KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION BIRMINGHAM

Educational excellence for our City

KING EDWARD VI ACADEMY TRUST BIRMINGHAM

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If you need someone to talk to, they listen. They won't judge or tell you what to do.
https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/

Call any time, day or night. Whatever you're going through, you can call any time from any phone for FREE. **Call 116 123**

Write an email to: jo@samaritans.org. Sometimes, writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you understand them better. Be aware that it may take several days to get a response by email.

Self-Harm Policy

Responsible Board/Committee	Academy Trust and Foundation Board
Policy Type	Hybrid Policy
Policy Owner	Foundation Leader in Education – Safeguarding and Wellbeing
Statutory	No
Publish Online	No
Last Review Date	March 2026
Review Cycle	Annual This policy will not expire but will be reviewed as per its designated cycle. This policy remains effective whilst the review is taking place and will only become non-applicable once the updated version has been approved.
Next Review Date	March 2027
Version	2

School	King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Girls
School Policy Owner	DSL
LGB Approval Date	19th October 2026

Related Documents/Policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The King Edward VI Foundation (the 'Foundation Charity') (registration no. 529051) charity comprises two Independent Schools and the Foundation Office. The King Edward VI Academy Trust Birmingham (the 'Academy Trust') (registration no. 10654935) incorporates the Academies. (The Foundation Charity and the Academy Trust are collectively known as the 'Foundation'.)

The Foundation Leader in Education – Safeguarding and Wellbeing and the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (Ms V Ridley) Senior Mental Health Lead (Ms L Maginnis) are responsible for reviewing and updating these procedures.

We fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:

The Education and Inspections Act 2006
Education Act 1996 and 2011
Children Act 1989
Human Rights Act 1998
The Equality Act 2010 (Part 6)
Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3)
Keeping Children Safe in Education
Working Together to Safeguard Children
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice
Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Filtering and monitoring standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Government Guidance: Mental health and behaviour in schools
West Midlands Regional Child Protection Procedures

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to set out a framework outlining the King Edward VI Foundation and Academy Trust's approach to safeguarding and positive mental health in relation to self-harm.

"Self-harm is any intentional act of harming your own body, generally as a way of managing distressing or overwhelming feelings and experiences."

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE's) definition of self-harm (2022)

Because there may be some temporary relief at the start, self-harm can become someone's normal way of dealing with life's difficulties. This means it is important to talk to someone as early as possible to get the right support and help. Learning new coping strategies to deal with these difficulties can make it easier to break the cycle of self-harm in the long term.

COMMITMENT

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who encounters young people and their families has a role to play in fulfilling this responsibility effectively, including identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.

In line with Birmingham City Council's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for Schools, Educational Settings and Providers of Education Services for Children and Young People, we believe that:

- Our pupils have the right to be protected from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- Our pupils have the right to experience their optimum mental and physical health.
- Every child has the right to an education. Pupils need to be safe and to feel safe in school.
- Pupils need support that matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.
- Our pupils have the right to express their views, feelings, and wishes and voice their own values and beliefs.
- Our pupils should be encouraged to respect each other's values and support each other.
- Our pupils have the right to be supported to meet their emotional, social, mental health, and educational needs. Our school will ensure clear systems and processes are in place to identify these needs, including considering when mental health needs may become a safeguarding need.

- Our school will contribute to the prevention of abuse, risk/involvement in serious violent crime, victimisation, bullying (including homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and cyberbullying), exploitation, extreme behaviours, discriminatory views, and risk-taking behaviours.

AIMS AND VALUES

As a school, we prioritise and are committed to the wellbeing of all members of our school community. Staff and students are committed to developing resilience through connectedness, kindness, and compassion.

Through the values, ethos, and culture we advocate every day in line with our school vision, we aim to develop and nurture students and colleagues with sensitivity and mutual respect.

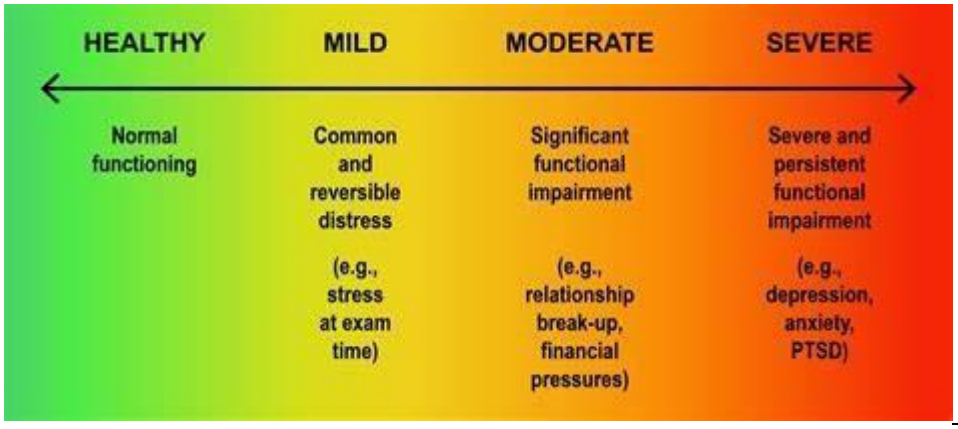
The aim of this policy is to recognise the need to support our pupils who use self-harm as a coping mechanism and to promote their welfare by:

- Increasing understanding and awareness of self-harm so needs can be identified as early as possible;
- Educating our staff on the warning signs that a young person may be struggling;
- Providing support to staff working with students who self-harm;
- Providing support to students who self-harm and their peers and parents/carers;
- Working with pupils and their parents/carers to help them find the right support service for the young person;
- Introducing age-appropriate work within the PSHE curriculum and form time for resilience, self-esteem, and self-harm;
- Implementing Early Help strategies as soon as concerns arise;
- Setting out clear guidelines on the school's procedures for responding to incidents of self-harm on our school site;
- Ensuring that safeguarding underpins all relevant aspects of process and policy development in school.

OUR VISION FOR WELLBEING

UNDERSTANDING WELLBEING

Emotional wellbeing is not a fixed state; it can fluctuate throughout a person's life. It can be influenced by various **internal** and **external** factors, such as life events, relationships, stressors, and learned coping strategies.



pressbooks.nscc.

Why do people self-harm?
Self-harm is a coping strategy that helps people to manage their emotional hurt or stress. The reasons for self-harm are different for each person and often complex. Here are some of the common reasons:

- A desire to escape an unbearable situation or intolerable emotional pain
- To feel more in control (when feeling trapped or helpless)
- Relieve tension (to release bottled-up emotions)
- Punish themselves (to manage feelings of guilt or shame)
- To feel more connected and alive (linked to apathy and low mood)
- To express anger or hostility (directing anger towards themselves so as not to cause conflict)
- To induce guilt or to increase caring from others
- As a soothing strategy (to help manage difficult memories or meet a sensory need for stimulation)

Evidence-base: Richardson, R., Connell, T., Foster, M., Blamires, J., Keshoor, S., Moir, C., & Zeng, I. S. (2024). Risk and protective factors of self-harm and suicidality in adolescents: An umbrella review with meta-analysis. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 53(6), 1301–1322

Some young people don't always have a reason. Even if the intent to die is not high, self-harming may express a powerful sense of despair and needs to be taken seriously. Some people who do not intend to kill themselves may do so because they do not realise the seriousness of the method they have chosen or because they do not get help in time. Although there is a known link between self-harm and suicidal ideation, many people do not intend to take their own life when they self-harm.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors

- Support the school Senior Leadership Team in awareness and understanding of self-harm and how it should be approached within the curriculum and training for staff and, where appropriate, parents/carers.
- Support the implementation of the school policy around self-harm.

