



## Guidance for Educational Settings Following the Suspected or Known Attempted Suicide of a Child or Young Person.

WC Educational Psychology Service and Worcestershire County Council Public Health

March 2024



## Purpose of this guidance

When there is an attempted suicide within a school community there is usually a profound sense of shock. It is, therefore, important to have already thought through a plan of action as it is sometimes difficult to think clearly at these times. You may find the following guidance helpful when considering the action to take in the event of a known or suspected attempted suicide or cluster of suicide attempts within your pupil population.

Within this document, links to external websites and documents have been included as potential resources for schools, families and young people. We have made every effort to check their suitability, but external sites are not under our control and their content may change without warning. We provide these links as a service and cannot guarantee their continued suitability.

## Definitions

### Suicide

Suicide is death resulting from an intentional, self-inflicted act

### Suicide attempt

When someone harms themselves with an intent to end their life.

### Suicide ideation

Thoughts of suicide which can range from ideas about ending your life to having a specific plan.

### Suicide contagion

It is the spread of suicidal thoughts and actions from one person to another, often through social media or news reports.

## Using this guidance

This resource is structured into three sections.

- x Immediate Response
- x Medium Term Response
- x Long Term Response

Each section includes local actions for the setting to ensure the safety of the individual and those within the setting and wider community plus a review of school/college processes to prevent further suicide attempts.

## Evaluation

This guidance will be evaluated in January 2025. Education settings that use any aspect of this guidance are asked to contribute to the evaluation at the time the guidance is used by submitting feedback via this survey link <https://forms.office.com/bnc>

## Becoming aware of a suicide attempt



- 
- o Follow school/college emergency management protocol / safeguarding procedures

When the student is safe and under medical supervision, the school/college should move to meeting the pupil/students [\[medium\]](#) to [long term](#) needs.

|                           |  |   |
|---------------------------|--|---|
|                           | <p>Choose the most natural member of school staff with an existing good relationship with the family to maintain contact.</p> <p>Is there a direct telephone line for the family to contact the school?</p>  | <p><a href="#">Supporting Your Child: A Guide for Parents.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="#">After a Suicide Attempt: A guide for families and friends (Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust)</a></p> |
| <p>Liaison with CAMHS</p> | <p>Suicide and self-harm are complex and rarely due to one factor. A crisis for young people is rarely due to a mental health problem alone and triggers for crisis can be multifactorial. Some of these may be external factors (wider societal issues). A mental health crisis occurs when the level of distress and risk presented is not supported or contained at that moment in time provoking an overwhelming and emotional response to an event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x If a child is open to CAMHS, the school should inform the CAMHS duty team via CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA)<br/>Phone no. 01905 681961 to ask for the CAMHS duty team.</li> <li>x If it is not known if a child/young person is open to CAMHS and there are immediate concerns, the school should call NHS 111 for the Mental health helpline 0808 1969127</li> <li>x If a pupil is not open to CAMHS does not need immediate medical attention (physically or mentally) the school should advise young person and their parent/carers (Á ] š Z š Z Ç } μ v P %o )CE • that the young person sees their GP</li> </ul> |   |







x

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
|   | <p>group and provide them with this WC guidance document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x Students who have been bereaved by suicide.</li> <li>x Consider siblings/cousins/friends who may have recently moved to a new school and inform their new school.</li> <li>x Students who have lost a family member by suicide.</li> </ul>   |  |
| <p>Monitor patterns of attempts/self harm</p> | <p>Use the spreadsheet <a href="#">Appendix 4</a> to monitor any further attempts and self harm across the pupil population. The spreadsheet may include those who have been identified as part of the Circles of Vulnerability exercise or other young people where suicide attempts or unexpected/more intense self-harm comes to light. This allows connections to be made between attempts or increased self-harm and developing clusters to be identified. Consider any social media or websites that young people mention or messaging groups that are being used to discuss suicide, self-harm or pacts.</p> <p>If a possible cluster of attempted suicide or self-harm is suspected as a result of using the tool in Appendix 4 OR if messaging groups are being used to discuss suicide contact Public Health at <a href="mailto:rts@worcestershire.gov.uk">rts@worcestershire.gov.uk</a> (Real Time</p> |  |



share (see page 5) it may be useful to have a staff meeting following a significant event to review the responses as well as allow for staff to

Staff members should be offered support for themselves and the appropriate information, training and advice for supporting pupils.

mental health, there are various sources of support:

Text Z t K K [ ôñî ñ ô ( } confidential text support 24/7

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Talking Therapies [Welcome to NHS Talking Therapies | Talking Therapies \(hwhct.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/services/talking-therapies/)

The following national resources have been created specifically for staff in an educational setting and may be useful to share

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/twinkl-partnerships/mind>

## Long Term Response

Review School/College  
Suicide Prevention Plan

Review the school/college Suicide  
Prevention Plan.

