

Suicide prevention and intervention policy

The Green Room Foundation is committed to the safety and happiness of pupils and staff

SEE, SAY, SUPPORT

Owners: DH/WCF/KBT/CAS

Date Created	Date 1st Review Due	Date Reviewed	Version	Next Review Due
October 2024			1	October 2025
		Jan 2026	2	January 2027

 Self-harm Policy - for reference

 Suicide Awareness training

[Autism and suicide awareness training](#)

 Suicide Safety Plan.pdf

[flow chart suicidal thoughts](#)

Introduction

The Green Room Foundation believes that suicide is everyone's business.

At The Green Room we are committed to safeguarding the well-being of our pupils and staff. We endeavour to provide an environment of safety where pupils and staff feel accepted and have a sense of belonging.

This policy outlines our approach to suicide safety. Evidence shows that suicide risk is reduced when we improve connectedness and reduce access to means: We encourage open communication and are alert to signs of self-harm and suicidal ideation. We follow procedures to ensure that both pupils and staff receive effective support. This policy must be read in conjunction with our safeguarding, self-harm and behaviour policies.

Purpose

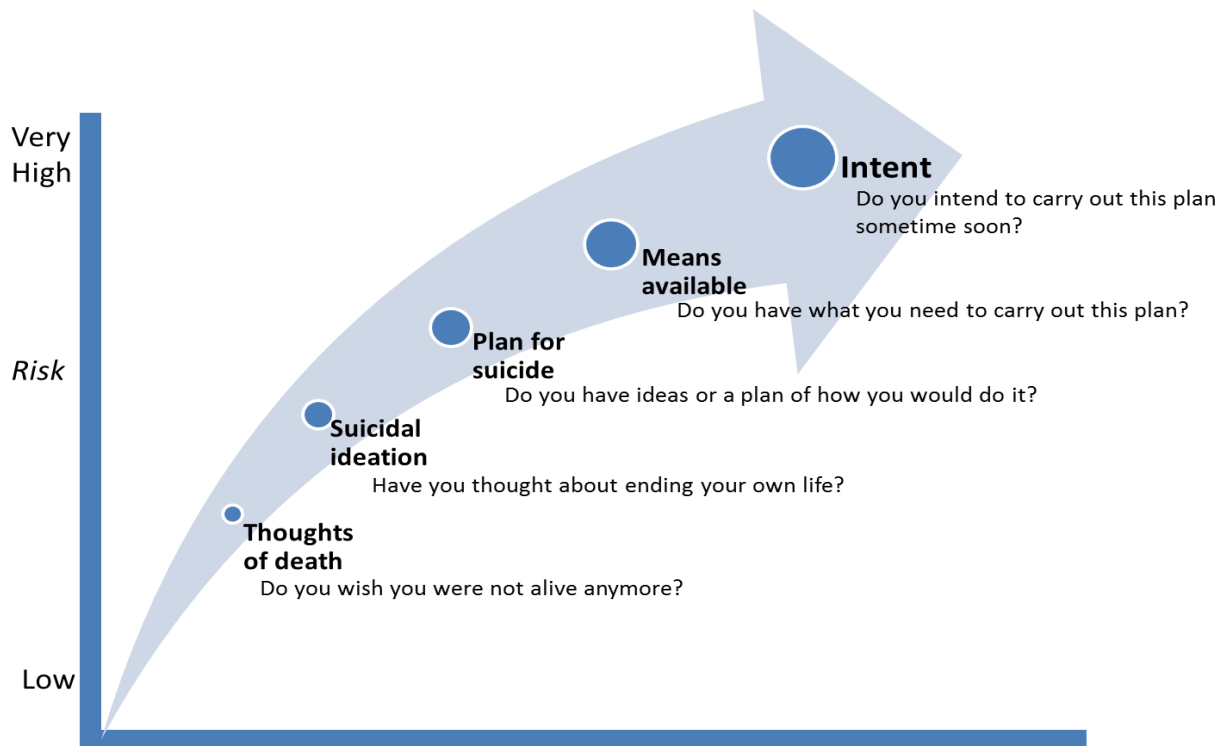
The Green Room Foundation is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people and that we can play a vital role in helping to prevent it. We want to make sure that our school community is as suicide-safe as possible.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a.) Promote a culture of openness and understanding
- b.) Provide guidance to recognise signs of suicidal ideation
- c.) Outline procedures for responding to and supporting individuals in crisis
- d.) Offer resources and support to both pupils, parents/carers and staff

Definition

Suicidal ideation refers to thoughts of suicide, ranging from passive thoughts of death to active plans or intent to ending one's life. The Green Room Foundation acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common.



