the NVS and creating suspicions and doubts in the minds of the parents and community about welfare and protection of children in the Vidyalayas.

The causes for these suicides have been reported as home sickness, mal adjustment in the Vidyalaya, adolescence related issues, depression, unable to tolerate fear of getting fail marks in the exam, failing to come up to expectations of their parents, extreme humiliation by the fellow
students, lapses of Vidyalaya administration, award of corporal punishment, lack of proper counseling, negligence in performing assigned duties by staff, humiliation by the fellow Teachers/Principal etc.

The Samiti has taken a serious view of such happenings in the Vidyalayas and necessary legal and administrative action is being taken in each individual case. These cases are viewed seriously by MHRD/NCPCR/NHRC and Samiti has no answer. When suicide takes place in the premises of JNV we can not escape from the responsibility. In one of the cases the NHRC has given its decision that due to negligence of the staff of the school (Public Servants), the student ended his life in JNV. Hence it ordered to Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti to make additional payment of ex gratia besides taking strict action against the staff. We could have avoided these unfortunate tragic loss of lives having followed the directions. A Child cannot take all of a sudden such an extreme step without showing some visible symptoms in advance. Vidyalaya administration failed to detect such symptoms. Though these symptoms were heard or seen by the students they were taken lightly.

It is high time to introspect to protect students from suicidal tendencies.

1) Principals and Vice Principals must pay visits to Hostels (at least one dormitory per day), speak to the students and record strong and weak points.

2) House masters/Assistant house masters, hence forth will also work as mentors for the students. Students are to be allotted to HM & AHM. The list of mentors and allotted students decided at Vidyalaya level may be displayed on the notice board.

3) Students may be involved in Pace setting activities/Scout and Guide/NCC/NSS/CCA to keep them busy.

4) A near by village may be adopted under Pace Setting activities and developmental activities may be taken up by students of JNVs.

5) Counselling meetings/sessions must be conducted on the spot when unusual behaviour/withdrawal symptoms/depression/insult feelings are seen/observed from any student.

After careful analysis of the circumstances leading to such unfortunate incidents, detailed Guidelines/check points have been prepared for taking further intensive steps for the safety and security of the children. (Copy of Guidelines enclosed) You are hereby requested to strictly adhere to the instructions and the guidelines and ensure that all the instructions given are scrupulously followed. Principals, House Masters and other teachers must make it a point to periodically sit together to chalk out strategies to ensure safety and security of the children. All other teaching and non-teaching staff of the Vidyalaya may also be impressed upon the need for meticulous implementation of these guidelines.
It may further be noted that any negligence/indifference/laziness in terms of the implementation of these guidelines will be viewed very seriously and the responsibility will be fixed on the employee concerned.

All earlier guidelines also should be followed scrupulously by all members of the Vidyalaya staff. Any failure on this account will invite severe disciplinary action.

Regional Offices are hereby requested to have a schedule of periodical verification of the safety measures being taken up by the Vidyalaya from time to time and take appropriate measures to prevent any unsafe happenings and also to take stern action on the negligent officials without any delay. Asstt. Commissioner/Cluster In-charge should remind Principals periodically about these guidelines.

You are requested to acknowledge the receipt of this letter along with the guidelines and intimate the action being taken in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

(Bishwajit Kumar Singh)
COMMISSIONER


Copy to:-

1. The Principal, All Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas.
2. The Dy. Commissioner, Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, All Regional Offices
3. The Director, All National Leadership Institutes
4. All Officers of NVS
5. Asstt. Commissioner(F/S), NVS(HQ) ...... with a request to upload the information in the website of NVS(HQ).
NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA SAMITI
(School Administration)

Suicide tendencies of Students in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and suggested preventive measures.

Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) an autonomous body under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, is running over 591 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas across the country.

Being residential co-educational Senior Secondary Institutions providing free education including boarding and lodging facilities, NVS is responsible for taking care of safety and security of students enrolled in JNVs under NVS. Children come from the rural areas and varied backgrounds. They take time in adjusting to the new environment, new people, facilities and residential culture more than that children will be missing their parents near and dear.

Suicide deaths of students in recent years in JNVs reveal that NVS instructions have not been followed in letter and spirit. The causes for these suicides have been reported as home sickness, mal adjustment in the Vidyalaya, lack of parental care, adolescence related issues, depression Lapses of Vidyalaya administration, corporal punishment, lack of proper counseling, negligence in performing assigned duties etc. It is being viewed very seriously at all levels and Samiti has no meaningful answer. In these cases if instructions issued by Samiti were followed we could have avoided these unfortunate tragic loss of lives. Some of these cases of suicide by the students have been reported due to apathy on the part of teachers on their psychological makeup.

A Child cannot take all of sudden such an extreme step without showing some visible symptoms in advance. Vidyalaya administration fails to detect such symptoms. If these symptoms are heard or seen by the staff / Students they are taken lightly. Generally the suicidal incidents take places due to the child being over protected at home, feel badly homesick, gets disturbed, unable to tolerate fear of getting fail in the exam, failing to come up to expectations of their parents, extreme humiliation by the fellow students/Teachers/Principal etc.
What are suicidal behaviours?

