

Donnington Wood C of E Junior School

Self-Harm Policy



“The ones who plant and the ones who water work together as a team with the same purpose.”

1 Corinthians 3:8

We believe that with God’s help when we all work as a TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More.

Our Mission (INTENT)

At Donnington Wood CE Junior School we will:

- put the safety of everyone as a priority so we can work in trust and peace.
- encourage everyone to understand the true meaning of friendship, fellowship and community by acting with humility, compassion and in service to each other.
- be inclusive so everyone is valued and respected and where tolerance and diversity are celebrated.
- seek out every opportunity to ensure that all of us flourish in all that we do, developing wisdom and creativity, through an ambitious and broad curriculum that challenges expectations, deepens knowledge and develops skills.
- empower pupils and adults to develop hope and perseverance, so that they are able to engage/explore the challenges of school and the wider world.
- nurture the spiritual development of our school fellowship, develop tolerance of other faiths, beliefs and cultures and build religious literacy through collective worship of God and teaching of RE.
- champion our values to equip our children ready for their future as respectful individuals, life-long learners and active citizens in society (justice).

Introduced	July 2024
Review date	July 2025
Person responsible for this policy	Rachael Ganderton

This Policy is divided into 5 sections:

1. Purpose of the Policy
2. Definitions of Self-Harm
3. Aims of the school Team with regard to Self-Harm
4. Key Responsibilities
5. Links to Other Policies

1. Purpose of the Policy

In keeping with the School's vision and aims, this Policy aims to address the issue of self-harm; it covers the following areas:

- How to deal with pupils who self-harm and how to offer support in the short and long term;
- How to provide support depending upon the individual needs of the pupil;
- How to help all pupils improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy;
- How to support staff members who come into contact with people who self-harm;
- How to prevent self-harm from escalating within the school;
- Providing clear guidelines for staff on who needs to be informed and when parents and outside agencies need to be contacted;
- Providing education about self-harm for pupils and staff.

2. Definitions of Self-Harm

Self-Harm

Self-harm is considered to be a coping mechanism for young people who are attempting to deal with high levels of distress and emotional pain. It may be defined as any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that causes physical pain or injury and is aimed at reducing the emotional pain and distress of the individual concerned.

These behaviours may include deliberate bone-breaking, cutting, bruising, banging and non-suicidal overdosing, and the behaviours are usually chronic, repetitive and habitual. Young people who self-injure will generally attempt to hide any scarring or injuries and can find it extremely difficult to discuss their behaviours, and the emotions behind them, with others. We understand these behaviours not to be about seeking attention, but rather to be about seeking relief and release from emotional distress.

We also understand that self-injury is not suicidal behaviour. However, the emotional distress that causes these behaviours can lead to suicidal thinking and actions – we will consequently take ALL incidents of self-injury seriously, investigate them, and attempt to provide the most appropriate emotional support possible.

Further information about the definitions of self-harm can be found in this resources from the National Self Harm Network [NSHN What is Self Harm- Definitions](#).



Suicide

While self-injury and suicide are separate, those who self-injure are in emotional distress and those who choose to end their lives are also in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chance of self-injury and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously.

Actions following discovery of a suicide risk:

- a. Following a report of a risk of suicide from a pupil, staff will report this to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (Robert Fox, Jon Rawson, Rachael Ganderton or Jo Jenks) in discussion with the pastoral care lead will decide on the appropriate course of action. This is likely to include:
 - Further exploration with the pupil through conversation
 - Contacting parents or carers;
 - Arranging professional assistance;
 - Immediately removing the student from school and seek further medical advice if their presence in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers. Alternatively, seeking reassurance that it is in their best interests and in the interests of the wider community that they remain in school and that it is safe for them to do so.
- b. The pupil will remain in the care of their parents or carers until the school receives sufficient evidence that the pupil is not a significant risk to themselves or others under the normal levels of supervision in a day school. The head teacher may direct and require parents to make use of relevant professional and medical services.
- c. The school will usually require additional safeguards following a pupil's return, which may include a commitment to attend appointments with counsellors, the GP, and/or CAMHS. Further information in section - Aims of the school team

