

## **Self-Harm & Suicide (within Safeguarding policy)**

**{Insert name of school}** is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people, and that we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide; we want to make sure that pupils are as suicide-safe as possible.

(delete if no such policy exists) This policy should be read alongside the schools Mental Health or wellbeing policy.

**{Insert name of school}** acknowledges that:

Thoughts of self-harm and suicide are common, particularly among young people.

**Suicide is complex.** There are many contributory factors surrounding a suicide and reasons are often complex and individual to that person.

**Stigma inhibits learning.** We recognise that the stigma surrounding self-harm, suicide and other mental illness can be both a barrier to seeking help and a barrier to offering help. We are dedicated to tackling suicide stigma.

**Self-Harm and Suicide is everyone's business,** and we want to facilitate the reporting of any risks and concerns.

**Self-harm and suicide are difficult things to talk about.** Through the training of Youth Mental Health First Aiders and whole school awareness of mental ill health, we will provide adults in school who are able to identify when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

**Talking about suicide does not create or increase risk.** Contrary to common belief, this type of questioning does not encourage young people to pursue suicide ideation. Rather it signals that you care and that you are ready to talk to them about it. The opportunity to discuss feelings around suicide can provide a great relief.

We will endeavour to involve anyone from our community who has personal experience of self-harm and suicide; either having struggled themselves or supported someone with thoughts of suicide.

We will help to ensure an active person-centred self-harm and suicide prevention, and intervention policy.

- We have a named individual who is responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of this policy.
- We will endeavour to ensure that all our staff are self-harm and suicide aware. This means that all staff inductions will include self-harm and suicide awareness. We have provided a Suicide and Self Harm Toolkit developed by Essex Local Authority to provide further support to members of staff.

[https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Information Portal for Schools/Documents/DS17 5950 SelfHarm Toolkit Digital.pdf](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Emotional_Wellbeing_and_Mental_Health_Information_Portal_for_Schools/Documents/DS17_5950_SelfHarm_Toolkit_Digital.pdf)

- We will ensure that Staff are aware of their responsibilities around suicide prevention as outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and we will continue to reinforce the message to all staff that we **ALWAYS** believe children and young people.
- We will ensure that all secondary pupils are self-harm and suicide aware through the delivery of class lessons/assemblies on mental ill health and a clear pathway for pupils to raise concerns to school staff.
- We will be aware of how we enhance the physical safety of our environment including the removal of potential ligature points, restricting access to places which facilitate jumping, and securely storing harmful substances.
- We recognise that the need to protect someone's life overrides confidentiality and will report our concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Mental Health Lead immediately.
- We will endeavour to put in place mechanisms which allow staff that have regular interaction with the pupils to be able to flag or review any concerns about the individual pupils, including suspected suicidal thoughts.
- When we identify a pupil at risk of self-harm or suicide we would inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Mental Health Lead and if a pupil is in crisis we would dial 999

We will help to ensure a sensitive, and safe, suicide post provision

- We will work in partnership with the Local Authority in the event of a serious incident, whereby someone has attempted or died by suicide.
- We will also be mindful of the impact that supporting an inquest can have on staff and their wellbeing and will signpost to appropriate support both in school, via our Mental Health First Aider and external resources such as, Papyrus, Samaritans and QWELL counselling services.
- We will ensure that peers and school staff are supported and able to access services when self-harm or suicide has affected them
- We will ensure effective partnership working to support pupils returning school after a serious incident of self-harm or attempted suicide, including Team Around the Child, whereby the child/young person is at the centre of decision making and determines who is best to support them in school.