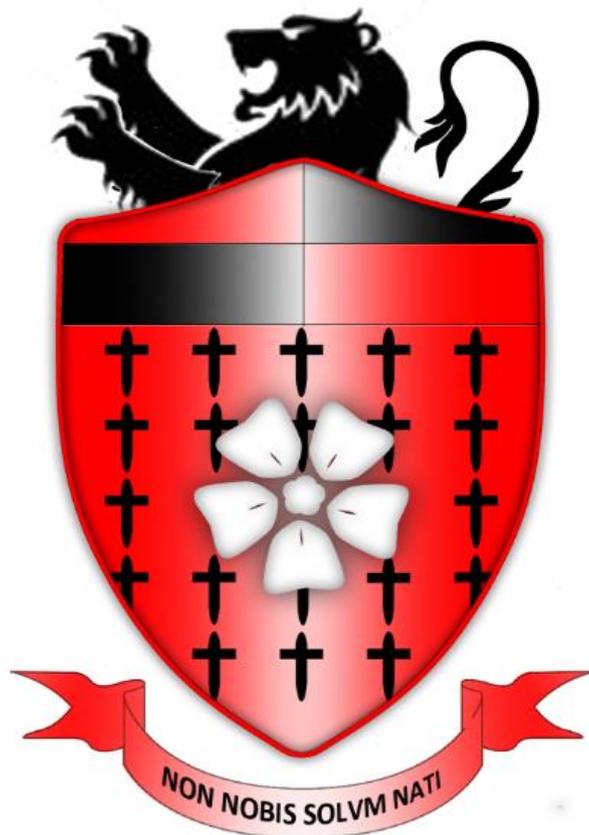


# Hornsea School & Language College



## Self-Harm Policy

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## Self-Harm Policy

### Introduction

Ensuring and promoting the health, well-being and safety of all pupils is a key objective at Hornsea School and Language College (HSLC) and viewed as a key component of healthy individual development. It is recognised that this underpins academic success and engagement with education. Governors and staff strive to provide an environment that is nurturing, supportive, safe and caring and a school ethos that is inclusive. The school follows guidance and procedures established by the East Riding Safeguarding Children Board (ERSCB) along with all relevant statutory guidance and identified best practice..

ERSCB specific guidance – ***‘Supporting Children and Young People who Self Harm’*** has provided the background to, and informs this policy. The HSLC Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy should be viewed as an accompanying document due to the clear overlap between Self Harm and school safeguarding responsibilities. The HSLC “duty of care” in safeguarding and supporting pupil well-being remains paramount. Please see “Appendix 1 Sources of Support, Advice and Help Lines”

School staff can play a vital role in recognising and sharing concerns relating to of self-harm in individual pupils. School staff are well placed to share information and provide assistance and initiate referrals to relevant partner agencies where necessary, to support the individual pupil, peers and parents / carers.

Self-Harm is a challenging, complex and emotionally charged issue. It is recognised that school staff will need to be supported and suitably informed when encountering self-harming behaviour. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to staff, pupils and parents and to introduce a clear procedure on dealing with such incidents.

### Aims and Objectives

- To increase awareness and understanding of self-harm within the school setting
- To raise awareness of the risk factors and warning signs of self-harm
- To provide relevant information and guidance on self-harm, which is accessible to staff, parents/carers and students.
- To provide a consistent approach to dealing with self-harm
- To offer support for pupils, parents and staff
- To enable those seeking help to feel secure and supported
- To put in place a robust policy which involves the child, the parents, school and other agencies to provide a holistic approach to care.

