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# **Self-harm Policy**

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***June 2025***

***Review date: June 2026***

## **1. Policy Statement**

Harworth Church of England Academy is committed to safeguarding the health and emotional well-being of all pupils. Self-harm among primary-aged children, while less common than in older age groups, is a growing concern. We aim to respond to any incidents or disclosures of self-harm with sensitivity, professionalism, and early intervention.

## **2. Aims of the Policy**

- To define self-harm and identify early warning signs.
- To outline the school's response to concerns or disclosures.
- To provide guidance for staff in supporting affected pupils.
- To ensure clear communication with parents/carers and appropriate external agencies.

## **3. Definition of Self-Harm**

Self-harm is any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in response to emotional distress. It can include:

- Scratching or cutting
- Banging or hitting body parts
- Hair pulling
- Ingesting harmful substances

While self-harm may not be life-threatening, it is always a sign of emotional distress and must be taken seriously.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL):** Oversees safeguarding procedures, liaises with external agencies.
- **All Staff:** Responsible for noticing signs, logging concerns, and reporting immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

## **5. Recognising Warning Signs**

Staff should be aware of:

- Unexplained injuries (e.g., cuts or bruises)
- Wearing long sleeves in warm weather
- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Social withdrawal or difficulty concentrating
- Expressions of low self-worth or distress

## **6. Responding to Concerns**

If a pupil discloses self-harm or a staff member suspects it:

1. **Listen calmly and non-judgementally.**

2. **Reassure the pupil** that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
3. **Do not promise confidentiality** – explain you will need to inform the DSL/DDSL.
4. **Report immediately** to the DSL/DDSL using the school's safeguarding reporting system.

## **7. Support for Pupils**

- Individual support from the safeguarding team
- Access to counselling services where appropriate
- Risk assessment and safety planning
- Regular check-ins

## **8. Involving Parents/Carers**

The DSL/DDSL will:

- Inform parents/carers sensitively and in person or by phone
- Offer guidance and reassurance
- Provide resources or referrals to CAMHS or other services

In exceptional cases (e.g., where informing parents may increase risk), decisions will be made in consultation with safeguarding partners.

## **9. Recording and Monitoring**

All concerns, disclosures, and actions taken must be:

- Logged on the school's safeguarding system (CPOMS)
- Monitored regularly by the safeguarding team
- Reviewed termly to identify patterns and adapt support

## **10. Staff Training**

Staff will receive training on:

- Understanding self-harm and mental health
- Responding to disclosures sensitively
- Following safeguarding procedures
- Promoting emotional wellbeing in the classroom

## **11. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and SLT, or sooner if required.

**Written by:** Sarah Booker

**Role:** Deputy Head

**Date:** June 2025

**Next Review:** June 2026

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*For more information, staff may refer to the DfE guidance: "Mental health and behaviour in schools" (November 2018).*