



Glenthorne Community Primary School

Self-Harm Policy

At Glenthorne Primary School, we believe our school community should feel safe and protected and, where possible, should receive support in any challenges they face, particularly those that effect the mental and physical well-being. This policy is to support individuals (adults and children in our school community) who may have self-harmed or expressed intentions to self-harm.

What is self-harm?

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. It is usually a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress (Definition taken from NHS Website).

Although people often mistakenly consider self-harm 'attention seeking' behaviour', in reality young people often feel extremely ashamed and go to great lengths to keep it a secret, making it difficult to tell if they're self-harming. Self-harm (also sometimes referred to as self-injury) can cover a variety of actions, further detail can be found in the website links later in this policy.

Possible indicators:

Possible indicators may include the information in the bullet points below, but it is important to realise this is not an exhaustive list. Children may demonstrate some of these behaviours, however self-harm will not be a concern to that child. Likewise, some children may demonstrate different or no suspicious behaviours and may be self-harming or thinking about self-harm.

- Changes in clothing to cover body/ marks
- Reluctance to expose body in activities, such as swimming
- Changes in habits such as eating and sleeping
- Isolation from friends and family

What can your child do if they are thinking about self-harming or have self-harmed?

- Tell someone that they can trust - it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a member of the lunchtime team, a parent, a friend, a prefect or a relative. Generally, it is best to tell an adult they trust straight away so we can begin to offer support.
- Although it can be less common in young children, it is important they do not see themselves as 'weird' to be feeling this way. They are not alone.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. The urge to self-harm in public can be less for some individuals.
- Write down the problem and give it to an adult member of staff. Sometimes it can be hard to say upsetting thoughts or words out loud.
- Consider an alternative way to cope with the emotion or feeling (see appendix 1).

What can other children do if they know someone is thinking about self-harming or has self-harmed?

- They should tell an adult immediately. Teachers will support the person. The person telling will not be in any trouble. The person sharing the information may also need support.
- Do not join in with, or become an audience to, harmful behaviour.
- Stay calm and listen, there is sometimes an underlying cause.

What can parents and carers do if they think their child is thinking about self-harming or has self-harmed?

Parents have an important part to play. We recommend parents should:

- Look out for unusual behaviour in your children.
- Always take an active role in talking to your child. Look for positives in their day too. Having good communication can help a child seek support.
- If you feel your child has self-harmed or implied they might, please inform school. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- If your child tells you about another child who may be at risk, inform the school.
- If your child tells you they have or are thinking of self-harm, tell your child that they have done the right thing by telling you. Talk to them about why they may be feeling this way and stay calm and listen, there can be an underlying cause.
- If they have not told you and you believe they have self-harmed, talk to them about their emotions, behaviours or feelings and stay calm and listen, there can be an underlying cause.
- Seek support from their doctor/ nurse. This may include a referral to a service such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (known as CAMHS), however, not all incidents will require this type of specialist service.

For further advice contact the appropriate agencies, some of which are listed below. Further advice on 'Do's and Don'ts' (see appendix 2).

What will school do when they know?

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness/ risk of the situation. If self-harm is suspected/reported:

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL will be informed.
- A member of staff, usually one of the DSL's, will talk to and listen to the child. They will ask questions about the child's intentions to hurt themselves in the future. If they have harmed themselves, we aim to understand the context of the situation and what support can be given.
- If the root cause of the problem can be identified then, where possible, solutions will be offered and agreed with the child and family.
- Parents will be informed and supported or directed to support, where available.
- All incidents of self-harm will be recorded on a concern form and kept confidentially within school.
- Referral to other service to support, where available and appropriate, will be made with the consent of the parent/carer. Where consent is not obtained, but the school feel there is a risk, we will seek advice in line with our safeguarding policy. (See Appendix 3).
- Further appropriate action, if required, for example: initiating a early help assessment plan; referral to the First Response Team (FRT) or referral to school health (Nurse or GP).

Throughout the process all school staff will aim to be respectful and non-judgemental. We will use different methods of communication to suit the needs of the child e.g one child may prefer to write things down, another may prefer to talk directly to the adult. Where appropriate, we will be open and honest with the child about what we can do and will do to support them, including informing their carer/parent.

Further advice and support:

Further advice and guidance can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/self-harm/>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/self-harm/>

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

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

Contact numbers:

Child Line- 0800 11 11

Samaritans- 116 123 (from a mobile)

Parent Line Plus- 0808 800 2222

NSPCC- 0808 800 5000

School Nurse/ Health Hub- 0300 303 3923, and the Chat Health text number (07520615721 - Young People, 07520615722 - Parents) - both numbers are manned between 0900 & 1700hours Monday- Friday.

