



# LUX MUNDI

LIGHT OF THE WORLD ~ CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

## Self-Harm Policy **CARDINAL POLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

Status Public  
2025

**APPROVED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY ON:**.....05/02/2025  
**CHAIR OF GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE:**.....*[Signature]*.....

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**Status:** Good Practice/additional policy

**Relationship to other policies and curriculum links:** Child Protection, SEN, health and safety and behaviour policies; PSHE curriculum

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the school Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

## **Mission Statement**

Cardinal Pole Catholic School is a community of **service**, guiding young people on a path to **opportunity, aspiration** and **reward**, founded on Catholic values.

## **Introduction**

At Cardinal Pole Catholic School, our Self Harm Policy recognises the link between self-harm and student stress and mental health. As a Christian learning community, we strive to create positive and supportive relationships between all our members. We understand how the importance of creating an environment where young people suffering from mental health issues that may cause them to self-harm can feel nurtured and supported.

## **Aims**

In keeping with the school's values, vision and aims, this policy aims to address the issue of self-harm:

- Dealing with pupils who self-harm and how to offer support in the short and long-term
- Providing support depending upon the individual needs of the pupil, including any SEND needs.
- Helping all pupils improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy
- Supporting and advising staff members who come into contact with students who self-harm
- Preventing self-harm from spreading within the school
- Providing clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when do parents and outside agencies need contacting?
- Education about self-harm for pupils and staff.

## **Definition**

Self-harm is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. It can include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing (without suicidal intent) and deliberate bone-breaking/spraining.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher will:

1. Appoint a designated teacher (Designated Safeguarding Lead) to be responsible for self-harm. The DSL is Peter McEvoy. The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are Alex O'Donoghue, Tom Read, and Cynthia John.
2. Ensure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training about self-harm
3. Ensure that self-harm policy is followed by all members of staff

The Governing Body will:

1. Decide, in consultation with the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead whether self-harm education should be in the school curriculum, and how it should be addressed
2. Ensure that education about self-harm neither promotes nor stigmatises
3. Look at provisions for students who self-harm, such as long-sleeved uniforms and PE kits, and time out of lessons when under intense stress.

All staff and teachers are expected to:

1. Listen to pupils in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way.
2. Immediately report any incident of self-harm to the designated staff member(s) for self-harm or to any member of the safeguarding team
3. Widen their own knowledge about self-harm and mental health disorders
4. Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot

In conjunction with Pastoral staff the Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

1. Keep records of self-harm incidents and concerns
2. Liaise with relevant services about help available for students who self-harm
3. Keep up-to-date with information about self-harm
4. Liaise with Headteacher
5. Contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the student in this process.
6. Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child which is available. Monitor the pupil's progress following an incident
7. Decide when people other than parents (e.g. Children's Services, educational psychologists) need to be informed.

### **Who self-harms?**

About 1 in 10 young people will self-harm at some point and it can occur at any age. People who self-harm are more likely to have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse during childhood.

- Factors associated with self-harm:
  - Mental health disorders including depression and eating disorders
  - Peer-on-peer abuse
  - Drug/alcohol abuse, and other risk-taking behaviour
  - Recent trauma e.g. death of relative, parental divorce
  - Negative thought patterns, and low self-esteem
  - Bullying
  - Abuse – sexual, physical and emotional
- It is more common in young women than young men.
- Gay and bisexual people seem to be more likely to self-harm.
- Sometimes groups of young people self-harm together.
- Having a friend who self-harms may increase a young person's chances of self-harming as well. Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance.

### **Suicide**

While self-harm and suicide are separate, those who self-injure are in emotional distress and those who end their lives are also in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chances of self-injury, and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously.

### **What makes young people self-harm?**

A basic emotional need is not being met. If the act of self-harm becomes an addiction it is taking the place of the need that is not being met.

Emotional distress – young people often struggle with difficulties for some time before they self-harm. These difficulties may include:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Feeling depressed
- Feeling bad about themselves
- Difficult relationship problems with boyfriend/girlfriend, friends and family members
- Stress due to school work and exams
- Being bullied
- Flashbacks to traumatic events in their lives.

Young people may feel:

- That no-one listens to them
- Hopeless
- Isolated, alone
- Out of control
- Powerless - it feels as though there's nothing they can do to change anything.

For many young people there is a combination of factors at work.

### **Staff awareness**

It can be very upsetting to be close to someone who self-harms but there are things you can do. The most important is to listen to them without judging them or being critical. This can be very hard if you are upset – and perhaps angry – about what they are doing. Try to concentrate on them rather than your own feelings, although this can be hard.

Do

- Alert the School Safeguarding Team urgently to any instance of self-harm, however minor it may appear to be
- Show genuine concern
- Be calm and patient
- Give them a message of hope - things will get better

Don't

- Keep it to yourself
- Show disappointment
- Give ultimatums
- Try to force the person to talk
- Try to force them to stop – remember self-harm might be keeping them safe.

### **Procedures for dealing with incidents of self-harm in school**

1. Any member of staff who becomes aware that a student is self-harming should report this immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the deputies.
2. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should remove equipment that they consider dangerous or is against school rules for the pupil to have in their possession.
3. Unless Medical Confidentiality has been granted to the pupil or there is some other overriding reason not to (e.g. an existing Child Protection concern), parents/carers should be invited in and support and advice offered. This might be counselling, mentoring, referral to CAMHS or relevant outside agencies
4. If severe physical harm has been done, the pupil should be taken to A&E for medical assessment and care.

### **Recording and Reporting Incidents of Self-Harm that take place in school**

All self-harm concerns will be logged and tracked on CPOMS. Governors will be updated regularly on numbers of referrals.

### **Further information about self-harm**

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/>