### Definition and general Information

Self-harm can and does take many forms, it is classified as any behaviour where the intent is to deliberately cause harm to one’s own body.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of self-harming behaviours

- Scratching or picking skin
- Cutting body
- Tying something around body
- Inserting things into body
- Scouring/scrubbing body excessively
- Hitting, punching self

- Pulling out hair
- Deliberate personal neglect
- Over/under eating
- Excessive drinking of alcohol
- Taking non-prescription drugs
- Burning or scalding body
- Hitting walls with head
- Taking an overdose or swallowing something dangerous
- Self-strangulation
- Risky behaviours such as running into the road

As most self-harm is privately or secretly carried out it can be hard to notice that a young person is self-harming but some signs to look out for are:

- Changes in clothing to cover parts of the body, e.g. wearing long sleeved tops
- Reluctance to participate in previously enjoyed physical activities, particularly those that involve wearing shorts or swimsuits, for example
- Changes in eating and/or sleeping habits
- Changes in consumption of drugs/alcohol
- Changes in levels of activity or mood
- Increasing isolation from friends/family

## **Suicide**

People who self-harm are at an increased risk of future suicide. In some cases, suicide can be intentional, in other cases death may occur as the result of an accident or miscalculation. Staff from the Student Support Team supporting pupils in school will routinely investigate and profile any concerns relating to the presence of suicidal ideation and where concerns emerge an appropriate response will be fashioned, placing the safety and well-being of the pupil at the centre of the process.

## **Prevention**

All school staff that has direct contact with pupils, either from an academic or pastoral base, or in any supporting or supervisory role, will be made aware of the issue of self-harm through staff briefings and appropriate information sharing (e.g. Self Harm Information Sheet). School staff will be knowledgeable on the school policy and will in the first instance refer any concerns about self-harming behaviour to the school Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead, using the Record of Child Protection Concern or Disclosure/CPOMS protocol in line with the HSLC Child Protection and Safeguarding and procedures.

Consideration will then be given as to how the identified concerns can best be supported and addressed. This is likely to involve working in partnership and sharing information appropriately with parents / carers and relevant professionals such as the School Nurse and G.P. Consideration of the context of self harming behaviour will inform any consideration of safeguarding implications and if guidance is required from the Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHaSH). School would usually seek to inform parents / carers, unless there are compelling reasons for not doing so (such as risk / safeguarding issues that may develop as a result of such contact being made). Decisions will be made on an individual case by case basis and the pupil will be involved as far as is possible in the decision making process.

Staff will provide clear explanations about what is going to happen and the choices and reason for certain courses of action. The specific circumstances (e.g. extent of any injury, intent to harm again imminently) allied to the age, understanding and capacity of the pupil will always be taken into account and assist in determining the level of involvement of the pupil in discussions and decision making and how and when and with who, information is shared. Every effort will be made to jointly

formulate and agree a course of action and support plan but guarantees of confidentiality cannot be made.

If there is reasonable professional concern that a child may be at risk of harm at HSLC, this will always override a requirement to keep information confidential.

The availability of 'open access' support within school and how to access this is publicised in school (e.g. School Nurse 'drop in', Student Support Team). HSLC as part of the school teaching and pastoral support structure also has a range of support available (Teacher's, Tutor / Mentor, Year Group Progress Leader and Pastoral Manager, ELSA, Learning Support Team etc.).

Pupils are encouraged to seek advice and support if they are self-harming or if they are concerned about a peer who is. Pupils who are known to be at risk of self-harm or have previously self-harmed will be offered additional support and guidance. Similarly, if a parent is concerned they can contact the school directly to discuss with a member of staff; the Progress Leader or Pastoral Manager for the child's year group, or a member of staff at the Student Support Team. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and parents / carers will in almost all cases be kept informed throughout this process (unless there are specific reasons involving safeguarding concerns / risk that prevent informing parents in the first instance)..

Staff are aware of the issue of self harm and make every effort to identify concerns and report these - whether resulting from pupil disclosure, observed behaviour and pupil presentation (e.g. injuries or inappropriate / unusual covering up of body areas) or information received from third party sources.

