THE
ADEYFIELD ACADEMY

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# Self-Harming Policy and Procedures

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**Co-ordinator:** **Ms J Day**

Signed by…….……. Dawn Mason (Headteacher)

Signed by…….…….. Leanne Stokoe (Chair of Governors)

This policy applies to all students and staff of The Adeyfield Academy

**1. Introduction**

This document describes the school's approach to self-harm. This policy and procedure is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. It forms part of the school's Safeguarding group of policies. It should be read in conjunction with these.

**2. Aim**

The overall aim is to ensure that staff are able to recognise and act swiftly and appropriately to all cases of student self-harm

**3. Objectives**

- To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm to alert staff to warning signs and risk factors.
- To provide support to staff dealing with students who self-harm.
- To provide support to the students.

**4. 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
- Scouring or scrubbing the body excessively
- Control of eating patterns, e.g. anorexia, bulimia, over-eating (See Eating Disorders Policy)
- Indulging in risky sexual behaviour
- Destructive use of alcohol/drugs

**5. Risk Factors**

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

**5.1 Individual Factors**

Depression / anxiety, Poor communication skills, Low self-esteem, Poor problem-solving skills, Hopelessness, Impulsivity, Drug or alcohol abuse

**5.2 Family Factors**

Unreasonable expectations, Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse, Poor parental relationships and arguments, Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family, Recent trauma e.g. death of a relative, parental divorce

**5.3 Social Factors**

Difficulty in making relationships / loneliness, Being bullied or rejected by peers

**6. Further Help with Websites**

**PAPYRUS**

Papyrus offers a helpline to give support, practical advice and information to anyone who is concerned that a young person may be suicidal.

0800 068 41 41
*www.papyrus-uk.org*

**National Self-Harm Network**

Support for people who self-harm. Provides free information pack to service users.

*www.nshn.co.uk*

**Young Minds**

Young Minds is a consultancy and training service for leaders and front line workers across the children's mental health system. They apply their professional experience, together with participation and a whole-systems approach to drive improvement across young people's mental health and help achieve the best possible outcomes for children and their families who need mental health support.

*https://youngminds.org.uk/*

**7. CALM**

https://www.thecalmzone.net/what-we-do

Helping people end their misery, not their lives People who feel suicidal will often say that they don't want to die - they want the pain and misery they're experiencing to end.But when you're struggling, you often can't see a way out. You see suicide as the only option. But we know it's not. We know there's always a reason to stay.That's why our mission is to help people end their misery, not their lives. We provide life-saving services, information and advice to help anyone struggling with life navigate the issues that can make us feel miserable. We've got trusted tools that give you practical ways to manage your mental health. We campaign to make sure everyone has the knowledge and skills to unite against suicide.

While self-harm and suicide are separate, those who self-harm are in emotional distress and those who end their lives are also in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chances of self-harm and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously. If a student expresses a wish to end their life or has suicidal thoughts, the member of staff must:

**At no time should the student be left unsupervised and reassurance should be given that support will be put into place for them.**

- Accompany the student immediately to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The DSL will speak with the student about their suicidal thoughts and feelings.
- The DSL will contact a parent/carer to inform them of the situation and ask that they collect the student and take them up to the hospital. Written evidence of need may be supplied as information to support presentation.
- Onsite at Watford General Hospital is a Child Mental Health team, (CRISIS) once the student arrives and their parent/carer informs the hospital of the situation, the Child Mental Health professional will assess the student and deal with the matter.

It is likely that the hospital will refer to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); however, this should be checked by the DSL and if this has not been done, a referral should be submitted as soon as possible. They will also supply an agreed safety support plan which should be shared with school before return.

## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

### 8.1 The Headteacher Will

- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to be responsible for self-harm matters, and liaise with them. Deputy Safeguarding Leads can perform this function
- Where the DSL is unavailable – see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for details of the DSL and deputies.
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead receives appropriate training about self harm, and that the Self-Harm Policy is followed by all members of staff.

