Safeguarding: Self Harm Policy

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Contents   **Page No.**

Changes in this Edition
First edition

Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

The Aims of this Policy

This policy describes High Storrs School's approach to self- harm. It is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

- To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm
- To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors
- To provide support to students who self-harm and their peers and parents/carer
- To provide support for staff dealing with self-harm

Safeguarding Roles & Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and Governors in High Storrs Schools. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities and online activities. Specific responsibilities of the organisation are highlighted below.

Safeguarding contact details for High Storrs School and other relevant safeguarding contacts.

Role/ Organisation	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Louise Hamnett	l.hamnett@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk 0114 2670000
Deputy DSL	John Bedford	j.bedford@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk 0114 2670000
Other contactable DSL(s) and/or deputy DSL(s):	Abi Osborne Tab Hussain Erin Sinclair	a.osborne@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk t.hussain@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk e.sinclair@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk
Children Looked-After designated teacher	Louise Hamnett	l.hamnett@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk
Online Safety Lead	Abi Osborne	a.osborne@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk
Headteacher	Claire Tasker	enquiries@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk 0114 2670000
Chair of Local Governing Body	Sarah Evans	sevans29@highstorrs.sheffield.sch.uk

Definition of Self-harm

Self-harm is any behaviour where the intent is to deliberately cause harm to one's own body for example:

- Cutting, scratching, scraping or picking skin
- Swallowing inedible objects
- Taking an overdose of prescription or non-prescription drugs
- Swallowing hazardous materials or substances
- Burning or scalding
- Hair pulling
- Banging or hitting the head or other parts of the body
- Risk taking behaviour e.g., unsafe sexual behaviour, substance misuse.
- Eating disorders e.g., anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa

Why Young People Harm Themselves

The exact reasons why children and young people decide to hurt themselves aren't always easy to work out. In fact, they might not even know exactly why they do it.

There are links between depression and self-harm. Quite often a young person who is self-harming is being bullied, under too much pressure to do well at school, being emotionally abused, grieving, or having relationship problems with family or friends.

Often, the physical pain of self-harm might feel easier to deal with than the emotional pain that's behind it. It can also make a young person feel they're in control of at least one part of their lives. Sometimes it can also be a way for them to punish themselves for something they've done or have been accused of doing.

Risk Factors

The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self-harm:

Individual Factors:
- Depression/low mood/anxiety/stress
- Poor communication skills
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving skills
- Hopelessness
- LGBTQ+
- Struggling to cope with existing emotional, mental and/or physical health problems
- Impulsivity
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Feeling like you have no control over your life

Family Factors:
• Unreasonable expectations including pressure to conform/achieve
• Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse
• Poor parental relationships and arguments
• Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family. This can result in students struggling at significant dates in the year e.g., anniversaries

Social Factors:
• Difficulty in making relationships/loneliness
• Being bullied or rejected by peers
• Self-harm behaviour in other students or friends outside of the school setting (contagion effect)
• Self-harm portrayed or reported in the media
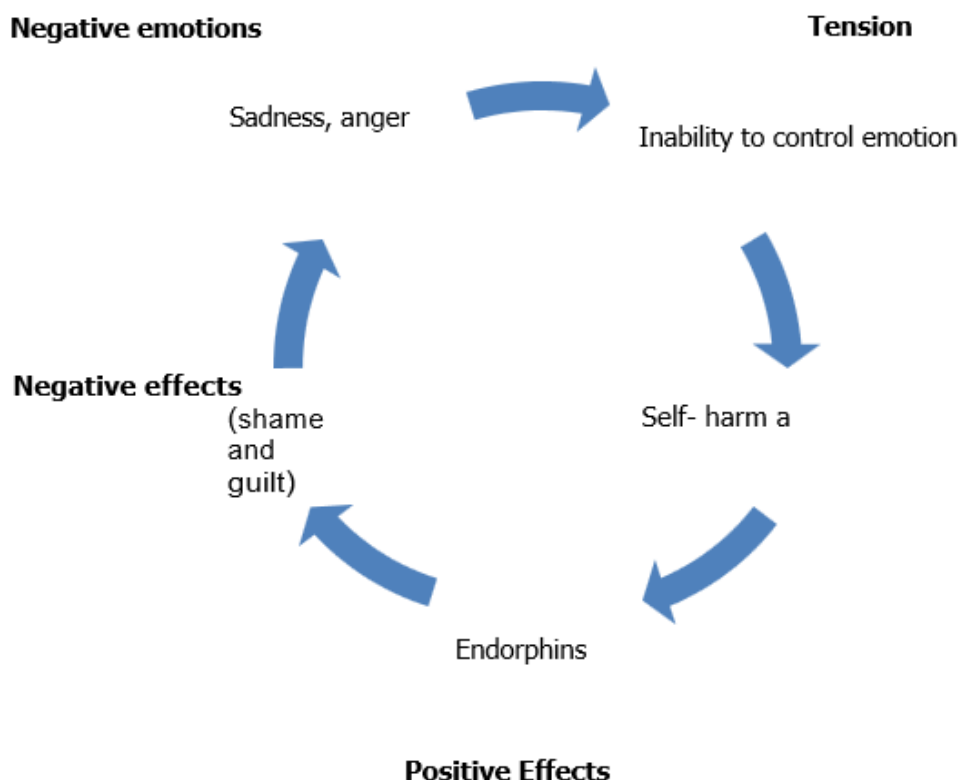
Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing difficulties which may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should make a report via CPOMS and seek further advice from a member of the safeguarding team if the student is in immediate danger.