Prompt but sensitive action will be taken as a response to self-harm concerns being identified and will involve mobilising support for the pupil and parents / carers. A multi-agency approach and information sharing will normally be adopted (School Nurse, CAMHS, EHaSH, Children's Social Care)

### **Staff Responsibilities**

- Any member of staff who is dealing with a disclosure from a child needs to act professionally at all times. They will adopt a non-judgemental approach and understand that it may have taken the child a lot of courage to confide in them. Staff may experience a variety of different emotions in response to self-harm in a pupil, such as anger, sadness, shock, guilt, helplessness and disbelief. However it is vital that they maintain a supportive and open attitude in order to offer the best possible help for the pupil.
- Staff must be able to identify any immediate risk to the child following any self-harm disclosure. If First Aid is needed, staff will immediately take the pupil to visit the school's First Aider where a view will be taken on the required medical support and intervention. If necessary, emergency medical help will be accessed.
- Staff are also required to share information and concerns promptly in line with the HSLC Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures

It is crucial that staff make pupils aware that complete confidentiality is not possible, but information will only be shared on a need to know basis. If it is considered that a student is at serious risk of harming themselves then confidentiality cannot be kept. It is important not to make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept, even if a student pressurises the member of staff. If a member of staff is in doubt of the best possible option with regards to information sharing, see the Designated Safeguarding Lead for advice. An accurate record of concerns and decisions will be maintained in line with local safeguarding recording protocols.

### **Procedure for supporting Self-Harming behaviour identified**

1. If staff identify a concern about self harm, the immediate risk to the safety of the pupil will be assessed and prioritised. As appropriate the school First Aider will be involved and take a lead role in prioritising and coordinating the appropriate immediate medical response and need for any external support e.g. emergency services and sharing of information.
2. Any equipment found in the possession of a pupil that is considered dangerous or that contravenes school rules will be removed and confiscated in line with statutory guidance (Searching, screening and confiscation; Advice for headteachers, school staff and governing bodies, 2014).
3. In the case of an acutely distressed pupil, the immediate safety of the pupil is paramount and an adult will remain with them at all times whilst arranging for support to attend from colleagues (SLT, Student Support Team, Pastoral Manager etc)
4. After medical attention has been sought, or if this was not necessary, the staff member with the pupil will speak to them about their self-harming and gather relevant information to try and gain an understanding of the severity of the situation (e.g. frequency, triggers etc). During this time, it is hoped that any worries that the child may have are disclosed. Staff will be mindful of the need for sensitivity and using an appropriate venue and an explanation surrounding the limits to confidentiality will be given. Staff may at any point seek the direct involvement of the Student Support Team to assist directly and will at all times follow the school safeguarding procedures – there is a clear expectation that school staff identifying self-harming behaviour share this with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead
5. Following this, the information relating to identified instances of self-harm will be shared in the first instance with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take the lead role in further assessing and profiling the self-harm / risk and coordinating the decision making and sharing information within school, with parents / carer's and external agencies. There will be a presumption that information will be shared with parents unless there are clear grounds for this not to be possible (i.e. risk and safeguarding issues)
6. Information will also be routinely shared with the School Nurse and Headteacher will be made aware of any significant safeguarding concerns emerging
7. If the school believe the child's self-harming behaviour to be a at a level of significant concern and beyond what school are able to support, it will be recommended that parents take their child to the GP as soon as possible. A follow up call home would be undertaken to establish the outcome and requirement for any further support. Where concerns are significant and / or immediate, school may look for external advice and support from EHaSH – especially in the case of suicidal ideation or clear intent. If and where necessary, emergency contact with specialist services will be orchestrated.
8. The school will support the pupil by offering the services of the School Nurse who can provide individual sessions to discuss issues surrounding self-harm and also promote onward referral as required. Consideration of the need for any other referrals will take place and also if there is a need to review arrangements in school to alleviate any potential triggers and reduce anxiety. Additionally, any need for school based support (ELSA, Counselling, Mentor) will be reviewed and introduced as appropriate and coordinated / facilitated by the Student Support Team.
9. It will be reiterated to the pupil that if they feel worried or concerned about anything that they must confide in support staff - Pastoral Managers, Progress Leaders, Student Support Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead and School Nurse.
10. A secure and confidential record of concerns and decision making will be maintained by the Student Support Team
11. If and when necessary, due to concerns about potential self-harming behaviour on the school site / during the school day and associated risk, arrangements may need to be reviewed (informed by advice received from partner agencies). This may involve adjustments to timetable and setting and also formal Home-School Agreement to clarify responsibilities to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.

