**POLICY TEMPLATE**

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

**{Insert name of setting}** is aware that suicide prevention is a key part of our role in safeguarding children and young people, and that we will take a holistic approach to ensuring that pupils and settings are as suicide-safe as possible.

This policy should be read alongside the school’s Mental Health or Wellbeing Policy.

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

* **Self-Harm and Suicide is everyone’s business**, and we want to facilitate the reporting of any risks and concerns.
* Many young people will experience thoughts of suicide and self-harm and young people might self-harm with or without suicidal intent.
* **Suicide is complex.** There are many contributory factors surrounding a suicide and reasons are often complex and individual to that person.
* **Self-harm and suicide are difficult things to talk about.** By encouraging staff to complete the [zero suicide alliance training](https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/suicide-awareness-training-uni-students) and enabling whole school awareness of mental ill health, we will ensure adults in school are able to identify and act when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. For further information about training opportunities please see the further resources section at the end of this document.
* **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 and will ensure staff use [appropriate language](https://iwc.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/download/trauma-informed-language-guide-20241) when talking about 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 ensure we develop an active, person-centred self-harm and suicide prevention policy.**

* We will have a named individual who is responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of this policy. **{insert name, job title of named lead here}**
* We will endeavour to ensure that all our staff are self-harm and suicide aware. This means that we have ensured that staff undertake relevant, up to date training (starting with [zero suicide training](https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training), for further, in-depth training see: Isle of Wight Council’s [Training Courses - Health and Safety (inc First Aid)](https://iwc.iow.gov.uk/trainingcourses/subCatsAndCourses.aspx?subCatId=0&catId=7)); that they are aware of the support offered by [Solent MIND](https://www.selfharmsupporthubhants.org.uk/) for self harm and [Papyrus](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/schools-guide/) for suicide prevention.
* The [HIPS Self-Harm Pathway](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhipsprocedures.org.uk%2Fassets%2Fclients%2F7%2FFINAL%2520HIPS%2520self%2520harm%2520pathway%25202022.pptx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) will form part of all staff inductions.
* We will ensure that Staff are aware of their responsibilities around keeping children safe including suicide prevention through the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the suicide prevention and self-harm policy and we will continue to reinforce the message to all staff that we ALWAYS believe children and young people.
* We will teach about mental wellbeing as part of the statutory duty outlined in: [Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education) [[1]](#footnote-2), aiming to build young people’s knowledge, skills, and resilience through regular, high-quality lessons. We will ensure learning materials are age-appropriate and preventative and ensure we do not give information on methods of self-harm or suicide, or use emotive language, videos, or images.
* We will provide clear pathway(s) for pupils to raise concerns to school staff.
* We will ensure that peers and school staff are supported and able to access services when self-harm or suicide has affected them.
* 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 all staff to be able to flag or review any concerns about individual pupils, including suspected suicidal thoughts.
* When we identify a pupil at risk of self-harm or suicide we will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Mental Health Lead and if a pupil is in crisis we will dial 999.

**Where a death by suspected suicide has occurred, we will have a named Postvention Response Team with the following roles:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| {insert name of school/college} Postvention Response Team | |
| Role | Named Staff Member |
| **Postvention Team Chair / Lead**  This may be the Headteacher/Designated Senior Leader | Primary:  Designate: |
| **Family Liaison Officer**  This may be The Pastoral Lead(s)  A sensitive and compassionate manner is crucial | Primary:  Designate: |
| **Administrator** | Primary:  Designate: |
| **Communications Lead**  A member of the senior leadership team | Primary:  Designate: |
| **Care for students Lead**  This may be the designated safeguarding lead; head of year | Primary:  Designate: |
| **Care for staff Lead**  This may be the wellbeing/mental health lead, safeguarding lead or other member of the senior leadership team | Primary:  Designate: |

* All primary and designate members will be familiar with the 7 stages of postvention response outlined within the [Isle of Wight Suicide Prevention and Postvention Protocol for Schools and Colleges](https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/qkyylq/children-in-specific-circumstances/self-harm-and-suicidal-behaviour)
* All primary and designate members will have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as outlined within the [Isle of Wight Suicide Prevention and Postvention Protocol for Schools and Colleges](https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/qkyylq/children-in-specific-circumstances/self-harm-and-suicidal-behaviour)

**In the event of a serious incident, whereby someone has attempted or died by suicide.**

* We will work in partnership with the Local Authority to implement our postvention response.
* We will be mindful of the impact that supporting an inquest can have on staff and their wellbeing and will signpost to appropriate support, including suicide bereavement support through [[Amparo](https://amparo.org.uk/)](https://amparo.org.uk/) (which provides support for anyone affected by suspected suicide)
* We will ensure effective partnership working to support pupils returning to school after a serious incident of self-harm or attempted suicide, whereby the child/young person is at the centre of decision making and determines who is best to support them in school

**Useful resources**

* See: [3.9 Self-harm and Suicidal Behaviour | Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton](https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/qkyylq/children-in-specific-circumstances/self-harm-and-suicidal-behaviour#s3880), on Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS) safeguarding children procedures manual. This includes self harm pathway, Isle of Wight Suicide prevention and postvention protocol for schools and education settings and national resources including [The truth about self-harm – The Mental Health Foundation](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/truth-about-self-harm) and [suicide prevention resources and guidance (GOV.UK)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/suicide-prevention-resources-and-guidance)
* [HIEP Critical Incident Packs](https://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/educational-psychology/HIEP-Critical-Incident-pack-for-Setting-2023.pdf) accessed via Educational Psychology website
* [CAMHS Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention resources](https://hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/professionals/crisis-self-harm-and-suicide/) (Hampshire resources but universally applicable)
* [Trauma Informed language guide](https://iwc.iow.gov.uk/documentlibrary/download/trauma-informed-language-guide-20241) – tips on communicating with language that reduces stigma and promotes open, non-judgmental conversations – includes mental health and wellbeing, and suicide prevention sections
* [Samaritans Step by Step Resources](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/step-step-resources/)
* [Papyrus](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/schools-guide/) – Schools Guide <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/schools-guide/>
* [[Amparo](https://amparo.org.uk/)](https://amparo.org.uk/): Suicide Bereavement Support Service

**Relevant training links:**

* [Zero suicide training](https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training) – The Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) offer a range of short course (from 5-10 minutes upwards)
* [Training Courses - Safeguarding (iow.gov.uk)](https://iwc.iow.gov.uk/trainingcourses/subCatsAndCourses.aspx?subCatId=0&catId=6) – Isle of Wight Council offer a range of training courses including suicide first aid, mental health first aid and youth mental health first aid
* [Papyrus](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/) – leading national charity for the prevention of young suicide – provides a direct support line as well as resources and school support tin safety planning

1. For post-16 education settings there is no statutory requirement, but many deliver PSHE as part of their Personal Development Learning (PDL) or tutorials. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)