This Policy was agreed by *Governors* on:

Chair of Govs: Mrs M Such

Date: 28.01.2026

Headteacher: Miss R Woodall

Date: 28.01.2026

Review

This policy will be reviewed 25.01.2028

Appendix 1- Alternative strategies to try

Things to make you feel better such as:

- Taking a bath
- Reading a book
- Exercise
- Talking to friends/ socializing
- Cuddle a soft toy
- Hug a loved one
- Listen to calming music
- Say the things you like or other say they like about you

Something to use the energy, for example:

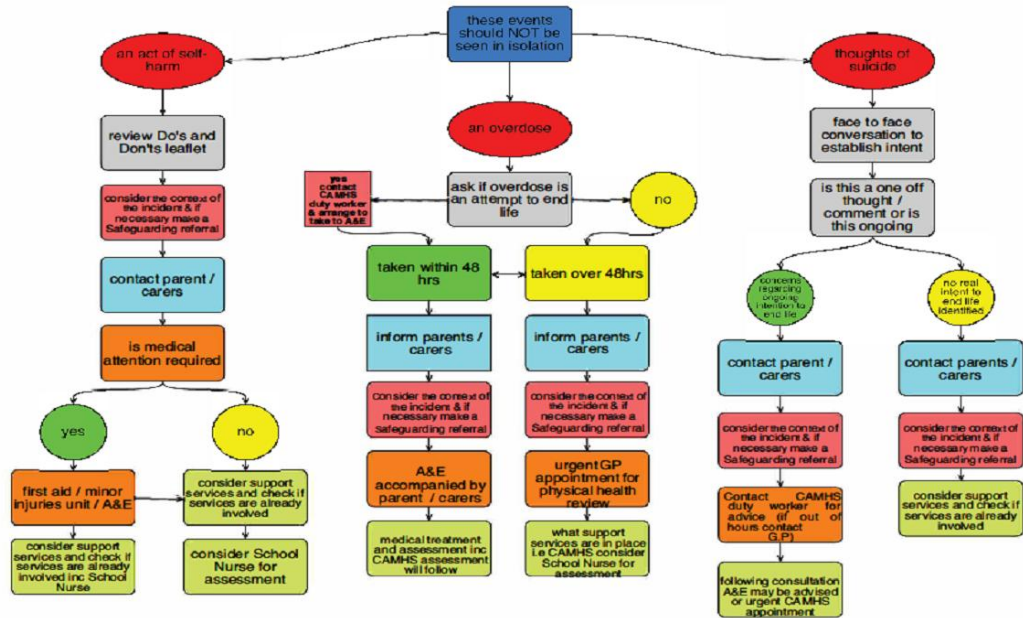
- Squeezing ice
- Crumple paper
- Hit a pillow
- Rip old material
- Scream or cry
- Bang a drum or pot or pan
- Squeeze a ball
- Exercise e.g. go for a walk

Appendix 2- Self-Harm and Suicide Awareness Advice 'Do's and Don't's'

Do	Don't
Stay Calm - do not show anxiety, disapproval or disgust. Be prepared to be shocked – then ...	Panic - Unfortunately, many young people self-harm - it is a complex issue and each young person will have a different reason or story behind their behaviour – panicking will not help the young person feel safe and contained.
Listen - just being listened to can be a brilliant support and bring great relief to someone: particularly if they have never spoken to anyone about their self-harming before	Don't send the young person away - make some time for them - either help them find other ways of coping or support them in getting the right kind of support.
Listening intently - does not just require ears - Observe the young person's non-verbal clues -look at their body language - does what they say and what you see match up?	Don't be judgemental – keep an open mind about the behaviour and don't refer to it as “attention seeking / needing”.
What is the underlying mood state – is it • Anger? • Sadness? • Frustration?	Don't work alone - you may still see a young person alone, but you will need to offload with an appropriate staff member or colleague from another agency.
Think carefully before you act - what is in the best interest of the young person?	Don't offer to take the young person to your home environment.
Remember - most episodes of self-harm have nothing to do with suicide. The easiest way to differentiate between suicide and self-harm is by asking the young person what was their intent behind the self-harm behaviour; Did they intend to seriously harm or kill themselves? If they did, ask what plans they had made or what their continuing thoughts of suicide are.	Don't give them your mobile number or house number – or get into texting the young person. It is more appropriate and professional for you to help the young person identify their supportive network, than for you to take this upon yourself. Self-harming behaviours can be extremely concerning, but you cannot offer objective support if you become enmeshed within the young person's difficulty.
Do Ask; The act of asking this will not increase their chances of attempting suicide in the future.	
Do refer the Young Person to your School Nurse if the child / young person attends school	
Do Treat a suicide intention as an emergency - do not leave the young person alone or in a vulnerable environment - get help and support as soon as possible and remain calm.	

Appendix 3- School decision making about seeking extra support

Referral pathway into child mental health services



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