

GORDON'S SCHOOL

SELF-HARM POLICY

The core principle that guides everything we do is **Putting Students First**.

1. Aim

This policy sets out clear guidelines on the School's procedures for managing and supporting those Students who deliberately self-harm and is for Students, their parents/ carers and staff. It is consistent with Gordon's School's overall approach to promoting positive social and emotional well-being for Students in school and tackling mental health problems of Students in more serious difficulty (see Mental Health Policy).

2. Self Harm

Self Harm is a term used when someone injures or harms him or herself on purpose (also called self injury or deliberate self-harm) rather than by accident. Common examples include cutting, hitting, scratching or burning. People self-harm for a number of reasons which include managing difficult emotions, very low self-esteem or because of an underlying mental health issue.

3. Raising a concern

If a Student wishes to disclose that they self-harm they can approach any member of staff that they are comfortable talking to. This member of staff will document what they are told and inform the Deputy Head Pastoral (DHP) or the Designated Safe Guarding Lead (DSL) within 24 hours.

If a disclosure is made by a friend, the member of staff should record what they are told and inform the Deputy Head Pastoral or the Designated Safe Guarding Lead within 24 hours.

Where a member of staff suspects self-harm they should inform the Deputy Head Pastoral or the Designated Safe Guarding Lead within 24 hours.

4. Chain of action when a concern is raised

- The Student is spoken to regarding the concern by their House parent, Head of House, School Nurse or other nominated member of staff.
- Medical advice will be sought regarding first aid, wound healing and measures to prevent infection.
- The Student is encouraged to discuss their self-harm with their parent /carer. Where a Student is deemed to be at serious risk of harm parents / carers are informed, preferably with the Student's consent. In consultation with DHP or DSL, a member of staff may need to disclose information without the Student's consent.
- Parents/ carers may be invited to school for a meeting.
- Parents /carers are recommended to seek consultation with their family GP and to inform the school of the outcome within 72 hours of that consultation.
- The Student will be offered counselling in school by a qualified and independent counsellor.
- The Student may have a Red Card, so they can exit the class and go to a designated safe place within school. The member of staff should email the school office.
- Where necessary the school will seek advice from C-SPA (Safeguarding body) and/or refer directly to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- The Head of House will write an Individual Welfare Plan (IWP) and meet with and monitor the Student's progress.
- The Head of House will ensure follow-up meetings or telephone appointments are arranged between themselves and the parents/carers so that progress can be monitored and communicated.

5. Preventing the spread of Self-harm within the school

- Wounds, injuries and scars should not be openly displayed
- Provision of long-sleeved PE kits may be necessary for those who self-harm
- Timetable changes, such as suspension from lessons that require self-harm to be revealed to others (for example PE) are likely to occur
- Any Student who self-harms in front of others may be taken to a safe place.
- Implements that are used to cause self-harm (razors, blades etc.) will be confiscated when it is practical to do so.
- Based on medical feedback, the suitability and safety of the Student to attend school either as a Day or Residential Boarder will be assessed.
- Education and awareness via the PSHE curriculum and other health promotion opportunities will be delivered throughout the year.
- Training for staff will also be delivered.
- School Comms messages may be used to raise awareness of self-harm amongst parents and carers.

6. Self-harm with suicidal intent

In the case of self-harm with suicidal intent, immediate steps will be taken to inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Student's parents. The Student's return to school will be risk-assessed following medical and parental consultation.

7. School Nurse, Doctor and Counsellor Confidentiality

In accordance with the School Nurses', Doctor's and Counsellors' professional obligations, the School Nurses, Doctor and Counsellors will respect a Student's confidence except on the very rare occasions when, having failed to persuade that Student, or his or her authorised representative, to give consent to divulgence, the doctor or nurse considers that it is in the Student's better interests or necessary for the protection of the wider school community, to breach confidence and pass information to a relevant person or body.

Julie Unsworth
Lead School Nurse

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