



Next Review Due: February 2020

Reviewed by SLT: 7th February 2017

Date first adopted by governing body: 20th January 2014 (Learning & Standards)

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

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

What is self-injury?

Self-injury 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-injury:

- 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, emotional and neglect
- Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance

Suicide:

While self-injury 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.

Who/what was consulted? The Local Authority, College staff and other supportive agencies.

Relationship to other policies:

Linked to Child Protection, SEN, social and health education, health and safety, and behaviour policies.

Roles and responsibilities of Principal, other staff, and governors:

The Principal will:

- Appoint a designated person to be responsible for self-injury matters, and liaise with them.
- Ensure that the designated person receives appropriate training about self-injury.
- Ensure that the self-injury policy is followed by all members of staff.

The governing body will:

- Decide whether self-injury education should be in the College curriculum, and how it should be addressed.
- Ensure that education about self-injury neither promotes nor stigmatises.
- Look at provisions for people who self-injure, 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 students who are in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way.
- Report self-injury to the designated staff member(s) for self-injury. Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected.
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which can't 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.
- Promote problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress.
- Enable students to find places for help and support.
- Provide accurate information about self-injury.
- Widen their own knowledge about self-injury 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 College.
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot.

The designated staff member(s) will:

- Follow the self-injury portrait.
- Keep records of self-injury incidents and concerns.
- Liaise with local services about help available for people who self-injure.
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-injury.
- Liaise with Principal.
- Contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the student in this process. 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 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.

Students will be expected to:

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

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Endorse the College's approach to self-injury education and pastoral care.
- Work in partnership with the College.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation:

- How to measure its success. This can include feed-back from parents and students as to how a self-injury incident/case has been dealt with.