Based on McDowell, Lineberry and Bostwick (2011) Hierarchy of suicide risk assessment

a.) A culture of openness and understanding

The Green Room Foundation recognises that stigma surrounding suicide can be both a barrier to seeking help and a barrier to offering help. The Foundation is dedicated to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we promote open, non judgemental, empathetic conversations that do not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos.

Our training informs that:

- Connections are a protective factor - the importance of relationships is understood
- Talking about suicide does not create or increase suicide risk
- Nothing is lost by having a conversation about suicide; you will have developed suicide-safety for and with that person now and for the future.

During the school day there are opportunities for staff and pupils to connect. When talking to pupils, staff explore what might be happening for the pupil and are trained to recognise and respond appropriately. Staff are encouraged to trust their intuition, to take each case seriously and not promise to keep confidence. The Green Room Foundation ensure that all staff are suicide-safe aware. This means that all staff receive training on induction and throughout their tenure. This suicide awareness training will include; how to assess risk, how to spot signs, how to listen and respond appropriately using correct language, and how to report concerns.

It is important that the entire school community nurtures an attitude around the subject of suicide which helps shatter stigma around it. Our multi faceted approach is enhanced by appropriate, non-stigmatising terminology when referring to suicide.

Unhelpful language:

- Commit suicide
- Unsuccessful or failed attempt
- It's not that serious
- Attention seeking/cry for help
- 'You're not thinking of doing something silly or stupid are you?'

Helpful language:

- Ended their life
- Died by suicide
- Acted on thoughts of suicide

Things to say that may be helpful to someone experiencing suicidal ideation:

- Take your time and tell me what's happening for you
- Things sound painful for you as if there is no way out but I want to listen and help
- It's not uncommon to have thoughts of suicide with help and support many people can work through these thoughts and stay safe

Both pupils and staff have access to therapeutic support. Each GRF setting has an on site therapist. Staff also have access to Benenden Health which includes counselling support.

The Green Room Foundation is aware of the physical safety of our environment. Harmful substances will be securely stored. Potential ligature points will be assessed and removed if a pupil's risk assessment identifies them as a suicide risk. We will restrict access to places which facilitate jumping to those at risk where possible.

b.) Guidance to recognise signs of suicidal ideation

Recognising signs - 'SEE'

It is crucial to be aware of the signs that someone may be experiencing suicidal thoughts. These can include but are not limited to:

- **Changes in behaviour:** Increased isolation, withdrawal, neglect of personal appearance, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, loss of interest e.g. hobbies
- **Changes in mood:** Persistent sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, irritability, or unusual mood swings, indecisiveness, difficulty thinking
- **Talk of suicide or death:** Direct or indirect references to death, dying, or suicide
- **Risk-taking behaviour:** Engaging in reckless or dangerous activities
- **Giving away possessions:** Distributing personal belongings
- **Changes in language:** expressing worthlessness, guilt, self reproach
- **Use of language:** "I don't want to be here anymore," "I wish I was dead," "I feel like I'm a burden" "nothing matters anymore"

It is worth remembering however, that it is not always possible to tell that a person is contemplating suicide, and around 30% of people will give no indication

c.) Outline procedures for responding to and supporting individuals in crisis - 'SAY'

If you are concerned about a pupil or colleague or suspect someone may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, take the following steps:

1. **Listen actively and empathetically:** Create a safe and non-judgmental space for the individual to express their feelings. Be aware of using appropriate language
2. **Ask directly**, “Are you thinking about suicide?” (By using the word suicide, you are telling them that it is ok to talk openly about their thoughts. They will be more likely to feel a sense of relief that they are being heard.)
3. Using open questions, ask, **Do they have a plan?** Refer to above diagram to assess risk
4. **Take the individual seriously:** Validate their feelings. Avoid dismissing or minimising their concerns. Do not try to fix or solve the problem
5. **Offer support and reassurance:** Let them know you care and are there to help
6. **Do not leave the individual alone:** Stay with them until they are safe or professional help arrives

All concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (DDSL) immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so

All incidents to be reported onto CPOMS.

The DSL or DDSL is to report to the parent/carers unless it is unsafe to do so

Confidentiality may be a concern for pupils; however, the Green Room’s Safeguarding Policy states pupils need to know that it is not possible to offer unconditional confidentiality.

In order to protect life, whenever we have concerns for the welfare of a pupil we will break confidentiality. Ideally this would be with the pupil’s consent or knowledge. Information will be shared with the necessary services, including emergency services where necessary.