Headteacher

- To lead a whole school culture of positive mental wellbeing, including awareness of emotional wellbeing, mental health issues and self-harm, and be supported to do so.
- Support training for staff on emotional wellbeing and mental health issues, including self-harm.
- Ensure school adherence to the Ofsted Inspection Framework, which requires schools to support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence, and

independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy as one of the criteria in the "personal development" section of the framework.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Implement the Self-Harm Policy, ensuring all staff are aware of and understand the policy and what procedures to follow.
- Ensure that all students know they can talk to members of the Pastoral Team, including the DSL and Senior Mental Health Lead, if they are experiencing or thinking about self-harming or are aware of another student who is thinking about self-harming/has self-harmed.
- Be aware of what organisations and key services in the area can support young people who self-harm and ensure all students, parents, and staff know where to access.
- Maintain up-to-date records on My Concern of students experiencing self-harm, incidents of self-harm, concerns surrounding the root cause, and support provided to students and share appropriate information or escalate concerns to the Senior Leadership Team, School Governing Body, and Foundation Leader in Education – Safeguarding and Wellbeing when necessary.
- Liaise with the relevant Pastoral Leaders and Deputy Head to manage a student's return to school after a period of inpatient treatment or a period off school in a way that is supportive to the individual student but also supportive of the rest of the pupils.
- Be confident and up to date in understanding self-harm, including specific training where required.
- Inform students' parents/carers, or support the Pastoral Team to do so, and liaise with them on how to support their child.
- Respond to any mention of suicidal feelings or behaviour as a matter of urgency.
- Ensure that all first aiders are provided with resources to understand the medical support needed by someone who has self-harmed.
- Take care of their own and the Pastoral Team's emotional wellbeing and seek support/supervision as and when necessary, including signposting to employeeassistance.org.uk, Education Support and external supervision.

Staff

- To support the positive wellbeing of young people in school, staff are encouraged to build and maintain positive relationships with pupils. This may include being a listening ear to students who may be struggling with their thoughts and emotions and having knowledge of pupils for whom there is a safeguarding and/or wellbeing concern.
- To mitigate risk in school, safeguarding and attendance policies and procedures must be adhered to, i.e. ensuring accurate completion of registers and following missing pupil protocols.
- If a young person approaches you and talks about self-harm, they are putting a great deal of trust in you. In this situation, confidentiality will be very important to them, but it's important to remember that you cannot promise total confidentiality. Follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and share any disclosure with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Remind the pupil that their health, safety, and welfare are paramount and that you are obliged to share information. Gain consent if possible. Let them know who you are telling and what you are sharing. Otherwise, they may feel their trust has been betrayed.
- A member of the pastoral and safeguarding team will usually share information with parents/carers, too. Discussing this with the young person and gaining consent, if possible, is good practice – a good conversation will often encourage a young person to accept this. Still, addressing any fears they may have about this is very important. (If letting parents/carers know poses a risk of harm to the young person, for example, where abuse is suspected, a decision should be made in line with safeguarding policies and not individually by staff.)

SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR SCHOOL

We put relationships at the heart of every aspect of school life to create an environment where everyone feels they belong and are safe, cared for, and valued. This approach emphasises connection through interactions and communications that are respectful, honest, compassionate, and inclusive.

In our school, we support our students' wellbeing in several ways. For example:

- Approach all students using TIAAS principles as set out in the Relational Behaviour Policy.
- All students receive explicit mental health education and signposting through the PSHE curriculum;
- Students are taught good social and emotional skills and can identify feelings, thoughts, and emotions;
- We use assemblies, classroom displays, and posters to promote emotional literacy and self-esteem and ensure students know where to go and who to talk to if they need support;
- We take opportunities to reduce the stigma around self-harm and/or mental ill health;
- Peer support through a mentoring system;
- We address perfectionism and comparison traits when necessary.

We recognise that specifically during Key Stage **transitions,** young people may experience, for example, disruption of routine, separation anxiety, or identity and self-esteem challenges. These changes can affect how emotionally safe they feel, so in our school we: (include examples)

Some staff who have received specific self-harm training for example through the Anna Freud charity.

Identification

The school will aim to identify risks early through:

- Daily interaction with Form Tutors
- Group or 1:1 sessions with peer mentors
- 1:1 intervention work with a member of the Pastoral Team
- School-wide TIAAS approach.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The DSL will:

- Ensure this policy is contextualised annually and the procedures and implementation in school are updated and reviewed regularly.
- Work with the Foundation Leader in Education – Safeguarding and Wellbeing and the School Safeguarding Governor (Jo Ellins) to evaluate the impact of the policy.
- Ensure this policy is available publicly and parents/carers know referrals to external agencies may be made.