

# Hurworth School

## Self Injury and Related Issues Policy

**Accepted by:** The Governors

**Senior Leadership Team Lead Reviewer:** Raising Achievement Coordinator (Year 7)

**Created:** March 2011

**Review Cycle:** 3 Years

**Date for Review:** March 2014

### **The purpose of a Self Injury Policy**

At Hurworth we have a dedicated approach to the health and happiness of our pupils. The aim of the Self Injury and Related Issues Policy is to provide a clear set of protocols to adopt for managing any issues that may arise surrounding the syndrome of self-injury. Such protocols include: -

- Recognising the warning signs that a child may be self harming
- Broaching the subject of self harm to a pupil you suspect of deliberately hurting themselves
- How to react positively if a pupil comes to you wishing to discuss their self harm
- Short term individualised plans of action for the care and management of the pupil
- Long term individualised plans of action for the continued support, assistance and monitoring of the pupil
- How best to assist in building confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing of the pupil
- Practical and emotional support for the staff members dealing with a self harming pupil
- Provision of clear and standard guidelines for all staff in contact with the pupil
- Implementation of a harm minimisation strategy to prevent the spreading of self injury in school
- Training and education surrounding the issue of self harm for all staff
- Education and awareness campaigns for pupils

### **What is self injury**

Self injury is a deliberate, non suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on your body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. Self injury is often habitual, chronic and repetitive. Self injury may include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing (without suicidal intent), deliberate bone-breaking/spraining, eating disorders and drug / alcohol misuse.

### **Associated risk factors that may contribute to self harm**

Self injury is a coping mechanism which may be a result of underlying problems, some of which may include:

- Low self esteem
- Perfectionism

- Mental health issues such as depression and anxiety
- The onset of more complicated mental health issues e.g. bi-polar
- Problems at home or at school
- Physical or emotional abuse

### **Physical signs of self injury**

- Obvious cuts, scratches or burns that do not appear to be accidental
- Frequent 'accidents' that cause injury
- Regularly bandaged arms / wrists
- Reluctant to take part in physical exercise
- Wearing long sleeves and trousers even during hot weather

### **Warning signs associated with self injury**

- Drug and / or alcohol misuse or risk taking behaviour
- Negativity and lack of Self Esteem
- Out of character behaviour
- Bullying other pupils
- A sudden change in friends or withdrawal from a group

### **Roles and responsibilities of Head Teacher, other staff, and governors:**

#### **The governing body will:**

- Ensure self-injury education is in the school curriculum.

#### **The Head Teacher will:**

Appoint a lead officer for safeguarding to be responsible for self-injury matters, and liaise with them.

- Ensure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training about self-injury.
- Ensure that self-injury policy is followed by all members of staff
- Ensure that education about self-injury neither promotes or 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, emotional support, a key worker and or counsellor

#### **All staff and teachers are expected to:**

- Listen to pupils 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 pupils that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help.
- Guide pupils towards seeking health and emotional well being

- Promoting problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress
- Enable pupils to find places and people 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 take place at school
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot
- Be aware of support mechanisms that already exist in school and how to access them

**The designated staff member(s) will:**

- 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 head teacher
- Contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the pupil in this process. Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child which is available. Monitor the pupil'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 feelings and distress.

**Pupils 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 pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to them-selves, and know when confidentiality must be broken

**Parents will be encouraged to:**

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

**Relationship to other policies**

Child Protection  
 SEN  
 Healthy Schools Policy  
 Safeguarding Policy  
 Behaviour Policy  
 Safeguarding Strategy  
 Management of Pupil Behaviour Policy

## **Arrangements for monitoring**

A self injury and related issues referral form will be completed for every instance of self injury. Copies of such a form are logged in the self injury file and a copy made to the students records.