

North Halifax Grammar School

Suicide Prevention Policy



Approved by:	Vice Principal i/c Pastoral
Date approved:	4 th July 2018
Next review:	Summer Term 2021
Policy owner:	Wellbeing & Engagement Officer

Foreword

This policy is based on the guidelines recommended by Papyrus, the national UK charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide.

Statement of purpose

The North Halifax Grammar School community acknowledges that suicide is the leading cause 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 are as suicide-safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, pupils themselves and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a suicide-safer school/college.

Our beliefs about suicide and its context

North Halifax Grammar School acknowledges that:

- i) SUICIDAL THOUGHTS ARE COMMON**
- ii) SUICIDE IS COMPLEX**

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.

- iii) STIGMA INHIBITS LEARNING AND CAN ENDANGER YOUNG PEOPLE**

The stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to seeking and offering help.

North Halifax Grammar School 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. We will actively promote emotional well-being for all in our school community by encouraging people to talk about mental health issues.

- iv) SUICIDE IS OUR BUSINESS TOO**

As a school community, we recognise that pupils may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries.

We offer a clear pathway in supporting any pupil who may have thoughts of suicide. We will also regularly risk assess our school to minimise access to the means to commit suicide in our physical environment and make it as safe as possible.

- v) SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT**

We know that pupils who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicide behaviours). School children experiencing suicidal thoughts are potentially at risk of acting on these thoughts. Those who are already engaging in suicide behaviours are also clearly at risk of death or harm.

North Halifax Grammar School wants to work with our pupils who may be thinking about suicide, or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, working in partnership where appropriate with family, caregivers and other professionals where this may enhance suicide safety.

- vi) 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 pupil may be

struggling with thoughts of suicide. We will also offer early intervention emotional support to allow young people to talk and access counselling in school to prevent such thoughts and behaviours developing.

These adults will be trained to keep our young people suicide-safe.

vii) TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE REDUCES RISK

We will provide our pupils with opportunities to speak openly about their worries with people who are accessible and qualified to support them. We want to make it possible for our students to do so safely. We will also provide supportive supervision for the staff who provide this valuable service.

Our Team and its Responsibilities

- a) Our governors and leadership team will follow the Business Management Continuity Plan in the event of a suicide; the plan outlines leadership in school, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media. The well-being team will offer appropriate interventions for students in school.
- b) We will have a clear safeguarding policy and set of procedures about how staff should work together where thoughts of suicide or suicide behaviours are known among our young people. We will manage the sharing of information in a way that enhances safety.

Ongoing Support and Development of our Policy and Practice

Our Governors and Leadership Team will keep our policy and practice up-to-date by maintaining awareness of current training and best practice.