



# St. Illtyd's Catholic High School

## Self-Harm Policy

**July 2024**

Role	Name(s)
Head of Centre	David B Thomas
SLT Lead	Adam Fleet
Date adopted by Governing Body	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2024
Review date	July 2027

Purpose: In keeping with the school's values, vision and aims, this policy aims to address the issue of self-harm:

- How to deal with pupils who self-harm and how to offer support in the short and long-term
- To provide support depending upon the individual needs of the pupil.
- To help all pupils improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy
- How to support staff members who come into contact with pupils who self-harm
- How to prevent self-harm from spreading within the school
- To have clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when do parents and outside agencies need contacting?
- Education about self-harm for pupils and staff

### **What is self-harm?**

When some people feel sad, desperate angry or confused, they can hurt themselves. This is called self-harm.

People can do this in a number of ways and for different reasons. People who harm themselves on more than one occasion may do so for a different reason each time. They may also harm themselves and not tell anyone about it.

### **Risk factors associated with self-harm:**

- Mental health disorders including depression and eating disorders
- Drug/alcohol abuse, and other risk-taking behaviour
- Recent trauma e.g. death of relative, parental divorce
- Negative thought patterns, and low self-esteem
- Bullying
- Abuse – sexual, physical and emotional
- Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance

### **Methods of self-harm**

- Excessive risk-taking
- Cutting
- Scalding/burning
- Hair pulling
- Breaking bones
- Restrictive eating
- Ingesting

### **Spotting the signs of self-harm**

Some things to look for:

- Withdrawal and spending more time alone
- Cuts ,burns, bruises or scratches that do not seem accidental
- Inappropriate clothing (e.g. long sleeves in very hot weather)
- Avoidance of PE lessons/getting changed in front of people

- Low self-esteem and/or feelings of self-worth
- Frequently appearing bandaged, particularly arms, wrists
- Absence or lateness
- Pulling out hair can result in bald patches
- Anger or irritability

### **Your initial response :**

It is essential not to promise confidentiality (refer to CP policy)  
Be honest from the beginning about the limits of confidentiality.

- Listen without judgement
- Show care and respect
- Acknowledge emotional distress
- Ask them what they want to do and try to plan the next steps together

### **Don't !**

- React with shock
- Ask abrupt or rapid questions
- Tell them they must stop self-harming
- Threaten or get angry
- Accuse them of attention seeking
- Get frustrated
- Ignore other warning signs
- Promise to keep things secret
- Ask the child to repeat it to the CPO or DCPO

### **Suicide:**

While self-harm and suicide are separate, those who self-injure 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-injury, and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously.

### **Procedure:**

It is the role of all staff to ensure they follow these guidelines and procedures and act promptly when referring cases of self-harm.

Staff must ensure that the child is safe and supervised whilst the referral is under investigation.

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All staff to ensure that they are clear about their roles in respect of children and young people who self-harm

All staff must ensure that self-harm incidents are logged on myconcern so that the safeguarding team can be made aware of the concern.

The HOY/AHOY must also be made aware of the concern and the HOY/AHOY will contact parents and write a safety plan. Depending on the severity of the self-harm parents will be advised to take the pupil to A & E/ make an appointment with the GP in order to access support.

### **Roles and responsibilities of Head Teacher, other staff, and governors:**

#### **The Governing body will:**

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

#### **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 Officer/ Deputy CPO
- Ensure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training about self-harm
- Ensure that self-harm policy is followed by all members of staff

#### **The Child Protection / Deputy Child Protection Officer will:**

- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress
- If the level of concern doesn't warrant a CP response which will be determined by the severity and context of the incident the CPO/DCPO should advise HOY/AHOY to contact the parents and advise that the parent make an appointment/ refer the child direct to GP/ A & E Dept at the Hospital and to come into school to collect the child. In situations where the self-harm is due to suspected abuse a referral will be made immediately to Children's Services MASH TEAM.
- A summary of discussion with student following a disclosure or incident of self-harm will be logged on myconcern and kept on file.
- Cases of attempted suicide - Asphyxiation, drug overdose, serious cutting. **A 999 call should be made immediately and a referral to the MASH TEAM**

The ALL Wales CP procedure should be applied

- Cases of alcohol abuse or solvent abuse if a child loses consciousness ( as above)
- Keep records of self-injury incidents and concerns
- Liaise with local services about help available for people who self-harm
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-harm
- Liaise with Headteacher / relevant HOY / AHOY/ SLT
- Support / Advise HOY/AHOY to contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the pupil in this process. Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child which is available. Monitor the pupil's progress following an incident
- Know when people other than parents (e.g. social workers, educational psychologists) need to be informed
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress.

### **All staff and teachers are expected to:**

- Listen to pupils in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way.
- Report self-injury to the designated staff member(s) HOY/AHOY for self-injury. Be clear that these concerns must be reported within the expected timescale
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which can't be kept. Reassure pupils that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help.
- Guide pupils towards seeking health and happiness
- Enable pupils to find places for help and support
- Provide accurate information about self-harm
- Widen their own knowledge about self-harm and mental health disorders
- All staff need to be aware of who the first-aiders are in order to be able to call on them if a self-harm incident needs medical assessment/attention
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot (FIRST- AID and LEAVING SITE)

**Pupils will be expected to:**

- Not display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately
- Talk to a trusted member of staff if they are in emotional distress
- Talk to a trusted member of staff if they suspect a fellow pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to them-selves, and know when confidentiality must be broken

**Parents will be encouraged to:**

Endorse the school's approach to self-harm education and pastoral care

**Important Contact Numbers:**

- MASH team: 02920 536490
- Children's Services - cases open and allocated social worker: 029 20536400
- Primary Mental Health Team consultation number: 029 20536795 - Tues 1.30-4.30 and Wed 9.30 –12.30
- YOUNG MINDS: 0800 0182138
- MEIC : 08088023456
- The Amber Project - Caryl Stock: 07905905437
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services (previously known as CAMHS) – office 02921836730