### 8.2 All Staff and Teachers Expected to

- Listen to students in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way
- Report self-harm to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected e.g. as quickly as possible
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which cannot be kept
- Reassure students that in order to seek health and happiness, people need to know about their problems so that they can help
- Guide students towards seeking health and happiness by promoting problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress.
- Enable students to find places for help and support
- Widen their own knowledge about self-harm and mental health disorders
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first aid and clearing up if a self-injury incident takes place at school

### 8.3 The Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead Will

- Keep records of self-injury incidents and concerns
- Follow the procedures in place for a student who is expressing suicidal thoughts/feelings
- Liaise with multi-agencies about help available for people who self-harm
- Coordinate risk management/student safety support plans
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-harm

- Liaise with the Head
- Contact the parent(s) and arrange a suitable meeting; involve the student in this process where appropriate or beneficial
- Know when people e.g. parents, social workers, Educational Psychologists need to be informed
- Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child which is available
- Monitor the student's progress following an incident
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress

**9. Warning Signs**

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing difficulties that 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 seek further advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

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.

**10. Staff Roles in Working with Students Who Self-Harm Key Staff**

- Designated Safeguarding Lead - Mrs S Gee; Assistant Headteacher
- Associate Assistant Headteacher/Deputy Safeguarding Lead/SENCO; Ms J Day
- Deputy Safeguarding and Mental Health lead; Miss C Gatt
- Wider mental health team

Students may choose to confide in a member of school staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer. School staff may experience a range of feelings in response to self-harm in a student such as anger, sadness, shock, disbelief, guilt, helplessness, disgust and rejection. However, in order to offer the best possible help to students it is important to try and maintain a supportive and open attitude – a student who has chosen to discuss their concerns with a member of school staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust.

Students should be made aware that staff cannot promise confidentiality if they disclose information that indicates they may be at risk of harm.

In line with KCSIE, all staff must share any concerns about a student's safety or welfare with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy DSL. This includes concerns related to self-harm, suicidal thoughts, or any behaviour that suggests the student may be at risk of significant harm.

Staff must not promise to keep information secret, even if a student requests it. Instead, they should explain that information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to help keep the student safe.

Decisions about the level of risk and any necessary actions will be made by the DSL (or deputy DSL), in consultation with relevant agencies if appropriate.

Any member of staff who is aware of a student engaging in or suspected to be at risk of engaging in self-harm should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

Following the report, the Designated/deputy Safeguarding Lead will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers
- Arranging professional assistance
- Further referrals
- Immediately removing the student from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers
- In the case of an acutely distressed student, the immediate safety of the student is paramount and an adult should remain with the student at all times
- If a student has self-harmed in school,a First Aider should be called for immediate help

**11. Further Considerations**

Any meetings with a student, their parents or their peers regarding self-harm should be Recorded and include:

- Dates and times
- An action plan
- Concerns raised
- Details of anyone else who has been informed

This information should be stored securely with the DSL.

It is important to encourage students to let you know if one of their group is in trouble, upset or showing signs of self-harming. Friends can worry about betraying confidences so they need to know that self-harm can be very dangerous and that by seeking help and advice for a friend they are taking responsible action and being a good friend. They should also be aware that their friend will be treated in a caring and supportive manner.

The peer group of a young person who self-harms may value the opportunity to talk to a member of staff either individually or in a small group. Any member of staff wishing for further advice on this should consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead. When a young person is self-harming it is important to be vigilant in case close contacts with the individual are also self-harming. Occasionally, schools discover that a number of students in the same peer group are harming themselves.

Students will be expected to:

- Not display open wounds/injuries; these must be appropriately dressed
- Talk to appropriate staff members if they are in emotional distress
- Alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow student of being suicidal or at serious risk or harm to themselves, and know when confidentiality must be broken