

OVERSTONE PARK SCHOOL

Self-Harm Policy



Self-Harm Policy

Date	Review Date	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
September 2026	September 2027	Mrs D York	Miss A West Ms J Sinnamon Mrs L Vippond

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Health (Discrimination) Act 2013
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (Detained Persons) Regulations 2015

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE 2014)
- Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools: Departmental Advice (DfE 2026)
- Promoting Children's Mental Health within Early Years and School Settings (DfES)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years. Statutory Guidance for Organisations Who Work With and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE) and (DoH)
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools and Proprietors of Academies in England (DfE)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and take account of the information contained in the DfE documents 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keep Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE 2026)' as the safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to everyone in this school.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is best defined as:

'protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes'.

(Keep Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (DfE 2014))

We believe self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body and is a way of coping with:

Individual Factors

- Alcohol abuse
- Anxiety
- Bullying
- Depression
- Drug abuse

- Eating disorders
- Hopelessness
- Impulsivity
- Low self-esteem
- Poor problem-solving

Family Factors

- Abuse
- Drug or alcohol misuse in the family
- Excessive punishments or restrictions
- Family history of mental health
- Family history of self-harm
- Neglect
- Poor relationships with parents
- Unreasonable expectations

Social Factors

- Abuse
- Bullying
- Difficulties in peer relationships
- Friends who self-harm
- Influences from the media and internet
- Peer rejection

Self-harm can become very addictive as it produces endorphins which produces an adrenaline rush. Self-harm is a form of self-punishment. It is very important to tackle self-harming behaviour at an early stage.

People who self-harm are of all ages, of either sex, from all social or cultural backgrounds and is very common in people with Autism Spectrum Disorders or people with learning difficulties. However, people who self-harm are at high risk of wanting to end their lives but many do not wish to end their lives as they use self-harming as a way of coping with emotional distress.

We believe we have a very important role to play in preventing self-harm and in supporting those who do self-harm. At all times we need to be aware of the signs of self-harm such as:

- cutting, scratching, scraping or picking the skin
- burning or scalding the skin
- punching themselves
- banging or hitting the head
- excessive scouring or scrubbing of the body
- overdosing or poisoning on prescription medication or non-prescription medication
- misusing alcohol
- swallowing hazardous materials, substances or inedible objects
- starvation or binge eating

We have the responsibility to observe the educational, social, behavioural, physical and emotional welfare of all pupils. Therefore, it is our duty to be alert to and to ensure that we act immediately if we believe someone is displaying any of the physical, behavioural or psychological warning signs that may lead to self-harm. School personnel will report any pupil causing concern to the designated lead for safeguarding who will take the appropriate action by:

- speaking with the pupil

- contacting parents/carers
- making a referral with parental consent to CAMHS

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

Aims

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.
- To be observe the educational, social, behavioural, physical and emotional welfare of all pupils.
- To help prevent self-harm and to support those who self-harm.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation connected to this policy.
- To work with other schools and the local authority to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Principal and Senior Leadership Team

The Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will:

- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- ensure good practice is shared throughout the school;
- work closely with the link governor and the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- ensure those pupils who do self-harm get the necessary treatment they require such as discussing their problem with their GP, referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), or counselling;
- have in place safeguarding procedures for pupils who self-harm whilst in school;
- ensure support is in place for parents of pupils who self-harm;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff and governors so that they are well informed about self-harm;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by speaking with pupils, school personnel, and parents;
- annually report on the success and development of this policy.

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- ensure the implementation of this policy;
- ensure everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- work closely with the Principal;
- be trained in child protection policy procedures;
- renew training every two years in order to understand the assessment process, the procedures of a child protection case conference and review conference, and the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;

