



Supreme Court's 15-Point Guidelines to Safeguard Student Mental Health

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Supreme Court's guidelines to Safeguard Student Mental Health

The Supreme Court has issued 15 binding directives to schools, colleges, and coaching centres to tackle the rising cases of student suicides and mental health crises. These will remain in force until specific legislation is enacted.

1. **Uniform Mental Health Policy** - Every institution must have a mental health policy based on [UMMEED](#), [MANODARPAN](#), and the [National Suicide Prevention Strategy](#). This policy must be updated annually and displayed publicly.
2. **Appointment of Counsellors** - Institutions with over 100 students must employ at least one qualified counsellor/psychologist/social worker. Smaller institutions must have formal linkages with external professionals.
3. **Optimal Student-to-Counsellor Ratio** - Institutions must ensure proper ratios. Dedicated mentors should be assigned to smaller groups, especially during exams.
4. **No Academic Segregation** - Coaching centres must avoid batch segregation based on marks, public shaming, or unrealistic targets.
5. **Emergency Protocols & Helplines** - Institutions must have written protocols for referral to mental health services/hospitals. Suicide helplines (e.g., Tele-MANAS) must be displayed clearly in classrooms, hostels, and websites.
6. **Training for Staff** - All teaching/non-teaching staff must undergo mental health training twice a year on psychological first aid, identifying warning signs, and referrals.
7. **Sensitivity Training** - Staff must be trained to deal with marginalised and vulnerable students sensitively (SC, ST, OBC, EWS, LGBTQ+, disabled, trauma-affected, etc.).
8. **Safe Complaint Mechanisms** - Institutions must have confidential systems to report harassment, ragging, or bullying. Complaints must be acted upon immediately.

9. **Internal Committees for Redressal** - A dedicated authority or committee must handle complaints and ensure psycho-social support for victims.
10. **Zero Tolerance for Retaliation** - Institutions must ensure no retaliation against whistle-blowers or complainants.
11. **Immediate Referral for Victims** - In cases of harassment, self-harm, or trauma, students must be referred to trained mental health professionals promptly.
12. **Prioritising Student Safety** - Physical and psychological safety must be prioritised in all actions taken by the institution.
13. **Accountability for Negligence** - If an institution's inaction leads to self-harm or suicide, it will be treated as institutional culpability, attracting legal consequences.
14. **Annual Review of Mental Health Policies** - Policies and practices must be reviewed every year to ensure they meet updated standards and needs.
15. **Proactive Mental Health Support** - Institutions must create an environment where mental health support is easily accessible, stigma-free, and proactive rather than reactive.

UMMEED Guidelines for Schools

The UMMEED Guidelines, introduced by the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, provide a structured approach to promoting student mental well-being and preventing suicides. The term UMMEED stands for:

- U – Understand the mental health needs of students
- M – Motivate students to seek help and express concerns
- M – Manage stressors and academic pressures effectively
- E – Empathise with students in distress
- E – Empower them with coping strategies and resilience
- D – Develop a supportive school ecosystem

Key Components of the Guidelines

- Understanding Suicide
- Identifying Risks
- Focuses on recognising warning signs of students at risk and taking timely preventive action.

[UMMEED guidelines for schools](#)

Suicide Prevention Plan for Schools

1. **Setting up a School Wellness Team (SWT):** A dedicated team to oversee mental health initiatives.
2. **Promoting a Positive School Environment:** Creating an inclusive, supportive atmosphere free from stigma and bullying.
3. **Building Capacity for Suicide Prevention:** Training teachers and staff to detect and respond to early signs.
4. **Immediate Response for Supporting Students at Risk:** Establishing protocols for crisis intervention.

intervention.

5. **Appraisal of Actions Taken by School:** Regular evaluation of the measures implemented for continuous improvement.

These guidelines aim to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and empower schools to take proactive steps in safeguarding student mental health.

[National Suicide Prevention Strategy](#)

MANODARPAN Initiative

MANODARPAN, launched by the Ministry of Education (MoE), Government of India, is a psychosocial support initiative aimed at promoting the mental health and well-being of students, teachers, and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The platform addresses challenges such as isolation, academic stress, exam anxiety, career uncertainty, and emotional distress arising during and after the pandemic.

The initiative bridges the gap between home and school by fostering positivity, resilience, and life skills in students while encouraging peer support and adapting to the “new normal” of learning.

MANODARPAN offers multiple support mechanisms, including a dedicated webpage (manodarpn.education.gov.in), a National Toll-Free Helpline (8448440632) for tele-counselling, and interactive programs like Paricharcha (awareness webinars) and Sahyog (live sessions on PM eVidya channel for classes VI–XII).

Since its launch on 21st July 2020, MANODARPAN has become an integral part of the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, providing continuous mental health support and guidance to the educational community across India.

[MANODARPAN](#)

source:

<https://data.vikaspedia.in/short/lc?k=RyZBX0wzVCvPZiAYVRQwfa>

