

SELF-HARM

Developing a Self-Harm Policy

Guidelines include:

1. A statement of intent

Explain why the policy has been written and what it should be used for

EXAMPLE: This policy sets out clear guidelines on the school's procedures for dealing with those who self-harm whilst the student is in school and is for students, their parents/carers and staff. It is consistent with the school's overall values and aims.

2. A definition of self-harm

EXAMPLE: Self-harm is a term used when someone injures or harms himself or herself on purpose (also called self-injury or deliberate self-harm) rather than by accident. Common examples include cutting, hitting, scratching or burning. Attempted suicide is the most serious form of self-harm.

3. Policy objectives

Who the policy is for and why.

EXAMPLE: This policy is intended for students, parents and staff

How the school will help support pupils with self-harm

EXAMPLE: The school will help pupils who self-harm by developing a common understanding through training such as the use of www.stem4-sh.org.uk; stem4 treatment workshops to inform and educate students, their families and staff; named staff for support; listening to concerns from friends; chain of action. There will be long-term strategies to enhance self-esteem and develop emotional literacy. Students will be made aware of the policy and who the named staff and student members are if there wish to report a concern.

How the school will respond when a concern is raised

EXAMPLE: If a student wishes to disclose that they self-harm the staff member(s) to approach are (names of members)
These members will record all incidents and discuss with the student the chain of command.

A similar route will be taken if a friend discloses self-harm.

There will be a time scale for the designated staff member to take the various steps below:

The recommended Chain of Action is as follows:

- Student is spoken to re concerns (by nominated teacher)
- Parents/carers are informed (and also referred to the school nurse/counsellor/child protection officer)
- Parents/carers are invited to school for a meeting with senior staff
- Parents/carers are recommended to seek consultation with family GP and to inform the school of the outcome within a nominated period of time
- School is given permission by parents to have feedback from the GP
- If no follow up occurs with the GP and the school remains concerned, the school may arrange an appointment with the school doctor/other specialists that may be associated with the school. In situations of extreme concern the school is also able to refer directly to CAMHS
- Follow up meetings are arranged between the parents/carers and senior staff so that progress can be assessed and any targets reviewed
- Nominated staff member from a named core team will act as a link with the student
- Timetable changes such as suspension from lessons that require extent of self-harm to be revealed to the others (for example) PE) are likely to occur
- Any student who self-harms at school may be suspended until they are to contain this behaviour at school
- Disciplinary steps will be taken by school is found with implements that are used to cause self-harm (razors, knives, blades, etc) at school which may include suspension
- Based on medical feedback the suitability of the student's continued attendance at school will be assessed
- Contagion will be managed by staff keeping an eye on the peer group and other potentially vulnerable young people in the year, by continued education on the fact that self-harm is an expression of distress rather than a risk behaviour that should be 'tried out'
- Steps may be taken to ensure that parents of the year group are informed (without naming) and that they monitor their children
- In the case of self-harm with suicidal intent immediate steps will be taken to inform the child protection officer, the parents and the GP and the students attendance to school only permitted after medical feedback and continued support established.

4. Preventing the spread of self-harm within the school

EXAMPLE: To prevent the spread.

- Wounds, injuries and scars should not be openly displayed.

- Provision of long sleeved PE kits may be necessary for those who self-harm.
- The designated staff member will try and identify 'high status' peers who may be self-harming and offer them support and similar restrictions as above.
- The school will be clear about how it would deal with any incident of self-harm that occurred in school. This includes a clear statement about what action will be taken if an implement of self-harm is brought into the school, a student is known to have harmed or where the student may be deliberately coercing others. A general rule will be to ban self-harm from occurring in school with the issue of a warning followed by suspension of a student's attendance from school should self-harm continue.

5. Named core team

Names and roles of people involved may be listed.

The team will be based on appropriate experience, seniority and training.

Pupils will be informed as to whom to approach.

6. School policy on confidentiality

EXAMPLE:

Our school policy will inform parents/carers if we feel the pupil is at risk to themselves or to others. We will inform the pupil that the information will be passed on and also about the content of the information. The school may, in the first instance, encourage the pupil to tell their parents/carers or with the support of a member of the core team.

The school may also need to pass on the information to some of the staff. The pupil and their parents/carers will be informed and the reasons why such staff need to know.

If concerns about a pupil have been raised by a friend/s, it should be decided with the pupil what feedback is given to the friends about the action the school will be taking on their behalf. The school will also make sure that any friends presenting needs will be supported. In the case of friends presenting with concerns their parents may need informing and again the need to know policy in terms of confidentiality will be used.

7. Management of other relevant circumstances

EXAMPLE: The school will consider managing the return of a pupil to school after a period of in-patient treatment or period of time off school in a way that is as supportive to the individual student but also supportive of the rest of the pupils.

8. Documentation

A record will be made of all incidents, discussion points and dates and the decided course of action.

9. Staff support

The designated staff member will have a duty to keep up to date with information regarding self-harm and forms of support available.

Staff who have been involved with a pupil who self-harms may need support and will be offered this opportunity through a number agreed ways with the school. These may include discussion with another experienced staff member, **stem4** teacher support, counselling.

10. Roles of responsibility

The Head Teacher has a responsibility to appoint a designated member of staff for dealing with incidents of self-harm (this is often the child protection officer). The head teacher and governing body should ensure the policy is in place, communicated to staff and implemented. Staff at all levels and pastoral leaders should be offered training and updated on the policy.

11. Implementing and reviewing the policy

Parents, students and staff should all be aware there is a policy and of its content. Parents and carers should work in partnership with school to support students who self-harm. Students need to be aware that they can be confident any disclosure of sensitive information will be supported and dealt with efficiently and sensitively.

The policy should be reviewed and reference to other policies, whether they be other mental health issues such as eating disorders or policies such as child protection, behaviour, health and safety and special educational needs available as reference.

12. Related policies

The Head Teacher has a responsibility to appoint a designated member of staff for dealing with incidents of self-harm (this is often the child protection officer). The head teacher and governing body should ensure the policy is in place, communicated to staff and implemented. Staff at all levels and pastoral leaders should be offered training and updated on the policy.