3. Aims of the School Team with Regard to Self-Harm

Our school team is dedicated to ensuring the emotional, physical and mental well-being of all pupils who attend. We consequently aim to:

- a. Recognise any warning signs that one of our pupils may be engaging in self-harming behaviours;
- b. Understand the risk factors associated with these behaviours, including low self-esteem, perfectionism, mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, home or school problems, social isolation, emotional, physical or sexual abuse;
- c. Be pro-active in discussing this topic with pupils we might feel are deliberately harming themselves;
- d. Know how to respond to pupils who wish to discuss these behaviours with us and take them seriously at all times;
- e. Be able to produce short- and long-term care and management plans for such pupils, in conjunction with external agencies if necessary; (See Attachment 1 sheet 4.1 for an example of a safety plan)
- f. Provide the appropriate level of practical and emotional support for staff dealing with pupils who self-harm and ensure appropriate training and education is available to all staff regarding this issue.

We have a tiered approach to mental health support in school and will decide as a safeguarding team which support is appropriate for each individual case:

- Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, Bedazzle student Mentor, Bee U Educational Mental Health Support, BeeU Crisis team.

Recognising warning signs

We are aware that for some young people there will not be any specific warning signs that they are engaging in or contemplating engaging in self-harming behaviours. For others, the following indicators may be noted:

- a. Risky behaviours, for example, drug taking, alcohol misuse;
- b. Lack of self-esteem, being overly negative;
- c. Bullying of others;
- d. Social withdrawal;
- e. Significant change in friendships;
- f. Regularly bandaged wrists and arms;
- g. Obvious cuts, burns or scratches (that don't look like accidents);
- h. A reluctance to participate in PE or change clothes;

- i. Frequent accidents that cause physical injuries
- j. Wearing long-sleeved tops even in very hot weather.

4. Key Responsibilities

Everyone in the school community – the school governors, the head teacher, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), all staff and teachers, pupils and parents – has a responsibility to promote and adhere to this policy in order to help ensure the well-being of all within the community. These responsibilities are outlined below.

Any member of staff who is aware of a student engaging in, or suspected to be at risk of engaging in, self-harm should report this to a safeguarding lead immediately in line with the Child Protection and safeguarding Policy.

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 first aid procedures should be followed and if needed 999 called.

Governors to do the following:

- a. Ensure the existence of a Procedural Policy in case of self-harming incidents occurring within the school context and that this is reviewed as necessary;
- b. Bear ultimate responsibility for the school's role in maintaining pupil health and wellbeing;
- c. Have nominated governors in charge of safeguarding (Steve Jones);
- d. Ensure that safeguarding and child protection issues are regularly reported to the governors;
- e. Put in place appropriate safeguards on admissions to maintain a tolerable level of risk with regard to the health and well-being of pupils.

The head teacher to do the following:


- a. Keep the governors aware of major incidents and trends;
- b. Appoint a designated member of staff to be responsible for all incidents of self-harm and be responsible for disseminating the policy and training (Rachael Ganderton- Assistant Head of Inclusion and Mental Health Lead and Jo Jenks- SENCo and Mental Health Lead);
- c. Be ultimately responsible for ensuring that designated staff members receive appropriate training, support and supervision;
- d. Ensure that all staff in the school community are fully conversant with and adhere to this Self-Harm Policy

Designated staff will do the following:

- a. Ensure that the Policy is disseminated and implemented appropriately, providing regular feedback and updates to the head teacher;
- b. Develop a record-keeping system to record such incidents and ensure that this is kept up to date and incidents and developments are regularly reported to the head teacher(Attachment 2 Self-Harm Incident Form and add CPOMS tab for Self-Harm);
- c. Ensure that pupils have an appropriate care and management plan which is recorded (on CPOMS) and, if necessary, developed with the support of external specialist agencies;
- d. Liaise with external agencies (specifically mental health) in order to provide the most appropriate support, alongside utilising key services to provide up-to-date education and information for pupils, parents or carers and staff;
- e. Liaise with parents or carers as appropriate in order to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils in the school community;
- f. Report on suicidal intent or feelings straight away and refer to other professional bodies as appropriate;
- g. Engage in appropriate supervision so as to ensure personal well-being.