- have in place a secure and accurate record system of all concerns and referrals;
- take the lead in dealing with child protection issues and in deciding what steps should be taken;
- raise awareness of the need to protect pupils who might be vulnerable to radicalisation and involvement in terrorism;
- raise awareness that female genital mutilation (FGM) affects girls particularly from north African countries and it is illegal to allow girls to undergo this practice either in this country or abroad;
- ensure that all concerns regarding FGM and vulnerability to radicalisation are reported;
- keep a confidential Child Protection Register of all those pupils known to be at risk and only if it is confirmed by social services that the child is at risk;
- ensure all confidential child protection information is stored securely in central place;
- inform parents that information is kept on their children;
- ensure that no information will be disclosed to a parent if this would put a child at risk of significant harm;
- be trained in working with all agencies;
- familiarise school personnel with the policy and procedures;
- investigate and deal with all cases of suspected or actual problems associated with child protection;
- ensure parents are aware that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made;
- make child protection referrals;
- record all child protection referrals;
- co-ordinate action within the school;
- liaise and seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer when the need arises;
- liaise with social care and other agencies;
- record the transfer of all child protection files of any pupil leaving to join another school;
- provide support for any child at risk;
- not promise confidentiality to any child but always act in the interests of a child;
- act as a source of advice within the school;
- help create a culture within the school of listening to children;
- keep up to date with all new guidance on safeguarding children;
- keep all school personnel up to date with any changes to procedures;
- organise appropriate training for school;
- ensure all incidents are recorded, reported and kept confidential;
- keep all paperwork up to date;
- report back to the appropriate school personnel when necessary;
- ensure that there is a smooth transition of responsibilities and information when a new Designated Safeguarding Lead takes over the role;
- annually review the policy with the Principal.

Role of School Personnel & Volunteers

School personnel and volunteers must:

- recognise that child protection is their main responsibility;
- treat children's welfare with the utmost importance and sensitivity;
- develop pupils self-confidence and self-esteem;
- be aware of the background of the children in their care;
- be made aware of this policy and all other safeguarding policies and procedures during induction, the school personnel handbook and training;
- receive basic level 1 training at least once every three years;
- be aware of the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead;

- be trained in identifying signs of self-harm and other warning signs such as mood swings, becoming socially withdrawn, changes in eating and sleeping habits, and expressing feelings of self-harm, suicide or failure;
- be aware of the effects of abuse and neglect on children;
- undertake training on responding to a child;
- be alert at all times to the signs of abuse namely physical, emotional, sexual or neglect;
- know how to report any suspected case of harm or abuse;
- report any concerns that they have about girls at risk of FGM;
- report any concerns that they have about pupils who may be vulnerable to radicalisation;
- establish a school and classroom environment where children feel safe to talk and where school personnel listen to children;
- provide opportunities through the curriculum to address relevant issues and topics in order to promote their safety and well-being;
- encourage pupils to assess risks to themselves;
- report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- know what to do if a child makes a disclosure;
- not promise confidentiality to any child but always act in the interests of a child;
- receive support and counselling if they feel distressed from being involved with a case or incident;
- be kept up to date with changes in procedures;
- be prepared to attend a Strategy Meeting;
- be prepared to attend a Child Protection Case Conference;
- ensure that they conduct themselves correctly at all times and do not put themselves at risk;
- be aware of the Safer Recruitment processes and checks;
- implement the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination;
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community.

Role of Pupils

Pupils must:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;
- be aware that they can confide in school personnel to discuss any concerns they may have;
- be encouraged to work in partnership with the school by making decisions and exercising choice in relation to their educational programme;
- listen carefully to all instructions given by the teacher;
- ask for further help if they do not understand;
- treat others, their work and equipment with respect;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers must:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;

- attend training covering: what is self-harm, what makes a young person self-harm, is your child self-harming, reasons for self-harm, possible future problems, supporting your child, managing injuries from self-harm, alternatives to self-harm, when to seek further help, informing other family members, attending to your own needs and sources of help;
- work in partnership with support agencies and the school;
- comply with this policy for the benefit of their children;
- be asked to take part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

Raising Awareness of this Policy

- School Handbook/Prospectus
- School website
- Staff Handbook
- Meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- School events
- Meetings with school personnel
- Written communications with home such as weekly newsletters and end of half term newsletters
- Annual report to parents
- Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- Information displays in the main school entrance
- Text messages
- Email
- Social media (Facebook, X, virtual pin boards, school blog)

Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion;
- receive training on induction which specifically covers all aspects of this policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Pupil Behaviour & Discipline, Anti-Bullying, Mental Health, Stress Management, Medical & First Aid, Equal opportunities and Inclusion;
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information;
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment)

Principal:	Mrs M F Brown	Date:	September 2026
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