Draft School Suicide Prevention Policy

(taken from Papyrus uk)

# Statement of purpose

* 1. This school or college community is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people and that we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide.
  2. We want to make sure that pupils at our school or college are as suicide-safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, pupils and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a Suicide-Safer school or college.

# Our beliefs about suicide and contributory factors

* 1. This school or college acknowledges that
     1. Suicidal thoughts are common We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common among young people.
     2. Suicide is complex.
  2. **We believe that every suicide is a tragedy.**   
     There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person. However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help prevent future deaths.
  3. **Stigma inhibits learning –**

stigma can kill We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to seeking help and a barrier to offering help. This school or college is dedicated to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos.

* 1. **Suicide is everyone’s business**   
     As a school or college community, we recognise that pupils may seek out someone who they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to facilitate the reporting of any risks or concerns.
  2. **Safety is very important**

We want to support our pupils, sometimes working in partnership with family, caregivers, external agencies, and other professionals where this may enhance suicide-safety.

* 1. **Suicide is a difficult thing to talk about**

We know that a pupil who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will provide trained adults who are able to identify when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

* 1. **Talking about suicide does not create or increase risk**
  2. **Those with personal experience have a unique role to play** in the development and refinement of this Suicide-Safer Policy We will endeavour to involve anyone from our community who has personal experience of suicide, either having struggled themselves or supported someone with thoughts of suicide.

# How we help ensure an active person-centred suicide prevention and intervention policy

* 1. Our school or college has a named individual who is responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of this policy.
  2. Our school or college has a Suicide Intervention Team whose members understand this policy and are trained in Suicide Intervention. We will ensure that a team of ( ) people have undertaken Suicide Intervention Training so that at least ( )\* trained staff are on duty during our school or college opening hours. The Suicide Intervention Team will be the point of escalation for any concerns about a pupil or young person. The Suicide Intervention Team will keep confidential records of pupils at risk of suicide to ensure some continuity of care within the intervention model.
  3. We will endeavour to ensure that all our staff are suicide aware. This means that all staff inductions will include suicide awareness, i.e. how to spot signs, what to do and how to escalate any concerns to the Suicide Intervention Team.
  4. We will ensure that all pupils are suicide aware. This means that we will ensure there is an annual programme of awareness-raising events and campaigns that equip our pupils to know how to spot signs, what to do and how to escalate any concerns to the Suicide Intervention Team.
  5. We will regularly consider whether the school or college should be represented on the Local Authority Suicide Prevention Group. This ensures that our suicide prevention work is integral to that in our wider community. It can also help identify and address possible patterns of imitative suicidal behaviours across the wider community.
  6. We will be clear about how we enhance the physical safety of our environment including the removal of potential ligature points, restricting access to places which facilitate jumping, and securely storing harmful substances.
  7. Confidentiality - In order to protect life whenever we have serious concerns for the welfare of a pupil, we will break confidentiality and share information with the necessary services, including emergency services.
  8. We recognise that pupils may experience periods of poor mental health while attending our school or college. We will endeavour to put in place mechanisms which allow staff that have regular interaction with the pupil to be able to flag or review any concerns about individual pupils including suspected suicidal thoughts. Ideally this flagging will be electronic and immediate e.g. ‘My concern’ feature on the school or college intranet home page. Pupils that are flagged in this way will be reviewed regularly and routinely by nominated staff so that patterns of concerning behaviour can be spotted and the necessary steps can be put in place to keep them safe, including meeting them face to face.
  9. When we identify a pupil at risk of suicide and decide to engage external services, such as a hospital A&E department or a crisis centre, we will have explicit guidelines on the pathways that apply. Those guidelines will be developed in co-operation with the external services and will be reviewed regularly as the provision of such services change over time.
  10. We recognise that some pupils may relocate to the school or college community when they join us but that they will still spend long periods of the year at home. We will look at ways we can help make the medical support they need (medication, counselling) consistent so that the pupil has a continuity of care.
  11. We will develop a ‘Helpers in the Community’ document (see template Appendix B). This will inform and equip our community about help that is available locally and nationally to support someone who is experiencing poor mental health and emotional wellbeing.

# How we help ensure a sensitive and safe suicide postvention provision

* 1. Our school or college has a Suicide Postvention Team whose role it is to respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our Suicide Postvention Team will have a defined responsibility within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media.
  2. We will be clear about how we deal with an inquest after someone has died by suicide in our school or college. We will support the authorities in their work but will be mindful of the distress an inquest causes to the bereaved people. We will also be mindful of the impact supporting an inquest can have on staff.
  3. We will record and monitor deaths by suicide and the impact on the community. This will include on-going monitoring of pupil deaths including suicides, suspected suicides and, if possible, self-harm. Monitoring of self-harm might be done through the collection of information from pupil support services and pupil health services.

We will also consider

* Recording and monitoring the uptake of bereavement support services by pupils after a suicide
* Surveying pupils regarding how supported they feel
* Assessing the impact of interventions on staff
* Reviewing lessons learned and any suggested changes to procedures and provision of well-being services
* Identification of multiple events, such as two suicides in a relatively short period of time (e.g. one term) which may indicate a possible suicide cluster, including investigating possible connections between individuals, their circumstances and their suicidal behaviour. Multiple suspected suicides may not be connected, but their occurrence can nonetheless have consequences. For example, in some vulnerable individuals it may contribute to thoughts of suicide as a way of dealing with problems. Where concerns arise regarding a possible suicide cluster we will immediately communicate with the local authority Public Health Suicide Prevention Lead\* and collaborate closely with them to development a response plan

# Ongoing support and development of our policy and practice

* 1. Our Leadership Team will ensure that ongoing reviews take place, that processes are updated in line with best practice and that on-going training is undertaken when necessary.
  2. Where possible we will include or consult with members of our community who have personal experience of suicidal ideation, either their own or as a concerned other, in the design, development and continuous refinement of this policy.
  3. We will refresh and update our ‘Helpers in the Community’ document on an annual basis and we will share it across our community as part of our regular suicide awareness raising campaigns.