All staff to do the following:

- a. Act in an empathetic manner, assuring pupils that they are available to listen in a calm and non-judgmental manner;
- b. Not invalidate any pupil's concerns or emotional distress (See Attachment 2- Initial Conversations Around Self-Harm or Suicidal Thoughts with a Young Person);
- c. Know the available support options or referral routes and refer pupils to these as appropriate;

Coping with stress Childline	
Calm zone Childline	
Helping a friend Childline	
Self-harm Childline	

- d. Ensure that pupils know that staff cannot make any promises to keep things confidential if they feel that the pupil is at risk. If staff consider a student is at serious risk of harming themselves, then confidentiality cannot be kept. It is important not to make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept even if a student puts pressure on a staff member to do so;
- e. Adhere to all other relevant and associated school policies;
- f. Be committed to providing an emotionally literate context in which the self-esteem and emotional and mental well-being of all are fostered and promoted;
- g. Be aware of the 'healthy' coping strategies pupils can utilise and know who to ask for advice if it is felt that these are being abused or becoming unsuccessful for the pupil;
- h. Ask for help if they feel a situation falls outside of their emotional competency, skills or knowledge base;
- i. Complete the schools Self-Harm Incident form (attachment 3) and submit this to a Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.
- j. As part of our whole school curriculum students are encouraged to pass on information 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;
- k. Be aware that 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 (DSL);

- l. Be vigilant when a young person is self-harming, 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 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 to maintain a supportive and open attitude – a student who has chosen to discuss concerns with a member of school staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust. Staff should go to the DSL for support and help following incidents covered in this policy to help protect their own well-being. Posters containing information of up to date Mental Health First Aiders can be found in the staff room.

Parents or carers need to do the following:

- a. Ensure that they both understand and endorse this policy;
- b. Find out about self-harm, making use of school-based and external resources, and discuss findings with the child. Further information about Self-Harm can be found on our school website [Mental Health and wellbeing – Donnington Wood Church of England Junior School](#) ;



- c. Ensure that appropriate school staff members are kept informed of any changes or incidents that occur outside the school that may have an impact on the behaviour and well-being of the child;
- d. If the child is engaging in these behaviours, work with designated staff in order to help the school develop the best ways of supporting the child and his or her parents or carers;
- e. Recognise that they may also need emotional support and find out where this is best accessed

Pupils must do the following:

- a. If self-harming, they will take care of any wounds appropriately and not display them in the school context. Pupils failing to comply with this requirement once appropriate support is in place will have to attend time in reflection in line with the school's Behaviour Management policy.
- b. Ensure that they do not engage in 'sensationalised' conversations with peers or staff or talk about the methods they use to other pupils. Pupils failing to comply with this requirement once appropriate support is in place may have to attend time in reflection in line with the school's Behaviour Management policy;
- c. Try to find something fun and positive in each day;
- d. Never encourage others to participate in self-harm;
- e. Focus on the emotional issues and not on the act of self-harm itself.
- f. Ensure that they know who they can talk to in both the immediate and longer term, should they feel distressed or at risk in either the school or social context;
- g. Alert a member of staff if they are at all concerned about a friend or peer who may be at risk of self-harming, engaging in these behaviours, or who may present as suicidal or discussing suicide.

Examples of resources pupils can be used can be found in Attachment 4

5. Link to other policies-

Our Self-Harm Policy has direct links to (and should be read in conjunction with) the following related policies, all of which are available on the intranet:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

This Policy will be monitored by Rachael Ganderton- Assistant Head of Inclusion and reviewed after requesting evaluative feedback from all key stakeholders. This will enable us to make the relevant and appropriate changes and ensure that this policy remains useful and user friendly

Worksheet 4.1

My Personal Self-Harm Prevention or Safety Plan

Before you start to complete your plan, read through and think about the following ideas and steps to building your plan.

