



**Bosworth  
Independent  
College**

# Anti-self-harm Policy

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## Contents

Our definitions of self-harm.....	3
Aims.....	3
Recognising Warning Signs.....	3
Key Responsibilities.....	4
College Principal, Head of Boarding, Vice/Assistant Principals.....	4
All Staff should .....	4
Personal Tutors.....	5
Boarding Staff.....	5
Students.....	5

## Our definitions of self-harm

We regard self-harm to be a coping mechanism for young people who are attempting to deal with high levels of distress and emotional pain. We identify it as any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour which causes physical pain and/or injury and is aimed at reducing the emotional pain and distress of the individual concerned.

These behaviours may include deliberate bone-breaking, cutting, bruising, banging and non-suicidal overdosing. The behaviours are usually chronic, repetitive and habitual. Young people who self-harm will generally attempt to hide any scarring or injuries and can find it extremely difficult to discuss their behaviours, and the emotions behind them with others. We understand these behaviours not to be about seeking attention but rather to be about seeking relief and release from emotional distress. We also understand that self-harm is not suicidal behaviour. However, the emotional distress that causes this behaviour can lead to suicidal thinking and actions and we will consequently take ALL incidents of self-harm seriously, investigate them and attempt to provide the most appropriate emotional support possible.

## Aims

Bosworth College is dedicated to ensuring the emotional, physical and mental well-being of all the students in our community. We consequently aim to:

- Recognise any warning signs that one of our students may be engaging in self-harming behaviours.
- Understand the risk factors associated with these behaviours including low self-esteem, perfectionism, home/College problems, social isolation, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- Be pro-active in discussing the topic with students we might feel are deliberately harming themselves.
- Know how to respond to students who wish to discuss these behaviours with us and take them seriously at all times.
- Be able to produce short- and long-term care and management plans for such students in conjunction with external agencies if necessary.
- Provide the appropriate level of practical and emotional support for staff dealing with students who self-harm.
- Provide an appropriate awareness campaign for students and ensure the topic is a significant part of our PSHE curriculum.
- Provide Staff with access to educational materials to raise awareness and help to identify self-harm (e.g. through available leaflets, staff training or online training).

## Recognising Warning Signs

We are aware that for some young people, there will not be any specific warning signs that they are engaging in or contemplating engaging in self-harming behaviours. For others the following indicators may be noted:

- Risky behaviour e.g. drug taking / alcohol misuse.

- Lack of self-esteem, being overly negative.
- Bullying of others.
- Social withdrawal.
- Significant change in friendships.
- Regularly bandaged wrists and/or arms.
- Obvious cuts, burns or scratches (that don't look like accidents).
- A reluctance to participate in PE / change clothes.
- Frequent accidents that cause physical injuries.
- Wearing long sleeved tops even in hot weather.

## Key Responsibilities

### College Principal, Head of Boarding, Vice/Assistant Principals

- Ensure that all staff in the College community are fully conversant with and adhere to our anti-self-harm policy.
- Ensure the policy is disseminated and implemented appropriately.
- Record such incidents and ensure the record is kept up-to-date.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the behaviours that will not be tolerated and that they understand these key rules e.g. no self-harm in front of others, no attempts to manipulate others with the threat of self-harm.
- Liaise with external agencies, specifically those supporting young people with poor mental health, in order to provide the most appropriate support alongside utilising key services to provide up-to-date education and information for students, parents and staff.
- Liaise with parents / carers as appropriate in order to ensure the safety and well-being of students in the College community.
- Review procedures regarding self-harm as necessary.

### All Staff should

- Act in an empathetic manner, assuring students that they are available to listen actively in a calm and non-judgemental manner.
- Not invalidate any student's concerns or emotional distress.
- Know the available support options or referral routes and refer students to these as appropriate.
- Ensure that students know staff cannot make any promises to keep things confidential if they feel the student is at risk.
- Inform and seek advice from the College Nurse.

## Personal Tutors

- As for 'All Staff' but to pay special attention to students in their care as they will have the opportunity to know the students in a non-classroom situation.

## Boarding Staff

- To be aware of the risk factors and signs and to inform the appropriate person; Head of Boarding, College Principal or Vice Principal with any concerns as necessary.

## Students

To be communicated to individual students as appropriate:

- If they are self-harming, they will take care of any wounds appropriately and not display them in a College context.
- Ensure that they don't engage in 'sensationalised' conversations with peers or staff or talk about the methods they use with other students.
- Try to find something positive and fun in each day.
- Never encourage others to participate in self-harm.
- Discuss why they / others might self-harm (i.e. emotional factors) and not focus on the act of self-harm itself.
- Ensure that they know who they can talk to in both the immediate and longer term should they feel distressed or at risk in either the College or social context (e.g. Designated staff)
- Alert a member of staff if they are at all concerned about a friend / peer who may be at risk of self-harming, engaging in these behaviours or who may present as suicidal or discussing suicide.