



Rugby Free

Secondary School



Self-Harm Policy

Policy Details

Policy Level	School
Document Approver	Local Accountability Board
Document Status	Final
Applicable to	Rugby Free Secondary School
Review Frequency	Every 3 Years

Revision History

Revision	Date	Details	Lead	Approved by
0	October 2025	First Issue		
1	September 2026	Updated	M Milsom	LAB

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1. Introduction

Self-harm is defined by NICE (NG225, 2022) as “intentional self-poisoning or injury, irrespective of the apparent purpose.”

It is a sign of significant emotional distress and should always be taken seriously.

Examples of self-harm include cutting, burning, overdosing, scratching, head-banging, or other behaviours intended to cause harm or pain.

Self-harm may be a way for a young person to:

- Cope with emotional distress or trauma
- Feel a sense of control
- Express or communicate feelings that are difficult to verbalise
- Punish themselves or relieve tension
- Feel connected or ‘real’ when emotionally numb

2. Scope of Policy

This policy provides clear guidance for all staff at Rugby Free Secondary School in managing and supporting students who may self-harm, ensuring consistency of practice across the School Community.

3. Aims and Objectives

Our Aims are to:

- Promote a safe, supportive and non-judgmental school environment where self-harm is understood as a response to distress rather than a behavior to be punished.
- Enable all staff to recognize the signs of self-harm and respond appropriately and compassionately.
- Ensure a coordinated and timely safeguarding response in line with the Warwickshire Guidance for Managing Self-Harm in Schools (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025).
- Support students to access appropriate help within any beyond school, involving parents/carers unless doing so places the student at greater risk.
- Promote positive mental health and wellbeing through a whole-school approach.

4. Recognising Self-Harm

Staff should be alert to possible warning signs, including unexplained cuts, burns or bruises, withdrawal, mood changes or risk-taking behaviour.

5. Responding to a Self-Harm Incident

If a student is found self-harming or discloses self-harm:

1. Stay calm and ensure safety. Administer first aid if necessary. Call 999 for urgent medical assistance or overdose guidance.
2. Listen with empathy, acknowledge distress, and avoid judgmental language.
3. Inform the DSL immediately. The DSL will assess risk, determine next steps, and make referrals if necessary.
4. Explain confidentiality limits to the student involve them in how information will be shared with parents/carers

6. Supporting the student

The DSL or Senior Mental Health Lead will coordinate a support plan of safety plan, ideally co-produced with the student and parent/carer.

The plan will outline:

- Named staff contact for regular check-ins
- Coping and distraction strategies
- Agreed safety measures in school
- Referrals to appropriate services

Encourage self-care and wound care guidance sensitively, and support harm reduction and safer coping strategies.

7. Supporting Parents and Carers

Parents/carers will be informed where safe and appropriate. Staff will provide reassurance, share information about self-harm, and offer signposting to services such as Rise, Connect for Health, Mind, and Wellbeing for Warwickshire.

8. Supporting Peers

When peers are affected or concerned

- Acknowledge that sharing concerns about a friend is the right thing to do.
- Provide reassurance and opportunities for one-to-one support.
- Avoid group discussions about specific incidents.
- Encourage healthy coping strategies and online safety.

9. Staff Support and Training

All staff receive annual safeguarding and mental health awareness training. Those directly supporting students will have access to supervision and wellbeing resources.

The Senior Mental Health Lead and DSL ensure reflective supervision following serious incidents.

10. Whole school approach

Rugby Free Secondary School promotes mental wellbeing through the PSHE curriculum, Relationship for Learning and Child Protection policies, assemblies and visible promotion of helplines and mental health services.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
All Staff	Recognise and report concerns, listen non-judgementally, maintain confidentiality, and follow safeguarding procedures.
DSL/Deputy DSL	Assess risk, inform parents/carers as appropriate, record and coordinate interventions, make referrals.
Senior Mental Health Lead	Support staff wellbeing, ensure training, and oversee emotional wellbeing provision.
Headteacher	Promote whole-school culture of wellbeing, ensure policy implementation, allocate training and resources.
Governing Body	Monitor effectiveness of this policy and ensure regular review and compliance with Warwickshire guidance.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or after any significant incident requiring a multi-agency response. Feedback from students, parents, and staff will inform updates.

13. Key Contacts and Support

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mandy Milsom

Senior Mental Health Lead: Lucy Clancy

School Lead First Aider and Self Harm Lead: Sally McGuigan



14. Local Support

Rise Mental Health Services: www.cwrise.com

Wellbeing for Warwickshire: 0800 616 171

Papyrus HOPELine UK: 0800 068 4141

Samaritans: 116 123

Shout Textline: Text SHOUT to 85258

Dear Life: www.dearlife.org.uk