

Suicides in Hong Kong

+ FOLLOW

Comment / Letters

Letters | Hong Kong schools can play a vital role in preventing student suicides

- Not only should all school buildings be made physically safe to prevent bodily harm, so too should the prevention ethos extend through to all aspects of school life – people, values, practices, teaching methodologies, curriculum and policies



Letters + FOLLOW

Published: 7:30am, 10 Sep, 2021

Why you can trust SCMP

TOP PICKS

5 trending wellness habits in Hong Kong

Paid Post: HSBC



Magazines

Reality star no more: inside Rob Kardashian's impressive net worth
2 Jul 2022



Magazines

Meet Elvis Presley's 'stepson' Navarone Garibaldi
3 Jul 2022



This Week in Asia

Trouble in Paradise: George Clooney, Julia Roberts film stirs debate in Indonesia
3 Jul 2022



News

End of 'Angola model' sees number of Chinese in oil-rich country plummet
3 Jul 2022



Magazines

10



Post



Schools could set up monitoring and observation systems to identify those at risk of suicide and create a holistic approach to student health. Photo: Shutterstock

In April this year, it was reported that 23 students in Hong Kong – of primary and secondary school age – were suspected to have taken their lives in the 2019/20 school year, a 15 per cent increase on the previous year. That's about eight student suicide cases each term, leaving behind bereaved families and many others directly and indirectly affected.

How can this possibly happen?

If any other cause was thought to be accounting for so many avoidable deaths in children, we would surely be outraged and calling for action. Yet mitigation measures are to hand. Research indicates strongly that suicide is preventable.

Everyone has a role to play – government, public health sector and us as

SCMP Poll
What type of holiday are you most interested in?

Meet Karan Adani, son of Asia's richest man Gautam Adani
3 Jul 2022



Magazines

Was Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley's marriage real?
2 Jul 2022



Magazines

21 mirror-image female celebrities who look so similar they could be twins
2 Jul 2022



News

Mahathir proud Malaysia-born Penny Wong is Australia's foreign minister
3 Jul 2022



Lifestyle

Where to buy an Hermès Birkin and how much it will cost you - expert tips
9 Dec 2021



Coronavirus

Hong Kong's latest Covid-19 rules for travel and social distancing
27 Mar 2022



Behind-the-scenes as 5 influencers share wellness tips

In partnership with: Lululemon



individuals. Schools can play a vital role and are uniquely placed to champion [suicide prevention](#) under their child protection responsibilities. They understand that adolescence is when children are at their most vulnerable mentally, as the brain transitions from childhood to adulthood, and their judgment may be impaired.

Advertisement

School staff spend more time in a day with their students than their parents do, and witness their behaviours and emotions, and how they may change over time. They can set up monitoring and observation systems to identify those at risk and create a holistic approach to student health. Schools are vital in combating the stigma around suicide and mental health that often prevents conversations from taking place.

Prevention includes practical, emotional, psychological and physical measures. Not only should all school buildings be made physically safe to prevent bodily harm, so too should the prevention ethos extend through to all aspects of school life – people, values, practices, teaching methodologies, curriculum and policies.

Teachers, school leaders, directors and governors have a moral responsibility to the young people in their care to keep them safe from suicide and to develop their self-help skills, and this is as important as academic achievement.

measures. Not only should all school buildings be made physically safe to prevent bodily harm, so too should the prevention ethos extend through to all aspects of school life – people, values, practices, teaching methodologies, curriculum and policies.

Teachers, school leaders, directors and governors have a moral responsibility to the young people in their care to keep them safe from suicide and to develop their self-help skills, and this is as important as academic achievement.

I have no doubt that each school has the best interests of its students at heart. I also acknowledge the pressures on teachers who will need support from their leaders in carrying out these responsibilities.

Preventing suicide is well within the realm of the possible. On World Suicide Prevention Day, as we think about those young people we have loved and lost, I strongly urge every school to commit to implementing a suicide prevention policy and to reducing youth suicide.

Determined leadership from our schools and a willingness from our teachers will make this goal achievable.

Ann Pearce, founder, The Weez Project

If you are having suicidal thoughts, or you know someone who is, help is available. For Hong Kong, dial +852 2896 0000 for The Samaritans or +852 2382 0000 for Suicide Prevention Services. In the US, call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline on +1 800 273 8255. For a list of other nations' helplines, [see this page](#)

- Cultural (Museums, temples, etc.)
- Relaxing (Beaches, nature, etc.)
- Adventure (Hiking, diving, etc.)

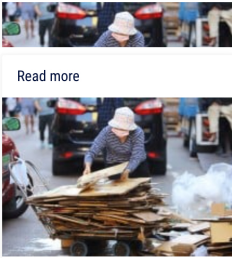
Per our [Privacy Policy](#), data collected may be used for marketing.

Read more



Half-day classes hardly help protect students from Covid-19

Read more



A big thank you from Hong Kong NGOs