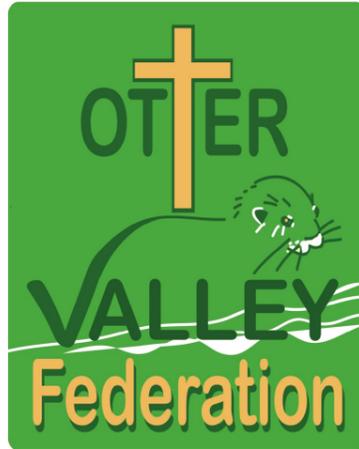


Believing and achieving together



We aim to reflect God's love, "always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres"

1 Corinthians 13:7

Self-Injury Policy for School

A guidance document

Policy dated 5th February 2018

Reviewed and approved by the Lead Governors for Safeguarding,
on behalf of the Governing Board on: **5th February 2018**

Next triannual review: Spring 2021

Purpose: In keeping with the OTTER VALLEY FEDERATION schools values, vision and aims, this policy aims to address the issue of self-injury:

- How to deal with pupils who self-injure and how to offer support in the short and long-term
- To provide support depending upon the individual needs of the pupil.
- To help all pupils improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy
- How to support staff members who come into contact with people who self-injure
- How to prevent self-injury from spreading within the school
- To have clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when do parents and outside agencies need contacting?
- Education about self-injury for pupils and staff

What is self-injury?

Self-injury 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.

Risk factors associated with self-injury:

- Mental health disorders including depression and eating disorders
- 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 and neglect
- Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance

Suicide:

While self-injury 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.

Who/what was consulted?

This can include information such as this document and the key people who are usually consulted during policy creation e.g. staff, pupils, parents, the Local Authority.

Relationship to other policies:

e.g. link to Child Protection, SEND, health and safety, and behaviour policies

Roles and responsibilities of Executive Headteacher, other staff, and governors:

The Executive Headteacher will:

- Appoint a designated person to be responsible for self-injury matters, and liaise with them. This might be the same person as the Senior Designated Officer
- Ensure that the designated teacher receives appropriate training about self-injury
- Ensure that self-injury policy is followed by all members of staff

The governing body will:

Decide whether self-injury education should be in the school curriculum, and how it should be addressed
Ensure that education about self-injury neither promotes nor stigmatises

Look at provisions for people who self-injure, such as long-sleeved uniforms and PE kits, and time out of lessons when under intense stress

All staff and teachers are expected to:

- Listen to pupils in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way.
- Report self-injury to the designated staff member(s) for self-injury. Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected.
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which can't be kept. Reassure pupils that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help.
- Guide pupils towards seeking health and happiness
- Promoting problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress
- Enable pupils to find places for help and support
- Provide accurate information about self-injury
- Widen their own knowledge about self-injury and mental health disorders
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first-aid and clearing up if a self-injury incident take place at school
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot

The designated staff members – Mrs Amanda Parsons, & Mr Michael Tuckett, Head of School and Mrs Janice Strawbridge, Designated Officer will -

- Follow the self injury portrait
- Keep records of self-injury incidents and concerns
- Liaise with local services about help available for people who self-injure
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-injury
- Liaise with Executive Headteacher
- Contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the pupil in this process. Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child which is available. Monitor the pupil's progress following an incident
- Know when people other than parents (e.g. social workers, educational psychologists) need to be informed
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress.

Pupils will be expected to:

- Not display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately
- Talk to the appropriate staff member if they are in emotional distress
- Alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to themselves, and know when confidentiality must be broken

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Endorse the school's approach to self-injury education and pastoral care
- Work in partnership with the school

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation:

How to measure its success. This can include feed-back from parents and pupils as to how a self-injury incident/case has been dealt with.