



SELF-HARM POLICY

Originated by:	Director – Students and Recruitment
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1. Introduction

Self-harm among young people is the number one issue young people themselves are concerned about particularly amongst their peers and in a list that includes gangs, bullying, drug use and binge drinking. One third of girls and one fifth of boys in the UK aged 11-19 have tried to harm themselves. Adolescent girls are 3-4 times more likely to self-harm than boys (*Hawton et al, 2002*)

Self-harming is the act of deliberately causing harm to oneself either by causing a physical injury, by putting oneself in dangerous situations and/or self-neglect, intentional self-poisoning or injury, irrespective of the apparent purpose of the act (NICE, 2004) It can take a number of forms; cutting, taking overdoses of tablets or medicine, punching oneself, pulling hair out or eyelashes, burning, scratching, picking or tearing of one's skin, inhaling or sniffing harmful substances, head banging.

2. Policy Statement

Fareham College is committed to ensuring the emotional, physical and mental well-being of all the students in its community. The College considers self-injury to be a coping mechanism for young people who are attempting to cope with high levels of distress and emotional pain.

We consequently aim to:

- Recognise any warning signs that any students may be engaging in self harming behaviours.
- Understand the risk factors associated with these behaviours including low self-esteem, perfectionism, mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, home or school problems, social isolation, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.
- Be pro-active in discussing this 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 refer such students to other external agencies if necessary.
- Provide the appropriate level of practical and emotional support for staff dealing with students who self-harm and ensure appropriate training and education is available to all staff regarding this issue.
- Provide an appropriate awareness campaign for students and ensure the topic is a significant part of our Tutorial programme.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all learners undertaking a full or part time course, traineeship or apprenticeship in further or higher education.

Self-harm is considered to be any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour, which causes physical pain or injury and is aimed at reducing the emotional pain and distress of the individual concerned.

4. Responsibilities

Everyone at Fareham College has a responsibility to promote and adhere to this policy in order to help ensure the well-being of all within the community. These are outlined as follows:

Governing Body

- Ensure pupils have access to appropriate and accurate information regarding self-harm alongside details of relevant support agencies.
- Determine how and when the topic is covered in the Tutorial Programme.
- Provide access to appropriate and accurate information for parents or carers.
- Ensure that 'special arrangements' are made for students who self-harm (for example, time out, wearing long-sleeved tops and that these are appropriately reviewed).
- Ensure the existence of Self-Harm Guidance should a case self-harming incidents occur within the College context and ensure that this is reviewed as necessary.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the behaviours that will not be tolerated and that they understand these key rules, for example, no self-injury in front of others, no deliberate displaying of self-harm injuries, or attempts to manipulate others with the threat of self-injury.

Principal

- Appoint a designated member of staff to be responsible for all incidents of self-harm and be responsible for disseminating the policy and training to the whole team
- Be ultimately responsible for ensuring that designated staff receive appropriate training and supervision (possibly from the local CAMHS team).
- Ensure that all Fareham College staff are fully conversant with and adhere to our Self-Harm policy.

Designated Staff (Designated Safeguarding Lead and Child protection Liaison Officers)

- Ensure that the policy is disseminated and implemented appropriately, providing regular feedback and updates to the Principal and Governing Body.
- Develop a record-keeping system to record such incidents and ensure that this is kept up to date and incidents and developments are regularly reported to the Principal
- Ensure that students have an appropriate care and management plan which is recorded and, if necessary, developed with the support of external specialist agencies.
- Liaise with external agencies (specifically 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 / carers and staff.
- Liaise with parents / carers as appropriate in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students in the school community.

- Report on suicidal intent or feelings straight away and refer to other professional bodies as appropriate.
- Engage in appropriate staff supervision so as to ensure personal well-being.

All Staff

- Familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding Self-Harm Guidance
- Act in an empathetic manner, assuring students that they are available to actively listen in a calm and non-judgmental manner.
- Not invalidate any students' concerns or emotional distress.
- Know the available support options or referral routes and refer students to these as appropriate.
- Ensure that students know they cannot make any promises to keep things confidential if they feel that the student is at risk.
- Adhere to our Staff Code of Conduct at all times
- Use the resources available through the Tutorial Programme and Oracle to promote an open forum of discussion for students where self-esteem and emotional and mental well-being of all are fostered and promoted.
- Be aware of the 'healthy' coping strategies students can utilise and know who to ask for advice if it felt that these are being abused or becoming unsuccessful for the student.
- Ask for help if they feel they are in a situation

Parents or Carers

- Ensure that they understand and endorse this policy.
- Find out about self-harm, making use of College-based and external resources and discuss your findings with your child.
- Ensure that College staff are kept informed of any changes or incidents that occur outside of the College that you feel may impact on the behaviour and well-being of your child.
- If you become aware that your child is engaging in these behaviours, work with designated staff in order to help us develop the best ways of supporting you and your child.
- Know that you may also need emotional support and find out where this is best accessed.

Students

- If they are self-harming, they will take care of any wounds appropriately and not display them in the College context.
- Ensure that they don't engage in 'sensationalised' conversations with peers or staff

or talk about the methods they use to other students.

- Never encourage others to participate in self-harm.
- Discuss why they or others might self-harm, that is 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 (such as designated staff).
- Alert a member of staff if they are at all concerned about a friend or peer who may be at risk of self-harming, engaging in these behaviours, or who may present as suicidal or discussing suicide.

Links to other policies

Our Self-Harm Policy has direct links to (and should be read in conjunction with) the following policies:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Additional Learning Support Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy