

Suggested self-harm policy for schools

This template policy should be used in conjunction with the information, guidance and assessment tools found on the website [HarmLESS](http://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/app/harmless) (www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/app/harmless)

Developed by Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, HarmLESS is a resource for those who have contact with children and young people who are self-harming. It provides schools with a range of resources including:-

- Up to date information about both thoughts and acts of self-harm, and risks and triggers for young people
- Guidance on how to react and talk to young people who are self-harming using the acronym SLEEP (Stop, Listen, Empathise, Explore, Plan)
- An online assessment tool to complete with a young person. This assessment automatically generates a safety plan
- Links to others useful resources and web sites
- Links to Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

In B&NES it has been agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) that the information contained on the HarmLESS website replaces previous guidance to staff working with children and young people who self-harm.

Anyone currently using the document entitled *Multi Agency Guidelines for Professionals Working with Children and Young People who Self-harm* should note that as of November 2017 this is now out of date and should be removed from circulation.

Self-Harm Policy for School

Status: Good Practice/additional policy

Purpose: In keeping with the school's safeguarding responsibilities, this policy aims to address the issue of self-harm. It should be read in conjunction with information and guidance provided on the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust CAMHS website [HarmLESS](#) which as of November 2017 replaces the previous B&NES guidance entitled *Multi Agency Guidelines for Professionals Working with Children and Young People who Self-harm*.

This policy covers:-

How to deal with pupils who self-harm and how to offer individual short and long term support

How to support staff members who come into contact with students who self-harm

How to prevent self-harming behaviours from 'spreading' within the school

The roles and responsibilities of governors, senior leaders, designated staff and all staff in relation to dealing with self-harm

Who/what was consulted? This policy was written in conjunction with the B&NES guidance on self-harm provided on the [HarmLESS](#) website. We have also consulted with young people, parents and staff.

Relationship to other policies: This policy should link to Child Protection, SEN, PSHE, health and safety, and behaviour policies

Information about self-harm

- [What is self-harm?](#)
- [Acts of self-harm](#)
- [Young people and suicide](#)
- [Who is at risk of self-harm and suicide](#)
- [Why do young people self-harm](#)
- [What might trigger self-harm](#)
- [How to react if someone self-harms](#)

Roles and responsibilities

The head teacher will:

- Appoint a designated teacher to be responsible for self-harm matters, and liaise with them. This might be the same person as the child protection lead
- Ensure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training about self-harm and is familiar with the content of the [HarmLESS](#) resource
- Ensure that this self-harm policy is understood by all members of staff

The governing body will:

- Decide whether self-harm education should be included in the school curriculum, and how it should be addressed
- Ensure that education about self-harm neither promotes or stigmatises
- Review and approve policy

The designated staff member(s) will:

- Keep records of self-harm incidents and concerns including feedback from pupils and parents as to how a self-harm incident has been dealt with
- Ensure all staff are aware of this policy and [HarmLESS](#) and are able to respond in a helpful manner including when the designated staff member is not available
- Liaise with [local services](#) about help available for pupils who self-harm
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-harm and attend relevant training
- Liaise with head teacher when appropriate
- Contact parents / carers at the appropriate time. Involve the pupil in this process. Inform the parent / carer about appropriate available help and support for their child
- Monitor the pupil's progress following an incident using the safety plan generated by [HarmLESS](#)
- Know when people other than parents (e.g. CAMHS, social workers, educational psychologists) need to be informed
- Provide students and staff with information about self-harm and sources of support in liaison with PSHE and pastoral staff
- Look at provisions for pupils who self-harm, such as long-sleeved uniforms and PE kits, and permitting time out of lessons when under intense stress
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress

All staff and teachers are expected to:

- Be aware of how to react if a student discloses about self-harm or harming thoughts following advice on [HarmLESS](#)

- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which can't be kept but rather reassure pupils that only people who can help will be informed
- Report self-harm to the designated staff member(s) for self-harm. Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first-aid and clearing up if a self-harm incident take place at school
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress

All staff and teachers are encouraged to:

- Follow the guidance on how to talk with young people who self-harm using the [HarmLESS acronym SLEEP](#) Stop, Listen, Empathise, Explore, Plan
- Use the [assessment tool provided on HarmLESS](#) and act on the safety plan this generates in conjunction with the designated staff member
- Make pupils aware of a range of [sources of support](#) including links to other websites, apps and services
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-harm and attend relevant training as promoted by the designated staff member
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress

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
- Know when confidentiality must be broken and alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to themselves

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Endorse the school's approach to self-harm education and pastoral care
- Work in partnership with the school if their child self-harms

Date established by governing body:

Date for full implementation:

Date for Review - policies should be reviewed every 3 years