Possible warning signs include:
• Changes in eating/sleeping habits (e.g., student may appear overly tired if not sleeping well)
• Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
• Changes in activity and mood (e.g., more aggressive or introverted than usual)
• Lowering of academic achievement
• Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
• Abusing drugs or alcohol
• Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope
• **Displaying physical signs of self-harm such as cuts to arms or head banging**

The Cycle of Self-Harm

When a person inflicts pain on themselves, their body produces endorphins. These are natural pain relievers and can give temporary relief from distress and induce a feeling of peace. This can become an addictive sensation which in turn makes it difficult for the person to stop the self-harm behaviour. Self-harming can cause physical pain, but this is easier to manage than the emotional pain which led to the self-harm in the first instance. The cycle also results in the person feeling a sense of shame of guilt. Within a school setting staff can encourage a student who is self-harming to replace the self-harm behaviour with safer coping strategies.

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Negative emotions          →          Tension
Sadness, anger                    Inability to control emotion


Negative effects                        Self- harm a
(shame
and
guilt)


           Endorphins


           Positive Effects
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Management of the Contagion Effect

Staff who have been made aware that a student is self-harming must remain vigilant in case their peers are also self-harming. Self-harm can become an acceptable way of dealing with stress and anxiety within a friendship group and can enable students to have a sense of identity.

Each individual student may have different reasons for self-harming and should be given the opportunity for one-to-one support. It is not appropriate for the school to offer group support.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

Students may choose to confide in a member of school staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer. If a student approaches a member of staff, they should be listened to on a non-judgmental way. Staff should maintain a supportive and open attitude – a student who has chosen to discuss their concerns is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust.

Students must be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. If you consider a student is at serious risk of harming themselves then confidentiality cannot be kept.

Any member of staff who is aware a student is engaging in or suspected to be at risk of engaging in self-harm must complete a CPOMS record and a member of the safeguarding team will decide what action to take.

This may include:

- Immediately removing the student from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers
- Offering one to one support including harm reduction work
- Contacting parent/carers *
- Seek specialist advice
- Referring to an appropriate agency for further support

*parents/carers will **always** be informed (unless to do so would put them at greater risk of harm in which case the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed).

A school risk assessment may be completed for each incident of self-harm
Clear written records will be kept of all meetings with students including any risk assessments and actions taken. This information will be stored in the student's safeguarding file (CPOMS).

Advice for staff:

Do
- Stay calm and do not show anxiety, disapproval, or disgust
- Listen to the student
- Make it clear that you cannot offer complete confidentiality and must inform a member of the schools safeguarding team
- Observe the student's non-verbal clues - does what they say and what you see match up?
- Reassure the student – they need to know they will be supported

Don't

- Panic. Self-harm is a complex issue. Panicking will not help the student feel safe and contained
- Send the student away. Make some time for them or signpost them to a member of the pastoral or safeguarding team.
- Be judgmental or refer to the self-harm as 'attention seeking'
- Work alone. Concerns must be recorded on and seek further advice from a member of the safeguarding team if the student is in immediate danger.
- Tell other members of school staff what the student has shared with you. Information is shared on a 'need to know' basis only.
- Contact parents/carers. This will be done by a member of the school's pastoral or safeguarding team if appropriate.

Confidentiality, Consent and Information Sharing

Students have the right to request confidentiality from a member of staff and information will only be shared with those staff that are involved directly with the safeguarding of any self-harm.

A priority one parent/ carer with parental responsibility will automatically be informed in the discovery of a case of self-harm, unless there is significant risk to the child as indicated in the safeguarding and child protection policy - in which the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub or Police would be contacted first.

Depending on the nature and severity of the self-harm, a student risk assessment may be required (See example using appendix 1)

Useful Sources of Further Information

KOOTH
Online mental wellbeing community, free, safe and anonymous support
www.Kooth.com

Childline
ChildLine offers free, confidential advice and support to under 18's.
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

YoungMinds
For anyone concerned about a child or young person's mental health
www.youngminds.org.uk
Parent helpline: 0808 802 5544

Epic Friends
A website developed by the Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust specialising in mental health issues such as self-harm
www.epicfriends.co.uk

IAPT
Provide a range of short-term talking therapies that are available to 18s and over
www.iaptsheffield.nhs.uk

Appendix 1
Risk Assessment Template

RISK ASSESSMENT – SELF HARM

Student Name: Date:

School/Establishment **High Storrs**

DATE(S): Review Date:

Describe the Benefits/Aims:

To support XXXXXXX in school so that they are safe and less likely to self harm.

RISK(s)	CONTROL MEASURES	Rating	Assessed
Access to items that could be used for self-harm		High	
		Low	
		Low	
		Med	
		Low	
		Med	
Accessing Support throughout the day		Med	
		High	
This risk assessment will be under constant review.			