School First Aider's will be available to help self-injuring students to manage scars and wounds. Whilst remaining sensitive to the complexities of self-harming behaviour, HSLC discourages visible

scars, wounds and cuts and will work with individual pupils and parents / carers to manage this in an appropriate and inclusive manner. Risk of infection, contagion and distress to fellow pupils and staff need to be gauged and factored in to decisions. Individual pupil compliance with this school approach will be carefully monitored.

### **Staff Training**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead undertake specific training in supporting and managing concerns relating to Self-Harm

### **Partnership Working**

- At Hornsea School and Language College, we strive to work in cooperation with other agencies. In self-harm cases, partnership working with the health services through referrals to the School Nurse, may be required. A referral to the GP could also be recommended.
- We also have links with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Youth and Family Support (YFS), which may also be useful in some self-harm cases.

### **Parental Involvement**

- If a child discloses an incident of self-harm, or if a peer is concerned about another pupil, we will routinely initiate contact with home to make the parents aware of the current situation.
- The child will be aware of the contact with home and it will be explained to them that confidentiality cannot be kept as their safety and wellbeing is a priority.
- Contact with home may be continued after the initial call to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of the child is supported both at home and at school. Also additional information may need to be shared with parents.
- The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead may decide that contact with home is not beneficial, however compelling reasons must be provided and will be recorded accordingly. Information may also be shared and advice sought from the Early Help and Safeguarding Hub if there are clear child protection concerns.

### **School Trips**

- Unfortunately, if a child is currently self-harming, as a school it may be necessary to prevent participation on school trips, especially if abroad. This is due to the risk self-harming may pose if away from medical services, the potential for other children to witness it and the difficulty for staff to constantly monitor children who self-harm.
- It may be that a jointly agreed Risk Assessment Plan is needed to allow a school trip to progress safely.. However it is at the schools discretion to refuse places on school trips and any decision would necessarily be on a case by case basis.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating**

- Any incident of self-harming will be recorded in a confidential format. The Progress Leader and Pastoral Manager for the child's year group will normally be informed, alongside the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Designated Safeguarding Lead, and the School Nurse. Members of the Senior Leadership Team will be briefed appropriately (Head teacher). Information sharing will be conducted on a need to know basis when dealing with self-harm, to ensure the child feels secure and protected, from all staff and pupils being notified.
- Any communication with home, or meetings with the child will be recorded and the relevant bodies will be informed about issues or concerns.

- Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any on-going concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and pupils.

#### **How do we ensure that people are aware of the policy?**

- Formal acceptance by the Governing Body
- This policy and accompanying Self-Harm Information Sheet will be made available to staff, parents and students on the HSLC website, hard copy can be made available on request
- Pupils can speak to members of staff about self-harm throughout the school day and will be offered support, advice and guidance in line with the contents of the policy

## **Appendix 1 – Sources of Support, Advice and Help Lines**

HSLC Student Support Team - 01964 532727

Contact the East Riding Early Help and Safeguarding Hub (EHaSH) for advice and signposting to services / support 01482 395500

### **CHILDLINE**

24 hour helpline for children and young people under 18 providing confidential counselling  
0800 1111 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **YOUNG MINDS**

Information on a range of subjects relevant for young people and their emotional health and wellbeing 0808 8025544 / [www.youngmind.org.uk](http://www.youngmind.org.uk)

### **PAPYRUS**

Offers a helpline for anyone who is concerned that a young person is suicidal 0870 170 4000 / [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

### **MIND**

Information on mental health - 030 123 3393 / [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **NSPCC**

[www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/self-harm/email](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/self-harm/email)

Your family doctor

School nurse linked to the school

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service / CAMHS Contact Point: (01482) 303810

Youth and Family Support Services: (01482) 392824 or [yfs@eastriding.gov.uk](mailto:yfs@eastriding.gov.uk)