



Self-Harm Policy

IMPORTANT

OAKWOOD ACADEMY WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY FORM OF ABUSE, RADICALISATION OR EXTREMISM TOWARDS CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

OAKWOOD ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT

"Promoting learning excellence - inclusion beyond the barriers".

OAKWOOD ACADEMY: MORAL PURPOSE

"We are united in the belief that together we can inspire all learners to dream, persevere and achieve so that we can change lives for the better, now and for future generations to come"

WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD?

If you are worried about a child or young person speak to a member of staff immediately.

'SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY'

Last Reviewed	September 2023
Next Review	September 2024

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SAFEGUARDING POLICIES CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The safeguarding policies (list back page) are in place to help prevent children and young people up to 18 years of age being at risk of harm. Oakwood Academy advises the safeguarding policies are read in conjunction with each other. If you have any concerns or questions regarding policies please refer to a member of SLT.

WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

If you are **worried about a child or a young person** being at risk of harm please speak to **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or, in their absence the Deputy DSL. **DO NOT IGNORE IT.**

EXTREMISM/RADICALISATION

All staff and Governors are to be familiar with the indicators of vulnerability to extremism and radicalisation and the procedures for dealing with concerns. Staff are made aware of the potential indicating factors when a child is vulnerable to being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. These include peer pressure, influence from other people or the internet, bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self-esteem or identity, prejudicial (damaging) behaviour and personal or political grievances. Staff to report any concerns to the **Single Point of Contact (SPOC)**.

SAFEGUARDING /HEALTH AND SAFETY

Oakwood Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At Oakwood we provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child and we strive to provide this within our classrooms. All staff follow health and safety guidelines.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL

Oakwood work to prevent children and young people from developing extreme and radical views by embedding SMSC principles throughout the curriculum. During lessons we strive to create a learning environment which promotes respect, diversity and self-awareness and equips all of our children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they will need to succeed in their future lives.

Vocational Training and Work Placements: External providers will be provided with a copy of the policy. They will be expected to follow the policy and inform school of behavioural incidents to ensure safety of all pupils and appropriate sanctions put in place.

For more details/information on Safeguarding refer to the following documents:

- Keeping Children safe in education (statutory guidance for schools and colleges): September 2023
- Working together to safeguard children (A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children : 2018
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in educational settings : October 2015
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures (Oakwood Academy)

Important: Please refer to the list of safeguarding policies (on back page) includes specific Safeguarding/Child Protection issues towards children and young people. The purpose of this policy:

Introduction:

Recent research indicates that up to one in ten young people in the UK engage in self-harming behaviours, and that this figure is higher amongst specific populations, including young people with special educational needs. School staff can play an important role in preventing self-harm and also in supporting students, peers and parents of students currently engaging in self-harm.

This document describes the school's approach to self-harm. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

Aims:

To increase understanding and awareness of self-harm. To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors. To provide support to staff dealing with students who self-harm. To provide support to students who self-harm and their peers and parents/carers.

Definition of Self-Harm:

Self-harm is any behaviour where the intent is to deliberately cause harm to one's own body for example:

- Cutting, scratching, scraping or picking skin.
- Swallowing inedible objects.
- Taking an overdose of prescription or non-prescription drugs.
- Swallowing hazardous materials or substances.
- Burning or scalding.
- Hair-pulling.
- Banging or hitting the head or other parts of the body.
- Scouring or scrubbing the body excessively.

It is imperative to note that self-harm is almost never a behaviour choice, but rather a compulsive action in response to intrusive thoughts, which are a symptom of a wider issue affecting an individual's mental health, and should be treated as such.

Risk Factors:

The following risk factors, particularly in combination, may make a young person particularly vulnerable to self-harm:

- Hopelessness.
- Lack of opportunity to exercise control or take responsibility for aspects of their life
- Impulsivity.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.

Individual Factors:

- Depression / anxiety and other mental health issues which include intrusive thoughts as a symptom.
- Poor communication skills.
- Low self-esteem.
- Poor problem-solving skills.
- Difficulty managing strong emotions

Family Factors:

- Unreasonable expectations.
- Neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse.
- Poor parental relationships and arguments.
- Depression, self-harm or suicide in the family.

Social Factors:

- Difficulty in making relationships / loneliness.
- Being bullied or rejected by peers.