If self-harming has already become a kind of coping strategy for you, it is not usually helpful to focus on complete abstinence or banning the behaviour in one sudden step. Instead, it is helpful to build new strategies for dealing with difficult feelings: these can gradually take the place of self-harm. In the first instance it can be useful to consider learning first aid and knowing how to take care of yourself practically if you do self-harm.

Creating a personal self-harm safety plan is a useful way to remind yourself of things you can do when you feel an urge to self-harm. These include ways to manage and reduce self-harming behaviours in the short term, so that they are less damaging, as well as finding alternative ways to manage difficult feelings that can replace self-harm in the longer term.

Even if you have not previously self-harmed, this prevention or safety plan can also be used as a helpful tool for those times when you feel very stressed and not able to effectively engage your support mechanisms or coping strategies.

De-escalate the intensity of self-harm

A first step can be to think about trying to slowly reduce the damage caused by your self-harming behaviour (e.g., cutting less deeply). Then try to move to less damaging practices, such as writing on your skin with red felt-tip instead of cutting.

Direct the harming urge at something else

Some people find squeezing an ice cube provides an alternative that is helpful. Hit pillows or cushions. Flick an elastic band on your wrist. Take a cold bath or shower.

Make a list of activities that you can use to distract yourself

Trying to be with other people is particularly effective.

Know your triggers and reduce the risks

Knowing what kinds of situations are particularly risky for you can help you plan to reduce the risks. For example, it is harder to manage your feelings effectively when you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Go easy on these if you are aware that you are feeling less stable.

Learn to tune in to your feelings

In the longer-term you can start to learn how to identify the experiences and feelings that are most likely to trigger your urges to self-harm. Learning the skill of 'mindfulness' – being tuned in to what you are feeling in the present moment, without judgement or attempt to change it – is invaluable in the move towards being able to manage or 'ride out' difficult feelings, rather than trying to eliminate them.

My Personal Self-Harm Prevention or Safety Plan

What makes me want to harm myself? For example, it could be particular people, feelings, places or memories.

Other than harming myself, what else helps me to cope?

What would I tell a close friend to do who was feeling this way?

What could others do that would help?

If I feel like harming myself again, I will do one of the following
(try to list 6-8 items):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

If the plan does not work and I still feel like harming myself, I will do at least one of the following:

- ✎ Call the *Samaritans* on **116 123** (free calls)
- ✎ Call *ChildLine* on **0800 1111** (free calls)
- ✎ Talk to a trusted adult _____
- ✎ Call emergency services **999** or go to nearest A&E

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Resource H

Initial Conversations Around Self-Harm or Suicidal Thoughts with a Young Person

If a young person discloses self-harm or suicidal thoughts, the following information can guide your discussion and act as a prompt to ensure that you cover key information that will be relevant for the safeguarding lead.

- Limitations of confidentiality. Be honest with the student and tell them you will have to pass this disclosure on to the designated safeguarding lead, but you will let them know what's going to happen and how you will keep them informed.
- Be clear with the student about how much time you have available for this conversation and the structure the conversation might take. For example, 'I'm glad you came to talk to me about this. I have half an hour now and we can talk about what has been going on for you and agree some next steps we can all put in place to support you.'
- Encourage the young person to remain in the setting until you have discussed the incident with the safeguarding lead.
- Try to ensure that if the young person is around in the setting for the rest of the day, they have someone they can talk to if necessary.

It is important to write down what the student says; however, it may not be appropriate to do this in front of them, so be sensitive. When making notes try to include exactly what the student says, rather than paraphrasing.

Self-Harm: Topics to cover

You have come to me and told me that you have self harmed ...

or

We are concerned you may have harmed yourself ...

