



For DSLs, Schools,  
Colleges & Youth Services

## Appendix E

# Schools & Colleges Suicide Policy



A collaboration between The Royal Borough of Kingston,  
Richmond & Wandsworth Borough Councils.

Understanding Self-Harm and Suicide  
[www.richmond.gov.uk/portus](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/portus)

Document Status:

Date of Next Review:

Date of Review Completion:

Committee:

Responsibility (Chair):

Date of Policy Creation:

Signed:

Method of Communication:

Date of Adoption by Governing Body:

### 01 Statement of Purpose

This school / college community is aware that:

- suicide is one of the leading causes of death in young people;
- we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide.

We want to make sure that children and young people at our school/college are as suicide safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, students and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a suicide-safer school / college.

### 02 Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents

This school / college community is aware that:

- a) Suicidal thoughts are common.**  
We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common among young people.
- b) Suicide is complex.** We believe that every suicide is a tragedy. There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person. However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help prevent future deaths.

- c) Stigma inhibits learning** – stigma can kill. We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be a barrier to both help seeking and a barrier to offering help. This school/college is committed to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos. This will include avoiding the use of language which perpetuates unhelpful notions that suicide is criminal, sinful or selfish. We know that unhelpful myths and misconceptions surrounding suicide can inhibit young people in seeking and finding appropriate help when it is most needed.

- d) Suicide is our business too.** As a school / college community, we recognise that students may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to play our part in supporting any pupil who may have thoughts of suicide.
- e) Safety is very important.** We know that students who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicide behaviours). Students experiencing suicidal thoughts are potentially at risk of acting on these thoughts. Those who are already engaging in suicidal behaviours are also clearly at risk of harm or death.

This school / college wants to work with our students who may be thinking about suicide, or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, working in partnership with family, caregivers and other professionals where this may enhance suicide safety.

- f) **Suicide is a difficult thing to talk about.** We know that a child or young person who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will equip adults with the skills to identify when a student may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. These adults will be trained to keep our young people suicide-safe.
- g) **Talking about suicide does not create or worsen risk.** We will provide our students with opportunities to speak openly about their worries with people who are ready, willing and able to support them. We want to make it possible for children and young people, and those who support them at this school/college, to do so safely. This will be in a way that leads to support and help where this is needed. We will do all we can to refrain from acting in a way that stops a student seeking the help they need when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

### 03 Roles & Responsibilities

- a) Our governors and leadership team will be clear about how we will respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our named response team will have a defined responsibility within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media.
- b) We will have a clear picture of who has received general suicide awareness education and commit to this being refreshed regularly. We will identify a team of people who are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) or Papyrus SP-EAK training. This team will be drawn from across the whole school community, not just from one department.
- c) We will have a clear policy about how staff should work together where thoughts of suicide or suicidal behaviours are known among our young people. We will manage the sharing of information in a way that enhances safety.

### i The Governing Body

The Governing Body has the legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their students. There may be a nominated governor who has

responsibility for safeguarding who will have an oversight for provision of suicide prevention.

### ii The Headteacher / Principal

- The Headteacher / Principal has responsibility for establishing effective safeguarding procedures with regard to suicide prevention, thereby ensuring the duty of care to students and staff.

### iii Staff.

- All staff have the responsibility to be aware of suicide prevention policies and protocols for responding to an incident or disclosure.
- This includes all staff being aware of the Self-harm and suicide prevention guidance resource and pathway of support for children and young people.
- Students may choose to speak to any member of school staff if they are concerned about their own welfare, or that of a peer.

### 04 Key Contacts

Name/Position/Email address:

Name/Position/Email address:

Name/Position/Email address:

Name/Position/Email address:

### 05 Training

- a) Schools / colleges are recommended to access training regularly on self-harm and suicide prevention. Staff giving support to students who self-harm or are suicidal may experience all sorts of reactions to this behaviour (e.g. anger, helplessness, rejection); it is helpful for staff to have an opportunity to talk this through with work colleagues or senior management.
- b) Staff who support students will attend training days on self-harm and suicide prevention and obtain relevant literature. Induction procedures for all staff, outlined below, will include training on self-harm, suicide prevention and child protection procedures and setting boundaries around confidentiality.

### 06 Response and referral protocols

Explain the protocol policy you will follow and include any embedded files.

### 07 Monitoring and Evaluation

The designated governor who has responsibility for safeguarding will monitor the systems yearly and following any incidents of self-harm and suicidal behaviour.

Date Policy Reviewed:

Policy Reviewed by: