



STANBOROUGH SCHOOL

SELF-HARM POLICY

Legal status

This policy has been prepared with reference to “**Self-Harm and Suicidal Behaviour: A Guide for Staff working with Children and Young People in Hertfordshire**”.

Applies to

- The whole school including at breakfast, the afterschool clubs, summer camp and all other activities provided by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours;
- All staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietors, pupils on placement, and volunteers working in the school. This includes, as stated below, designating person to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children and liaising with the local authority children’s agencies as appropriate.

Designated Safeguarding Person

- Mrs Lorraine Dixon, Headteacher whose contact details are ldixon@spsch.org and telephone number is: 01923673268/07956560413

Related Documents:

- Safeguarding - child protection policies and procedures
- Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies

Availability:

- This policy is made available to parents, staff and pupils in the following ways: via the School website, and on request, a copy may be obtained from the Office.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher will undertake a formal biennial review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than two years from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Date: 5th September 2016

Lorraine Dixon
Headteacher

Berton Samuel
Chair of Governors



Purpose: In keeping our mission statement, the schools values, vision and aims, this policy aims to address the issue of self-harm:

- How to deal with pupils who self-harm and how to offer support in the short and long-term.
- To provide support depending upon the individual needs of the pupil.
- To help all pupils improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy.
- How to support staff members who come into contact with people who self-injure How to prevent self-harm from spreading within the school.
- To have clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when parents and outside agencies need contacting.
- Education about self-harm for pupils and staff.

What is self-harm?

Self-harm is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. It can include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing (without suicidal intent) and deliberate bone-breaking/spraining.

Risk factors associated with self-harm:

- Mental health disorders including depression and eating disorders.
- Drug/alcohol abuse, and other risk-taking behaviour.
- Recent trauma e.g. death of relative, parental divorce.
- Negative thought patterns, and low self-esteem.
- Bullying Abuse – sexual, physical and emotional.
- Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance.

Suicide:

While self-harm and suicide are separate, those who self-harm are in emotional distress, and those who end their lives are also in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chances of self-harm, and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously. If a pupil expresses a wish to end their life or has suicidal thoughts the member of staff must:

- Discuss this immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP).
- The DSP will then speak with the pupil about their suicidal thoughts and feelings.
- The DSP will contact parent/carer to inform them of the situation and ask that they are seen by a Mental Health Professional to discuss the situation and offer further advice.
- At no time should the pupil be left unsupervised and reassurance should be given that support will be put into place for them.
- Upon returning to school close monitoring strategies should be put into place. Teaching staff should be made aware of the situation and pupils must be supervised closely at all times.
- It is more than likely that the Hospital will refer to the ELCAS team however this should be checked by the DSP and if this has not been done a referral should be submitted as soon as possible.



The cycle of self-harm/cutting

When a person inflicts pain upon himself or herself the body responds by producing endorphins, a natural pain reliever that gives temporary relief or a feeling of peace. The addictive nature of this feeling can make self-harm difficult to stop. Young people that self-harm still feel pain, but some say the physical pain is easier to stand than the emotional/mental pain that led to the self-harm initially. After the incident, the act of self-harming can often bring feelings of guilt and shame over the act itself, restarting the process.

On discovering a pupil who has self-harmed

- Any member of the School who knows a pupil who has or they feel is thinking of self-harming should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Person.
- The Designated Safeguarding Person should remove equipment that they consider to be dangerous or is against School rules for the pupil to have in their possession.
- If physical harm has taken place, the pupil should be taken to the School's First Aid Room or to the school's Local A&E for medical assessment and care. This will be arranged by the Designated Safeguarding Person or Headteacher.
- The DSP will provide Counselling within the School or with an outside agency associated with the school or they can help the pupil make contact with many support organisations as appropriate. The pupil should be advised of this.
- In most cases, incidents of self-harm will be passed onto the school's Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB)
- Unless Medical Confidentiality has been granted to the pupil or there is some other over-riding reason not to, the pupil's parents must be informed of the situation and be actively involved in the handling of the situation. The decision not to involve parents should be taken in consultation with the Headteacher.
- If any member of staff has any concerns about confidentiality, issues they should take advice from the Headteacher/ DSP.

Following a disclosure, the designated teacher / governor will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. doctor, nurse, social services
- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Immediately removing the pupil from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers
- In the case of an acutely distressed pupil, the immediate safety of the pupil is paramount and an adult should remain with the pupil at all times
- If a pupil has self-harmed in school a first aider should be called for immediate help

Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher, other staff, and governors:

The Headteacher will:

- Appoint a designated teacher to be responsible for self-harm matters, and liaise with them. This might be the same persons as the child protection managers and
- Ensure that the designated person(s) receive appropriate training about self-harm. Ensure that self-harm policy is followed by all members of staff.

The governing body will:

- Decide what aspects of self-harm education should be in the school curriculum, and how it should be addressed;



- ensure that education about self-harm neither promotes nor stigmatises and,
- Look at provisions for people who self-harm, such as long-sleeved uniforms and PE kits, and time out of lessons when under intense stress.

All staff and teachers are expected to:

- Listen to pupils in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way;
- Report self-harm to the designated staff member(s) for self-harm;
- Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected;
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which can't be kept;
- Reassure pupils that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help;
- Guide pupils towards seeking health and happiness;
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress;
- Enable pupils to find places for help and support Provide accurate information about self-harm;
- Widen their own knowledge about self-harm and mental health disorders;
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first-aid and clearing up if a self-injury incident take place at the school and,
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot.

The designated staff member(s) will:

- Ensure implementation of the policy, communicate with each other and report back to the Headteacher;
- Refer to appropriate Self-Harm Documentation and Guidance as appropriate;
- Encourage pupils to be open and reassure them that they can get the help they need if they are willing to talk;
- Try to make the pupils feel in control by asking them what they would like to happen and what help they feel they need etc
- Discuss and promote healthy coping mechanisms and suggest ways in which pupils can be empowered to make positive changes in their lives;
- Provide access to information and resources regarding Self-Harm and its causes, using supporting organisations and outside agencies where appropriate;
- Monitor the reactions of other pupils who know about the Self-Harm;
- Avoid asking a pupils to stop Self-Harming;
- Maintain up to date record of pupils experiencing Self-Harm, incidents of Self-Harm and all other concerns surrounding the issue;
- Monitor the help, support and progress of pupils in the school's care and maintain communication with them;
- Ensure they are fully confident in their understanding of Self-Harm and seek additional information and/or training for themselves as appropriate;
- Contact other organisations and key services for help and support for the pupil;
- Liaise with the Headteacher and pupil to decide if any other members of staff who have contact with the pupil should be made aware of the Self-Harm and underlying concerns;
- Ensure that the first aiders are well informed about how to deal with Self-Harm related injuries;
- Inform the pupil's parents if appropriate and liaise with them as to how best manage the situation;
- Be aware of when it is essential for other professional bodies to be informed, such as social services or educational psychologists;
- Report any mention of suicidal feelings or behaviour as a matter or urgency to the Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) and,



- Take care of their own emotional well-being and seek support as and when necessary.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Not display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately;
- Talk to the appropriate staff member if they are in emotional distress and,
- Alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to them-selves, and know when confidentiality must be broken.

At our school, we feel that it is important to encourage pupils to let us know if one of their peers is in trouble, upset or showing signs of self-harming. Friends can worry about betraying confidences and they need to understand that self-harm can be very dangerous. By seeking help and advice for a friend, pupils are taking responsible action and being a good friend. They will be informed by staff that their friend will be treated in a caring and supportive manner.

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Understand and endorse the school Self-Harm policy;
- If their child is Self-Harming, work closely with school and take an active role in deciding the best course of action for their child;
- Understand the emotional difficulties behind a pupil's behaviour;
- Keep the school informed of any incidents outside school that parents feel they should know about and
- Take care of themselves and seek any emotional support they may need in dealing with their child's Self-Harm.

Supporting Pupils who self-Harm

At our school, we aim to help pupils replace the desire to self-harm with other safer coping strategies. For example, helpful strategies can include:

- Finding someone to talk to about their feelings (this could be a friend or family member)
- Talking to someone on the phone (organisations such as the NSPCC)
- writing and drawing feelings
- Scribbling on and/or ripping up paper
- Listening to music
- Going for a walk, run or other kinds of exercise
- Getting out of the house and going somewhere where there are other people
- Keeping a diary
- Hitting a pillow or other soft object
- Watching a favourite film

Our staff will also use positive behaviour strategies to support vulnerable pupils:

- Staff will not focus on the self-harm or trying to get the child to talk.
- Boost the child's self-esteem and sense of belonging in the class by focussing on things they are good at.
- Maintain routines, boundaries and positive behaviour management strategies whilst being aware that the child is having a difficult time.
- Establish and promote peer relationships e.g. using Circle of Friends.
- Provide positive encouragement if they show safer ways of expressing feelings.
- Consider any stresses in the school environment that can be changed, for example, more support around learning difficulties/bullying.



In the longer term it is important that pupils who self-harm learn to understand and deal with the causes of the stress that they feel. The support of someone who understands and will listen can be very helpful in facing difficult feelings. As a school, we advise pupils to seek support from:

- Home - parents, brother/sister or another trusted family member
- School- school counsellor, school nurse, teacher, teaching assistant or other member of staff
- GP- Talk to GP about difficulties and he/she can make a referral for counselling

Further actions that the school may take to support a pupil who has self-harmed

- **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 pupil who self-harms at school** may be suspended until they are able to contain this behaviour at school
- **Disciplinary steps** will be taken by school if a pupil 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 pupil's continuing 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 Person, the parents and the G.P and the pupil's

Supporting Members of Staff

Staff members need to monitor and care for their own wellbeing on an on-going basis. Supporting a child or young person who is self-harming can be upsetting as well as rewarding. It is important for the staff member involved to be aware of their own mental health and to acknowledge any distress they may feel. Senior Leadership need to be careful to ensure that staff members feel they can access appropriate support whenever they need it, but particularly when dealing with these kinds of incidents. Staff can also try some of the self-care techniques to relieve the stress they may feel.

Staff Training

All members of school staff receive training around self-harm and its indicators as part of child protection training alongside their role within the school. School staff are made aware of the Designated Safeguarding Person and their role with respect to pupil self-harm.

Recording of incidents

It is vital that we keep a log of all incidents of self-harm to ensure effective monitoring and reviewing for pupils involved. Our Designated Safeguarding Person (in conjunction with the Headteacher) will maintain this log which will be stored confidentially as part of the Child Protection Log. We record all incidences of self-harm using our '*Safeguarding Incident Report Form*'

Confidentiality concerning issues of self-harm



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 staff 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