Emergency Procedures

In cases of imminent or immediate danger, follow these steps:

1. **Call emergency services:** Dial 999, Accident and Emergency
2. **Stay with the individual:** Remain with them until help arrives
3. **Provide reassurance and support:** listen - using active listening skills

d.) Offer resources and support to both pupils, parents/carers and staff - SUPPORT

We will endeavor to inform our school community about help that is available to support someone who is experiencing poor mental health and emotional wellbeing

Communication with pupils: Staff are expected to respond to communications from students only during school hours, which are defined as **8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday to Friday**, and only during **term time**. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to student communications outside of the designated school hours and term time. Indeed, we recommend turning all notifications off outside of school hours, especially with relevance to the GRC Student Chat Room.

Pupils are made aware of these response timeframes and are given the following information: If you need help, can you speak to a family member or friend, or, if appropriate can any of the following emergency services help you?

- *Samaritans: If you are feeling alone and struggling to cope, and need someone to talk to, day or night. Call 116 123.*
- *NHS 111: If you need medical advice assistance. Call 111.*
- *Life-threatening emergency, including fire and police: Call 999.*
- *NSPCC Childline*

If you see a direct communication from a pupil to you that you perceive to be an emergency please forward this on to your Head and DSL. If they are unavailable please contact a member of ELT.

National helplines:

[Papyrus - prevention of young suicide](#)

Ring [HOPELINEUK](#) on 0800 068 4141

[Samaritans](#) on 116 123

Text SHOUT to [Shout's textline](#) on 85258

Postvention

In the event of a suicide the senior leadership team will consider which pupils and staff may need early support. As a small tight knit community we believe every member of our community could be greatly affected and in need of support. Local bereavement support agencies will be contacted for guidance and to help affected individuals.

Support can be accessed from the organisation below:

<https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/>

Things to consider: (the information below is from Papyrus suicide postvention advice)

1. How do I tell staff and pupils about a suicide?
2. A pupil from our school or college has taken their own life, how do I tell the other pupils?

3. How can I support my pupils after a suicide at our school?
4. Should I inform anyone else about the suicide?
5. How should I communicate with the press and media after a suicide at our school or college?
6. How can I manage the associated social media coverage?

1. How do I tell staff and pupils about a suicide?

After liaising with the pupil's family, you should meet with your colleagues as soon as possible. Ensure all of the adults working in your school or college community are invited: the death of a pupil can affect everyone.

The Leadership Team should inform the staff of the pupil's apparent suicide. Please note that only the authorities can conclude whether or not the death is a suicide; before then, it might be helpful to say that the person appears to have died by suicide. If the facts are unclear, state that the cause of death is still being determined. As soon as possible, ensure that the school or college's administrators stop any standard communications with the family, such as sending school trip information home, to reduce unnecessary additional stress to the family of the pupil who has died.

You should think carefully about how you are going to share the fact that a suicide has happened within your community.

Think about who should be told what and when. This should include consideration of possible communication with

- Other local educational institutions
- Local Safeguarding Board
- Local health services (GPs, emergency departments, psychiatric service)
- Parents and carers (pay particular attention to parents and carers of pupils in close proximity to the person who died)

2. A pupil from our school or college has taken their own life, how do I tell the other pupils?

When you meet as a team, agreement should be reached on the words to be used to tell pupils about the death. It is essential that you and your colleagues communicate the same information to all pupils. Try to tell all your pupils at the same time to prevent some receiving the news before others and then passing information on without support. You may decide to do this as small groups, year groups or classes.

The information you share should include:

- Relevant facts about the death but not the details
- Explanation of normal responses to news about pupil deaths
- Encouraging support for each other and advice to flag if anyone has concerns about other pupils
- Encouraging positive ways of managing stress or distress
- Letting pupils know what support is available from the school

- Providing a link to Help is at Hand. This can be found by googling 'Help is at Hand'. There are specific versions for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Signposting to other support agencies and resources

It is essential that you do not talk about the method the pupil used to end their life. This can be unhelpful, unnecessary and dangerous. Talking about method can be speculative, it can intrude into grief and it can lead other vulnerable people to imitate the behaviour. You can be open with the pupils about why you won't engage in conversations about the method the pupil used to end their life; letting them know that it is unhelpful and that you want to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

You may decide to give pupils and school staff time off to be with their families and guardians. You should provide opportunities for pupils to express their emotions and identify strategies for managing them. You and your colleagues might not be the most appropriate people to facilitate this and you should engage professionals such as counsellors and therapists to further support pupils through their responses to the suicide. They will be able to provide more specialist support. It is important to de-brief at the end of the day with your colleagues. Talk about how the day has gone, what went well, and what may have been difficult. You may want to raise concerns about some of the pupils and their responses so the whole team are aware. Checking in with your colleagues and talking about your experience of the day before you go home may help you to manage how you're feeling. You may want to begin looking at next steps together.

