



Newby and Scalby Primary School

(An Academy within Coast and Vale Learning Trust)

SCHOOL POLICY

Self-Harm Policy

Approver: Headteacher
Review cycle: Annual

| Revision History | | | |
|------------------|---------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Date | Version | Short Description of changes | Approved by |
| Sept 23 | 1.0 | Original | Governors |
| Jan 2025 | 1.01 | No amendments | HT |
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This policy forms an essential part of the school's medical and safeguarding group of policies. It should be viewed in conjunction with these, Safeguarding Children and Child Protection.

Aim

The overall aim is to ensure that staff can recognise and act swiftly and appropriately to all cases of self-harm.

Objectives

- To recognise any form of self-harm or mutilation.
- To understand that self-harming is almost always a symptom of some underlying emotional or psychological issue.
- To put in a framework for intervention
- To be alert to the possibility that self-harm may arise from a history of abuse.
- How to work with students who self-harm and how to support them in the short/long term.
- To support staff who encounter students who self-harm.
- To have clear guidance for staff - Who needs to be informed and when do parents and external agencies need to be contacted.
- Education around self-harm for students and staff.

What Is Self-Harm?

Self-harm is any deliberate behaviour that inflicts physical harm on Someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. Self- Harm can include:

- Scratching/Cutting themselves.
- Banging and bruising themselves.
- Punching themselves.
- Biting themselves
- Sticking things into their body.
- Burning/scalding their body.
- Scrubbing/scouring their body.
- Pulling their hair or eye lashes out.
- Swallowing inappropriate objects or liquids
- Taking too many tablets
- Substance abuse

Less obvious self-harm behaviours also include:

- Controlled eating patterns-anorexia, bulimia, over-eating.
- Indulging in continuous risky behaviour including sexual and the use of drugs or alcohol.
- Frequently getting into fights.

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Warning Signs

Self-harm may present as visible or invisible signs. The latter can include ingested materials or cuts and bruises under the clothing. Staff, parents, and students may become aware of the warning signs that might indicate that a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to self-harm or suicide. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and anyone observing these should seek advice from the school's mental health lead (Ms R Williams) or if not available the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr. Vipond)

Warning signs may include:

- Visible signs of injury (e.g., scarring).
- A change in dress habit that may be intended to disguise injuries (e.g., an unexpected / sudden change to wearing long sleeved tops)
- Increased isolation from friends or family; becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity and mood (becoming more introvert or withdrawn).
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, or loss of hope.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Changes in eating and sleep habits.

Emotional/Psychological Risk Factors Associated with Self-Harm Can Be:

- Recent trauma or death of a friend/relative or a parental divorce.
- Negative thought patterns and low self-esteem.
- Bullying - within school, home, or the internet.
- Abuse- sexual, physical, emotional or neglect.
- Sudden changes in behaviour and/or academic performance.
- Learning difficulties.
- Relationship difficulties with family and friends.
- Substance abuse (including tobacco, alcohol, and drugs)
- Issues around sexuality
- Medical condition.
- Parent/family long term illness.

Information must be available within school to help the students experiencing distress find an appropriate person to talk to.

Within Newby and Scalby Primary School, the Senior Mental Health Lead, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, working in collaboration, are responsible for self-harm matters. Anyone concerned about a student must liaise with either of these members of staff, who will follow up with sensitivity, discretion and in line with the Child Protection Policy.

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Prevention

An estimated 1 in 12 children self-harm at some point. The risk of self-harm can be significantly reduced by the creation of a supportive environment in which the individual's self-esteem is raised and healthy peer relationships are fostered. This can be achieved through development of good relationships by all members of the school community.

Staff awareness of issues leading to self-harm is increased through training and the production of comprehensive policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, Bullying, Medical and Self-Harm Policy.

Policies are posted on the school website to achieve the widest circulation and are also available upon request from the school office.

The pupils are provided with a wide range of internal and external sources of help, and these are widely publicised and spoken about during PSHE lessons where appropriate.

Roles And Responsibilities of Management, Staff and Teachers

- Ensure that designated staff responsible for self-harm receive appropriate training.
- Ensure that the self-harm protocol is followed by all staff members.
- Ensure that self-harm education/awareness is in the school curriculum e.g., PHSE lessons.
- Consider provisions for students who self-harm, e.g., long sleeved uniforms and PE kits, time out cards from lessons when a student is experiencing distress.

All Staff and Teachers are expected to:

- Listen to students who are experiencing emotional distress in a calm and non-judgemental way.
- Think carefully how to communicate with the pupil.
- Understand that the child may not be able to tell you why or what they are feeling.
- Report the self-harm incident to the designated staff member immediately and report the incident on CPOMS. Staff need to be aware of the timescale in which this must be done.
- Do not make promises which cannot be kept. Reassure the student that to receive help and find more helpful ways to cope others may need to know.
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress.
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first aid if the incident has occurred in school so a plan to support and keep the pupil safe can be put into place.

Students will be expected to:

- Be encouraged to not display open wounds and injuries. These must be dressed appropriately.
- Talk to the designated member of staff or follow their accessibility plan e.g., a time out card when they are in emotional distress.
- Be encouraged to alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow pupil of being at serious risk of harming themselves and know that confidentiality must be broken.

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Parents will be encouraged to:

- Work in partnership with the school to support the pupil through this difficult time.
- Seek professional help offered by school and outside agencies.
- Use resources available through school such:

<https://www.compass-uk.org/buzz-us>

<https://mentalhealthmatters.org>

<https://www.place2be.org.uk>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

<https://www.annafreud.org>

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually (or earlier if necessary) by the designated School Mental Health Lead, DSL, and the Senior Leadership Team

Linked Policies

The following are linked to this policy and should be noted when dealing with cases or suspected cases of self-harm.

- Child Protection.
- Medical Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy

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