

Personalised Learning College, North Yorkshire

Suicide and Self-Harm Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the college's commitment to safeguarding the mental health and wellbeing of learners with special educational needs and disabilities. Recognising the unique vulnerabilities and communication styles of SEND learners, the college aims to create a safe, inclusive, and responsive environment where every learner feels supported and valued.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All enrolled learners

It governs procedures related to:

- Prevention and mental health promotion
- Identification and intervention
- Crisis response and recovery
- Collaboration with families and external services

Guiding Principles

- **Accessibility:** All mental health resources and communications will be adapted to meet diverse cognitive, emotional, and sensory needs.
 - **Individualised Support:** Responses will be tailored to each learner's personal, developmental, and educational profile.
 - **Trauma-Informed Care:** Staff will approach all situations with sensitivity to past trauma and emotional regulation challenges.
 - **Non-Punitive and Non-Stigmatising:** Learners will never be punished or excluded for experiencing mental health crises.
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Prevention and Education

- **Mental Health Literacy for Learners:**
 - Use of visual aids, social stories, and simplified language to teach emotional awareness and coping strategies.
 - **Staff Training:**
 - Annual training in de-escalation techniques, and mental health first aid, with a focus on SEND-specific approaches.
 - **Wellbeing Curriculum:**
 - Integrated into daily learning, including mindfulness, emotional regulation, and safe expression of feelings.
 - **Safe Spaces:**
 - Designated quiet rooms and sensory-friendly areas for learners to self-regulate and seek support.
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Identification and Intervention

- **Early Warning Signs:**
 - Staff trained to recognise behavioural, verbal, and non-verbal indicators of distress or self-harm.
 - **Reporting Concerns:**
 - Clear protocols for staff, and peers to report concerns confidentially to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
 - **Risk Assessment and Safety Planning:**
 - Conducted by qualified mental health professionals in collaboration with the learner, family, and support team.
 - May include visual safety plans, communication aids, and regular check-ins.
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Crisis Response

- **Immediate Action:**
 - If a learner is at imminent risk, emergency services will be contacted and the DSL or DDSL notified.
 - Staff will follow de-escalation protocols and ensure the learner is in a safe, supervised environment.
 - **Emergency Mental Health Support:**
 - **Notify Social Care Worker and Health Care professionals**
 - Access to crisis counsellors trained in SEND support.
 - Option for emergency medical leave with academic and therapeutic reintegration planning.
 - **Family and Carer Involvement:**
 - Families will be involved in all decisions unless doing so would increase risk to the learner.
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Postvention and Recovery

- **Support for the Learner:**
 - Ongoing counselling, therapeutic interventions, and academic accommodations.
 - Updated Behaviour Support Plans (BSP) and Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place
 - **Support for Peers and Staff:**
 - Group debriefings, grief counselling, and professional supervision for staff.
 - **Community Healing:**
 - Sensitive communication and memorials, avoiding triggering language or imagery.
 - **Policy Review:**
 - After any incident, the college will conduct a review and update procedures as needed.
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Confidentiality and Legal Compliance

All actions will comply with:

- **Children and Families Act 2014**
- **Mental Capacity Act 2005**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**
- **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

Confidentiality will be maintained except where disclosure is necessary to prevent harm.

Resources and Contacts

Service	Contact
Kate Carter	kate.carter@northyorks.goc.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Phone: 01609 534031
Debbie Breatcliffe	Debbie.breatcliffe@northyorks.gov.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Phone: 07791 886009
Local CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)	0300 0134 778
Emergency Services	999
National Suicide Prevention Helpline	0800 689 5652