Are you willing to show me what you have done? [It may need medical attention.]

or

What have you done?

Tell me about it? [Different types of self-harm: cutting, hitting, burning]

How did this make you feel?

Have you done it before?

Do you plan to do it again?

Have you told anyone else: your parents or carers or friends?

What are you planning to do the rest of the day/over the weekend?

[This is to check out if they have any support at home, or if they are going to be alone.]

Now this is out in the open this is what we need to do to support you ...

Suicidal Thoughts: Topics to cover

We believe that you have had these thoughts ...

or

You have come to me and told me that you have had these thoughts ...

Have you tried to do anything to harm yourself?

Have you made any plans to end your life?

What are you planning to do for the rest of the day or weekend?



Self-Harm Incident Form

Day and date:		Time:	
Child's Name:			
Age:	Gender:	Year Group:	SEND:
Name of member of staff completing form:		Position:	
Brief description of incident, including day, date and time of occurrences (bullet point): <i>(Use the body map overleaf if applicable)</i>			
Actions taken:			
Recommendations:			
Follow up required:			
Form copied to:			



Name of student:

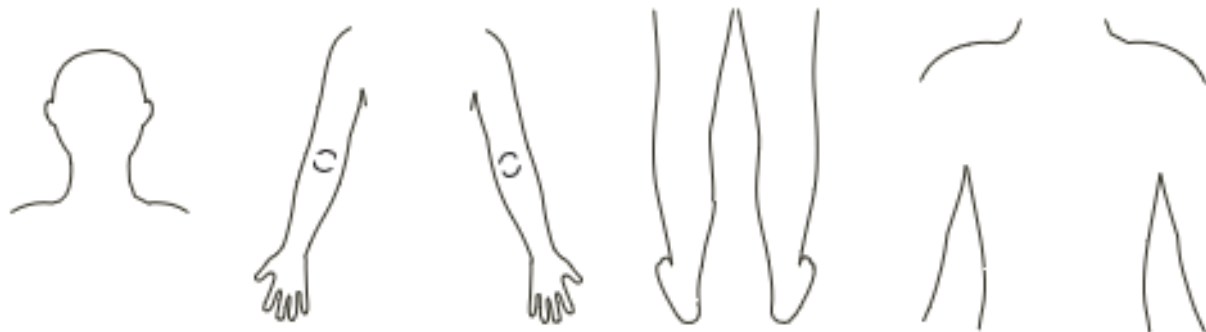
Body Map

Please indicate on the relevant diagram(s) the location of the self-harm if appropriate

FRONT



BACK



Name of student:

Date of completion:

Name of member of staff completing form:

Any Additional Information

Daily Stress Management Diary

Day	Stress	What I did	How effective was it?	What would I do differently next time to cope more effectively?
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	
			0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Not effective at all ↔ very effective	

Worksheet 2.1

The Stressors in My Life

Try to think of three things that are currently causing stress in your life.

Look at the different categories of stress reducers; some ideas have already been completed. Try and add some more ideas of your own.

Now, for each of the things causing you stress, write one idea that you think could help to reduce or avoid this stress.

Three things that cause me stress are:

1	2	3
---	---	---

To reduce this stress I can:

1	2	3
---	---	---

Ideas for reducing stress**Show your feelings**

- Cry.
- Talk to a friend.
- Write a poem.
- _____
- _____

Problem solve

- Write out the problem and brainstorm solutions.
- Work out strategies with a friend.
- Think about what is causing the stress and change what you are doing.
- _____
- _____

Find a distraction

- Learn a new skill.
- Try out a new computer game.
- Do something creative.
- _____
- _____

Nurture yourself

- Eat some chocolate.
- Have a bath.
- Watch your favourite television programme.
- _____
- _____

Problem solve

- Decide what is causing the stress and make a plan to tackle it.
- List as many solutions as possible. Try all the strategies until one works.
- _____
- _____
- _____

Get distracted very actively!

- Go for a run.
- Play a physically demanding game.
- Go for a swim.
- _____
- _____