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Self-harm Policy

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

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