Warning Signs:

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to thoughts of self-harm or suicide, or may actually be self-harming. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should seek further advice from one of the designated teachers for safeguarding children. Possible warning signs include:

- Changes in eating / sleeping / exercise habits (e.g. student may appear overly tired if not sleeping well). Self-harm is sometimes a symptom of an eating disorder or body dysmorphia.
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity and mood e.g. more aggressive or introverted than usual.
- Lowering of academic achievement.
- Changes to dress: wearing long sleeves or thick tights/leggings regardless of weather, refusing to change into PE kits or remove items of clothing in front of other pupils

- Changes in the way they talk about self-harm or suicide, for example beginning to avoid discussing it, or increased mention of it in conversation and work.
- Abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness, loss of hope or lack of control over aspects of their life.

Staff Roles:

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 maintain a supportive and open attitude - a student who has chosen to discuss their concerns with a member of school staff is showing a considerable amount of courage and trust. It is important for the staff member to keep at the forefront of their mind that self-harm is only very rarely a behaviour choice - the urge to self-harm is a compulsion which is symptomatic of a larger issue. The traditional assumption that "cry for help" and "attention-seeking" are synonymous is to be discarded - significant numbers of students who self-harm suffer such low self-esteem that they will express surprise that someone noticed.

Students need to be made aware that it may not be possible for staff to offer complete confidentiality. If you 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 you to do so.

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 using CPOMS.

Following the report, the DSL will decide on the appropriate course of action. This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers.
- Referral to the SMART Room.
- Arrange professional assistance.
- Arrange an appointment with a counsellor.
- Immediately removing the student from lessons if their remaining in class is likely to cause further distress to themselves or their peers.

Further Guidance:

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, a first aider should be called for immediate help.

It is important to encourage students to let you know 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 & being a good friend. They should also be aware that their friend will be treated in a caring and supportive manner.

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 one of the designated teachers for safeguarding children.

When a young person is self-harming it is important to be vigilant 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. Motivations for peer group self-harm can be more complex than those of individual students - it is important in these cases to help each student to discover or disclose their motivation in order to provide the most appropriate support.

Risk factors for peer self-harm:

Peer pressure - students may engage in self-harm as a form or consequence of risk-taking behaviour in order to appeal to or conform with peers. Examples of this type of peer group self-harm are more likely to involve boys, and are also more likely to have a basis in online "challenges", or behaviours imitating characters in other media.

Misplaced support - students may join another pupil who is engaging in self-harm as a form of "tough love", trying to shock their friend out of a self-harming habit by putting themselves at risk. Students may also join another pupil who is engaging in self-harm as a way to show solidarity.

Experimentation - students may join another pupil who is engaging in self-harm, or research and/or attempt self-harm as a group, out of curiosity.

CONNECTING POLICIES FOR SAFEGUARDING PURPOSE

If you are worried about a child or young person (in relation to issues listed below) or have any concerns or questions regarding Child Protection refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence Deputy DSL.

LIST OF SAFEGUARDING/CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

Child missing from education: child missing from home care: child sexual exploitation (CSE): bullying including cyber bullying: domestic violence: drugs: fabricated or induced illness: faith abuse: female genital mutilation (FGM): forced marriage: gangs with youth violence: gender based violence against women and girls (VAWG): mental health: private fostering: preventing radicalisation: sexting: teenage relationship abuse: trafficking.

From DfE, *Keeping children safe in education*: September 2023

Oakwood Academy believes it is very important that all the Safeguarding Policies are read in conjunction with one another to quickly identify and take any necessary and appropriate action to help prevent children and young people up to 18 years of age being at risk of harm.

MORE INFORMATION VISIT: NSPCC.org.uk: TES & NSPCC safeguarding: GOV.UK keeping children safe

SAFEGUARDING CONNECTING POLICIES (situated on the Oakwood website) www.oakwoodacademy.co.uk

Anti-Bullying

Anti- Cyber Bullying

Anti- Racism

Anti-Radicalisation

Attendance

Behaviour

Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures

Care/Intimate Care/Administration of Medication /Touch

Children Missing From Home

Complaints

Child Protection (including the safeguarding of all children)

Data Protection

Drugs

e-safety (online)

FGM

First Aid

Health & Safety

ICT and Computing

Lone Worker

PSHE

Pupil Friendly Safeguarding

SRE

SMSC

Safer Recruitment

SMSC

Trafficking

Visits/Trips

Whistleblowing

The Safeguarding Policies are up-dated annually or as necessary depending on new statutory guidance or legislation.

THE GOVERNORS AGREEMENT TO POLICY

Signed (Chair of Governors) Date

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