3. How can I support my pupils after a suicide at our school?

It is important not to panic, but to acknowledge how the young people are feeling – their pain and distress is a normal response to what has happened. Their distress might manifest in the way that they behave. They might be tearful, distressed, 'act out', be withdrawn or hyperactive. They may become very aware, perhaps for the first time, of their own mortality and be scared of death. You might also notice a decline in their performance at school, or they may demonstrate regressive behaviour (e.g. in eating/sleeping/toileting). It might seem strange to you that pupils who didn't know the young person who died are distressed – this distress is sometimes referred to as 'disenfranchised grief,' a grief we feel we don't have a right to. Regardless of whether they had a relationship with the pupil who has died, their response is still real and painful for them. It is important to believe everyone's expression of grief and offer support. If a pupil wants to talk, find a quiet place and listen.

4. Should I inform anyone else about the suicide?

In addition to all the staff, pupils and parents you should also consider contacting the following to let them know about the death:

- Other local educational institutions
- Local Safeguarding Board
- Local health services (GPs, emergency departments, psychiatric service)
- The National Public Health team may be helpful in case you suspect that a cluster of suicides may be developing

5. How should I communicate with the press and media after a suicide at our school or college?

Young suicide attracts press and media interest. The instantaneous and 'viral' circulation of information online makes it all the more important to observe guidelines when communicating the news of a suicide at your school or college, including through internal communication channels. However, you may find dealing with the press and media challenging and confusing at such a devastating time. You should nominate a single point of contact who can monitor and react to the media response and you may wish to prepare a media statement.

Try to encourage all comments from the school or college to come via this person only. You should ask all other staff not to talk to the media and press, and instead direct them to the agreed point of contact. This ensures a consistent approach and allows you some control over the messages.

The media response should include:

- Monitoring of any press coverage, including local media
- Preparing a draft media statement (in case this should be required)
- Liaison with any internal media channels, including highlighting the need for care and sensitivity in articles and other communications from pupil news reporters (meeting with them pro-actively can be important)
- Awareness of the possibility of harmful social media communications
- Consideration of possible positive media initiatives e.g. promoting well-being and help-seeking; highlighting stories of recovery from emotional problems
- Advising pupils and staff if approached by the press to contact or refer journalists to the named point of contact
- Advising pupils and staff that there may be more media interest around the time of an inquest which may occur a number of months after a death. There should be special attention to media responses in the event of multiple pupil deaths. Often the press and media will want to report on a suicide and they may contact staff members and/or pupils for comments, stories and photographs of the person who died. It is therefore imperative that everyone within the school or college community is aware of your guidelines for dealing with journalists and the need to refer on appropriately. This ensures a consistent approach and allows you some control over the messages.

The Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)'s Editors' Code of Practice and the Ofcom Broadcasting Code offer guidelines for the press and media to follow, which promotes appropriate reporting of suicide. See Appendix D 'Guidelines for Reporting Suicides' for further information and guidance, or contact the PAPYRUS press office.

6. How can I manage the associated social media coverage?

Social media is an extremely popular way in which people communicate and express themselves. The school's or college's web based forums could therefore be used to discuss, comment and speculate on the suicide. You should make sure that the terms of use on any of your online forums clearly state what material will be considered inappropriate. Pro-active monitoring and moderating of comments may prevent these forums inadvertently breaching

any of these guidelines, for example by detailing suicide methods. It can be helpful to release some guidelines after a suicide.

Try to discourage:

- Detail of suicide method used
- Speculation about the location of the apparent suicide
- Speculation about the reason or 'trigger' for the suicide; there is never only one reason why a young person ends their life
- Making the deceased appear heroic or brave or that the suicide was a solution to a problem
- Endorsement of myths around suicide

Try to encourage:

- Sharing of helpline services and support organisations
- Sensitivity to the grief and feelings of bereaved family and friends, who are often vulnerable to taking their own lives

Responsibilities

We want to support our pupils and keep them safe. Sometimes this will mean working in partnership with family, caregivers, external agencies and other professionals where this may enhance suicide-safety.

This policy is approved by the CEO of The Green Room Foundation

Date

17/11/25

CEO

Richard Allen
