



EPSOM

COLLEGE

Self-Harm Policy

Purpose

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 well-being;
- How to support staff members who come into contact with people who self-injure and to prevent self-harm from spreading within the school;
- To have clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when do parents need to be informed and outside agencies;
- Education about self harm for pupils and staff through the PSD programme.

What is self harm?

Self-harm is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. It can include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing (without suicidal intent) and deliberate bone-breaking/spraining.

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.

Relationship to other policies

This policy is to be applied and interpreted within the context of the Child Protection, Health and Safety, Well-being and Behaviour Policies.

Roles and responsibilities of staff and governors:

The Headmaster will:

- Appoint a designated teacher to be responsible for self harm matters, and liaise with them. This person is Paul Williams, Second Master or Helen Keevil, Assistant Head: Pupil Welfare;
- Ensure that the designated person(s) receive appropriate training about self harm. Ensure the self harm policy is followed by all members of staff.

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 nor stigmatises;
- Look at provisions for people who self harm, such as long-sleeved uniforms and PE kits, and time out of lessons when under intense stress.

All staff and teachers are expected to:

- Listen to pupils in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way;
- Report self harm to the designated staff member(s) for self-harm;
- Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected;
- 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;
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress;
- Enable pupils to find places for help and support and provide accurate information about self-harm;
- 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 the College;
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot.

The designated staff member(s) will:

- Keep records of self-injury incidents and concerns and liaise closely with the Medical Centre health professionals;
- Follow the procedures in place for a pupil who is expressing suicidal thoughts/feelings;
- Liaise with multi-agencies about help available for people who self-harm;
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-harm;
- Liaise with Headmaster and Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- Contact parent and arrange a suitable meeting, 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.

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- Be aware of another pupil self-harming. The earlier this behaviour is identified and a responsible adult is made aware, the better. Even reporting any minor self-harming behaviour anonymously may be helpful;
- Not display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately;
- Talk to the appropriate staff member if they are in emotional distress.

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Endorse the school's approach to self harm education and pastoral care;
- Work in partnership with the College;
- Work with the College Medical Centre and external agencies involved in order to support the child.