

Self-harming and Suicidal Behaviour

Any young person or vulnerable adult who actively engages in self-harming behaviour, intent to self-harm, suicidal thoughts, plans or behaviour, should be taken seriously and appropriate help and intervention offered at that point.

Definitions and Meanings:

<u>Suicide</u>	Self-harm, resulting in death The act of killing oneself deliberately
<u>Attempted Suicide</u>	Self-harm with intent to take life, resulting in non-fatal injury
<u>Suicidal Ideation</u>	Suicidal thoughts about how to kill oneself.
<u>Suicide Plan</u>	A clear suicide plan outlining the process to be followed.
<u>Deliberate Self harm/Self-harm</u>	In its broadest sense, self-harm describes a wide range of things that people do to themselves in a deliberate and usually hidden way, which are damaging. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cutting behaviours• Other forms of self-harm, such as burning, scalding, head banging, hair pulling• Self-poisoning / overdosing.

The difference between **attempted** suicide and deliberate self-harm / injury is not always clear. Self-harm is **not** a common precursor to suicide. It can mean different things to different individuals

Responding to the Young Person or Vulnerable Adult

In every case, appropriate College staff should be made aware a young person or vulnerable adult has self-harmed, or is contemplating this or suicide and should talk with them without delay. Competent staff includes any member of the Safeguarding Team, Counsellors and Mental Health Advisers. They should:

- Automatically notify parents / carers or next of kin / partner / appropriate person regardless of the individual's age having initially responded to the needs of the individual. (Counsellors, Mental Health Advisers, Safeguarding Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead must use their professional skills to advise if a parent should, or should not, be informed).

- Ascertain if they have taken any substances, including tablets, or injured themselves. If so, the young person or vulnerable adult should receive urgent medical attention, even if they appear well, as harmful effects can sometimes be delayed;
- Try to find out what may be troubling them and explore what their intentions were;
- Ascertain what help or support the young person or vulnerable adult would ideally wish (with no promises being made).

A supportive attitude, respect and understanding of the young person or vulnerable adult, along with a non-judgmental stance, is of prime importance. Note also that a young person or vulnerable adult who has a learning disability will find it more difficult to express their thoughts.

Young Person or Vulnerable Adult Requiring Immediate Hospital Treatment for Physical Harm

Where a young person or vulnerable adult requires immediate hospital treatment in relation to physical self-harm, practice should be as follows:

- Initial First Aid assessment and treatment should take place by a competent First Aider.
- Professional medical assistance should be sought immediately in particular for serious injuries and self-poisoning / overdosing.
- The College Safeguarding Officer must be informed.
- College will automatically contact emergency services and notify parents / carers or next of kin / partner regardless of the level of injury or individual person's age as best practice and duty of care.
- Formal Assessments should only be undertaken by healthcare practitioners or personnel suitably trained and qualified in this field.
- Informal information gathering should follow the same principles for both young persons and vulnerable adults who self-harm and should also consider a wider assessment of the family, their social situation, family history and child protection issues.
- Initial safe management should include advising staff of the need to remove all medications or other means of self-harm available to the young person or vulnerable adult who has self-harmed.



Self-harming and Suicidal Behaviour Policy



Multi-agency Response

Wherever there is a serious concern for a young person or vulnerable adult, a multiagency planning meeting should take place, without delay to include relevant College staff and the Safeguarding Officer. Depending on the circumstances of the individual, this may be arranged through, for example, hospital staff, the College or by Social Care if the young person or vulnerable adult is considered to be in need. Advice can be sought from the MARU. The Safeguarding Officer will also notify the relevant police contact of students presenting as **HIGH RISK** who may also be vulnerable to CSE or a potential Missing Person.

The purpose of a meeting is to:

- Consider the concerns;
- Devise a care plan to support the young person in the community and within the education environment;
- Consider support services for the family (external to College);
- Agree plans for an inter-agency assessment and management of risk.

Where the Young Person or Vulnerable Adult is a Carer for a Child or Pregnant

Where a young person or vulnerable adult, who is a carer for a child or is pregnant, self-harms, or threatens this, a referral must be made to the MARU in respect of the child/unborn baby.

Return to college following a self-harming incident or suicide attempt

Before a young person or vulnerable adult is permitted to return to college to continue with their studies, following a safeguarding incident, the college will:

- Ensure the College Safeguarding Officer is made aware.
- Arrange a Return to College meeting to take place with the college's Safeguarding Officer and the young person or vulnerable adult and a PTL/DTL or person chosen by the young person or vulnerable adult, who will:
 - Refer to and consider the Fitness to Study Policy
 - Develop a support plan with the student to identify what can be done to support and assist the individual where possible.
 - Complete an individual Risk Assessment plan with the student and/or other appropriate professionals where possible to identify any risk factors and document control measures put in place.
- Key staff will be made aware of the plan and control measures in place.



Self-harming and Suicidal Behaviour Policy



- Regularly review the individual's needs in liaison with College's Safeguarding Officer and a College Mental Health Adviser.
- Liaise with other services and professional organisations where appropriate

Other Documents to be considered

Fitness to Study Policy
Mental Health Policy