Harwich and Dovercourt High School

Self-harm Toolkit

This is why

Self-harm is when someone hurts themselves on purpose to manage distressing or overwhelming feelings or experiences. It is usually a way of trying to manage very difficult feelings. People often harm themselves when life feels hard to cope with - when distressing feelings have built up and become overwhelming. In the moment, physical pain can be easier than feeling emotionally out of control.

Responding to someone who has self-harmed, or you're concerned they might be, can be incredibly daunting. You may worry that you will say the wrong thing or make matters worse. This rarely happens. The main thing is to try to be open and honest. It is important to remember that lots of young people go through this and come out the other side with different ways of coping. You also need to remember that you are not alone and can discuss concerns with any member of the HDHS Safeguarding team.

Some of the Signs

Potential indicators of self harm
Self injury - Pulling out hair, hitting themselves, picking at scars, unexplained cuts, Bruises, burns (often on wrists, arms, thighs and torso)
Covering up - hiding injuries under clothing at all times, even in hot weather or a reluctance to change in front of others
Risky behaviour - misusing alcohol or drugs
Eating habits - unusual weight gain, loss or change to eating habits
Withdrawing - losing interest in things they used to enjoy or not speaking to others
Self loathing - thinking they are not good enough or wanting to punish themselves
Poor emotional well being - low mood, appearing sad, crying
Poisoning - ingesting tablets or toxic chemicals

How can I help?

Listening and talking to young people about self harm. However, this can be difficult for them and you. Ensure you are in a **confidential space, have the time to talk and use active listening**. Each young person's circumstances and motivations to self harm will be different as will their response to any intervention. It is important to keep in mind the young person's age, additional needs and emotional maturity when approaching this subject; some young people will prefer to talk but others may not. You will need to gauge this when talking to the young person, reassure them it is not something that they have to manage alone.

You must:

- Be calm and reassure the young person
- Assess/address any injuries (new incidents to be seen by First Aider asap)
- Seek additional medical assistance if required (emergency call 999)
- Inform DSL/DDSL
- Explain confidentiality policy - parent/carers to be informed (exceptions on Safeguarding basis only)
- Complete/review Risk Assessment and Safety Plan as required (see attached)
- Report details to the Safeguarding Team / Reporting a Concern Form and they will log the incident on CPOM

You should not:

- Ignore any form of self-harm
- Be judgemental
- Tell the young person to stop
- Inform wider staff or their peers without young person consent
- Avoid discussing suicide. If you think they are at risk - it has to be spoken about if it is a risk

Start the conversation..

- **When did you first self harm?**
- **How long have you been having these feelings?**
- **I wonder if anything has happened that is making you feel this way?**
- **What is your biggest worry right now?**
- **Who have you told about how you feel?**
- **Where on your body do you self harm?**
- **What are you using to self harm?**
- **Where or when do you tend to do this?**
- **Have you self harmed in school?**
- **How do you take care of your injuries?**
- **Is there anything you have found that helps to prevent self harm?**
- **Can you think of a time when you don't feel like this?**
- **What can I/School do to help?**
- **Have you looked at any self help resources?**

If you feel there is an immediate risk to life this must be reported to DSL or DDSL immediately

Self-Harm Individual Risk Assessment

Name	
Year Group	
DOB	

Risk assessment and safety plan completed by:	
Any agencies contributing to the risk assessment and safety plan?	
Date completed:	
Date reviewed:	
Date updated:	

Contextual information about the student	
Is the student currently known/open to Social Care:	
Is the student SEN (K/ EHCP):	
Does the student have any other health needs:	
Is the student on any medication:	
Other professionals involved with the student/family (GP/CAMHS)	
Are parents aware. If so who?	

Risk to self	
Nature or harm and item used (cutting, scratching, substance misuse or other)	
Location of injury	
Is this the first instance of SH? How long have they felt this way?	
Where does the behaviour occur? (school, home or elsewhere)	
Are there thoughts or suicide, Past or present? Inform DSL	
Wellbeing	
Can student identify cause of self-harming thoughts?	
Are there times when they don't feel this way	
Activities that may trigger stress or harm (Classes, sensory needs)	
specific events that may trigger distress (anniversaries, people)	

Student's support network	
Does the student have a trusted member of staff in school?	
Alternative trusted member of staff	
Is the student's friends aware	
What could this behaviour be communicating	

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Student Safety Plan

What makes me feel unsafe?	
How can I keep safe?	
What can I do/use to help myself?	
Who can I find to help me?	
Where can I go for support?	
Other help?	
you need urgent support or First aid treatment, please tell your Teacher or Student Services	

Student may prefer to photograph their plan for easy reference

School Safety plan

- Parent to inform school of any concerns before attending
- Parent to check for sharps before school
- Student to seek support for injuries
- Parent to be informed of all harm by student or school
- Teachers informed
- Monitored in school for changes i.e. appearance/mood
- Daily/morning check in with identified staff
- Regular check in's with identified support staff
- Remove sharp objects that could be used to injure self
- Staff to count out and in classroom scissors, compasses, DT/Food equipment including sharp knives
- Time out card – with allocated safe space
- Distraction i.e. Fiddle toys, bands
- Access to B block as a safe space – approved by SEN Team
- Teachers to alert SS and attendance if student doesn't arrive to class or return from the toilet after short period
- Counselling Referral
- No Medication on person in school
- Staff to follow guidance in the schools safeguarding policy

Identified issue and Response to incident	**Strategies to reduce the behaviour/risk**	**staff/agency**	**Review - Has SH/risk Reduced?**

Action	**Yes/No**	**Date**

Discussed with DSL/DDSL		
All parents contacted and contact recorded		
Referral to or informed external support services involved		
Referral to Social Care		

Parent Signature .....