- Suicide occurs when someone purposely kills him/herself.
- A suicide attempt occurs when someone tries to kill him/herself but does not succeed. The person who survives may have serious injuries such as brain damage, broken bones, and organ failure. The survivor may also have depression or other mental health issues.
- Suicidal ideation occurs when someone is thinking about ending his/her life.

Why do students commit suicide?

There are many reasons why students become suicidal. A suicide rarely has just one causes

Following problems may be possible reasons.

- Depression.
- Tried suicide before.
- A history of being bullied.
- Problems at school, such as falling grades, disruptive behaviour, frequent absences, humiliation from fellow students and Staff, adjustment problems.
- Stress, chronic illness, and/or sexually transmitted diseases.
- Uncertainty surrounding sexual orientation (Love failure)
- A history of sexual abuse.
- Discipline problems.
- Coping with being gay in an unsupportive family, community
- A friend, peer, family member, who recently attempted or committed suicide.
- A disruptive or abusive family life.
- A parent with depression or substance abuse problems.
- Loss of a parent or close family member through death or divorce.

How do we know if a student is at risk for suicide?

Following may be the signs/symptoms

- Feeling sad, empty, or tearful nearly every day.
- Loss of interest in activities that were enjoyed in the past.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Difficulty in thinking and concentrating.
- Complaints of continued boredom.
- Complaints of headaches, stomach-aches, or fatigue with no actual physical problems.
- Expressions of guilt and/or not allowing anyone to give him or her praise or rewards.
- Feeling hopeless and worthless
- Complain of being a bad person or feeling rotten inside
- Give verbal hints with statements such as: I won't be a problem for you much longer, It's no use, and I won't see you again.
- Give away favourite possessions, clean his or her room, throw away important belongings, etc.
- Become suddenly cheerful after a period of depression
- Show signs of psychosis..
- Lack of a sense of purpose in life

**Suicidal ideation** (thinking, writing a suicide note drawing or talking about suicide, death, dying or the afterlife)

- Threatening to or talking about wanting to hurt or kill him/herself
- Expressing odd or troubling thoughts.
- Showing a dramatic change in personality or appearance.
- Talking about not being around in the future or "going away"
- Searching for and trying to obtain weapons, pills, or other means ways to kill him/herself

**How can we help a student who is thinking or talking about suicide in JNV?**

The moment you find/notice any of the signs/symptoms in any student it should be taken seriously and counselling should start in the following sequence

1) The matter should not be taken lightly by students and staff. Students if they happen to listen/notice any of the symptoms, the observer student must tell it to the Wing prefect/House captain who will inform immediately to the HM. In turn HM should inform it immediately to the Principal invariably.

2) HM should pay love and affection as Mother/Father and be with the student till principal comes there.

3) Principal immediately should go to the Student, speak to him/her in elderly, mature and affectionate manner and extend all possible help and moral support and arrange proper counselling through HMs and Staff Nurse.

4) HM and Principal should try to find the causes for suicidal ideation.

5) Once the reasons are identified remedial action should start on priority basis.

6) Principal must arrange a professional counsellor urgently. All logistic support has to be extended by the Principal to the Counsellor.
7) Parents may be informed not as a compliant but to join the counselling group.
8) All medical care should be provided without caring for the expenditure.

**EVENT SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO PREVENT UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENTS**

A gist of suggestive event specific action points to prevent suicides are summarized under

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological problems</th>
<th>With frequent interactions House Master/AHM can come to know about psychological problems. Psychological behaviour of the students should be watched closely to avoid any sort of unforeseen incidents.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression.</td>
<td>Proper regular counselling of the children is to be done to help the mentally disturbed children who are under depression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/language problems.</td>
<td>The teacher is the best judge to identify any behavioural social language problem in child and provide proper stimulus, appropriate love and affection, necessary guidance and plentiful insight, human touch and care. Each teacher should be a guide, friend, counsellor to the child only then he/she can contribute to overall development of child. Students problem must be listened patiently, politely and solved amicably Informal conversation with the pupils by way of discussions with peers and planned observations in hostels, classrooms, playground, Mess should be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliation by students, Teachers/Principal</td>
<td>Extreme Humiliation by the fellow students/Teachers/Principal should completely be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study pressure</td>
<td>All efforts must be made by Teachers/HMS/AHMs to relieve study pressure. Vidyalaya should develop a good social, authentic and environment friendly educational climate in the school personal attention by the Teachers, proper counselling/motivation efforts to overcome fear of failure of students in exams. Child fails to cope up with the studies as per the expectations of his/her parents Parents should also be counselled and intimated about the performance of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence problems</td>
<td>their wards. Adolescence problems should be talked in a mature way by the Staff Nurse and trained teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiscipline</td>
<td>Indiscipline activities of students should be settled amicably with the help of PTC/VMC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragging/Bullying</td>
<td>Ragging and Bullying should completely be stopped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal punishment</td>
<td>Children should not be scolded in public on their mistakes. Child is a child-like any child he also needs kind behaviour from senior students, teachers and Principal. Too much critical command by teachers/Principal is to be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling for</td>
<td>Child should be heard, he should be enquired if he is looking upset, he should be guided, counselled and timely help and assistance provided to him. Any child noticed disturbed, should never be left alone. His attention should immediately be diverted in an activity of his choice under the supervision of HM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mistakes/Stealing</td>
<td>Awards to good students play effective role than punishment. The child should feel himself at home, safe and secure in the Vidyalaya with nil threats to the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td>Every child has some positive qualities which are to be identified, recognised may be in the form of incentives/Awards/appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family History,</td>
<td>Suicidal tendencies are very deep rooted. Family history play an important role. All House Masters should collect the family history of the children through informal chitchat with the child/guardian/visitors/parents and will keep a record. They should invariably inform the Principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family disturbances</td>
<td>Children on account of family disturbances like separation of parents, family, etc. are to be specially attended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents expectations</td>
<td>Few parents of students are not meeting with their wards on parents days. Non meeting with their wards by the parents will lead sometimes to student's isolation and depression. Such students are vulnerable for committing suicide. Continuous communications between the child and the teacher HM/AHM should be maintained with proper follow up action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Children on account of family disturbances like communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
separation of parents, family, etc. are to be specially attended.
All House Masters should collect the family history of the children through informal chitchat with the child/guardian/visitors/parents and will keep a record. HMs should invariably inform the Principal if any unusual behaviour, talk, feelings are shown by the child.
Generally the suicidal incidents take place due to the child being over protected at home, feel badly homesick, gets disturbed, unable to tolerate papers/fear of getting fall, to come up to expectations of their parents.

- Abundant temporary buildings which are not in use are to be kept out of bound for the students.
- Principal, HM and other Teachers have to inspect the dormitories class rooms and other buildings in the campus to find out the danger points and rectify the problems.
- Arranging for proper roll call by the teachers at various places will ensure the physical presence of the students. Instead of mechanical head counting, the assembly of the students should be used to note the emotional behavior of the students and on the basis of the feedback, proper counseling is to be done.
- In most of the suicide cases through inquiry it is noticed that symptoms were noticed by the Students but not communicated to the faculties. By interacting the students regularly confidence is to be built among the students about staff so that they may approach the teachers without any fear in case of their personal problems.
- Counseling sessions are to be arranged to counsel the students in person/group on need basis to stress upon the mutual assistance, stress management and building rapport among the inmates.
- Corporal punishment is to be completely banned. Criticising the students for their behavior in public should also be avoided. Instead arrangements may be personally for proper counseling.
- Every JNV should have the family details of all the students and the students are personally counseled on the basis of their family history and cases of family disturbances.
• Regular meetings with the students are to be conducted to get the feed back about the various activities of JNVs. Good suggestions from the students are to be taken in to account for the performance of the JNVs.
• Tuck shop and coin box telephone facilities are to be extended to the students in a time bound manner with restrictions so that the other activities of JNVs are not affected.
• Ladies safai Karmachari is to be appointed on part time basis without fail to ensure hygienic condition in the wash room area of Girl dormitories.
• Matron has to always with the students as directed through various circulars of NVS.
• Grievance box/Suggestion box are to be operated in a transparent manner and action taken are to be recorded properly by the committee for future reference.
• Students with academic performance related stress are to be repeatedly counseled to bring out their talent and systematic remediation is also to be planned out to improve their academic performance.
• Adolescence problems are to be handled with care by taking the parents in to confidence.
• Role of the HM and AHM is highly crucial. They have to regularly interact with the students to find out their emotional feelings and they are to be guided properly.
• Awareness programmes on various issues like sexual abuse POCSO act, adolescence behavior, life skills etc are to be regularly arranged for both parents and students.
• All the efforts are to be made to have a healthy atmosphere in JNVs by involving the stakeholders.
• The Principal, Class Teachers, House Masters and House Mistresses must have a thorough knowledge of likes and dislikes and above all the family backgrounds of the children.
• Children in JNVs are admitted at the tender age of 9 to 13 years which needs counselling and continuous guidance to become physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally balanced.
• It is essential that a firm trust/confidence friendship and affection are established between a child and the teacher.
• Student's problem must be listened patiently, politely and solved amicably. Informal conversation with the pupils by way of discussions with peers and planned observations in hostels, classrooms, playground mess etc should be developed.
• Any child noticed disturbed, should never be left alone. His attention should immediately be diverted in an activity of his choice under the supervision of the staff. The child should feel himself at home, safe and secure in the Vidyalaya with nil threats to the child.
• Non meeting with their wards by the parents will also lead sometime student’s isolation and depression. Such students are vulnerable for committing suicide. Shy, Isolate, neglected children should be identified and watched and they are taken care of properly.
• Provide guidance and support to students who are identified to be suffering from depression, abnormal behaviour or any such symptoms which can compel them to take any extreme step.
• Services of Matrons should be taken to ensure safety and security of girl students and to provide parental care to the girls in the dormitories.