Further information, guidance and support:

## Acknowledgements

With thanks to Halton District Council Public Health Team for their collaborative approach to this topic.

## Appendix 1: Data/Information Sharing

The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe.

To effectively share information:

{All practitioners should be confident of the processing conditions, which allow them to store, and share, the information that they need to carry out their safeguarding role. Information which is

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## Appendix 2: Safety Plan: Guidance and Blank Template

### Guidance template

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Name:   |                |
| Tutor Group:  |                |
| Date of Plan:   | Date completed |
| Completed with (parents, carers/other):   |                |
|   |                |
| If not completed with parents/carers, reasons:  |                |
|   |                |
| Adults who are  |                |
| Aware of this plan:   |                |
| Named in this plan:   |                |
| Trusted adults in school:   |                |
| Adjustments   |                |
| <p>Consider working up to full time hours, academic assessment adjustments, permission to leave class to go to designated safe spaces/person within school/college.</p> <p>Identify specific staff within the school/college to whom student can access ideally two should be identified to ensure availability.</p> <p>School/college [ ] v u v š [ ] • š u . v š •</p> <p>Alterations to class allocation and address issues with young people who may present risks mentally and physically.</p> |                |
| How will I know when I need to use my safety plan?  |                |
| Consider thoughts, feelings, behaviours   |                |
| What are my coping strategies to help me with my thoughts and feelings?   |                |

e.g., What has helped before? What will help in school? Listening to music, going for a walk with someone, talking to others, going to safe space with staff,





Blank template for use:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Name:   |  |
| Tutor Group:  |  |
| Date of Plan:   |  |
| Completed with (parents, carers/other):                                       |  |
| If not completed with parents/carers, reasons:                                |  |
| Adults who are:   |  |
| Aware of this plan:   |  |
| Named in this plan:   |  |
| Trusted adults in school:   |  |
| Adjustments   |  |
| How will I know when I need to use my safety plan?                            |  |
| What are my coping strategies to help me with my thoughts and feelings?       |  |
| What resources can I access in school/college to help me with these feelings? |  |
| What can my trusted adult do to help me?                                      |  |
| What professionals/adults can I contact?                                      |  |



## Appendix 3: Circles of Vulnerability

The Circles of Vulnerability tool is a way of identifying which individuals or groups may require additional support or monitoring due to multiple risk factors. While originally designed for use in the case of suicide, or critical incidents, it remains a useful tool for structuring thinking after a suicide attempt.

First, consider who was geographically or physically close to the young person at the time or shortly after they made the suicide attempt (if an incident happened for example on school grounds), or who lives close to the young person. Consider home educated young people and those out of school.

Psychological proximity refers to those who relate to the young person through cultural connections, shared experiences (e.g. fellow victims of bullying, team members, classmates, etc.) or the perception of having similar characteristics. Consider young people who may have a family member or friend who has died by suicide.

Social proximity refers to the relationships someone has with the young person who made the attempt. This can include family, friends, social circles, or a romantic interest.

## Appendix4: Spreadsheet to monitor patterns of attempts

This template can be used by the school/college to monitor suicide attempts and increased self harm.

Ensure that this document

- x remains confidential
- x has no names included
- x is password protected and
- x data sharing agreements are checked and agreed before sharing with outside agencies

All recipients must be asked to delete all copies at the end of SPAG meetings unless agreed otherwise by the school.



Attempts Timeline  
Template FINAL Ma

# Appendix 5: Terms of Reference and Agenda for a Suicide Postvention Action Group (SPAG)

## Terms of Reference

### Aim

A response to prevent a further suicide attempt or a cluster of attempts from developing. To minimise the longer term mental and emotional distress, and the impact, that arises from a suicide attempt.

### Objectives

- x To decide what action needs to be taken to minimise the chance of further suicide attempt particularly protecting vulnerable & impressionable individuals
- x To oversee and coordinate the action needed to support young people impacted by suicide attempts of a pupil (or staff member).
- x To coordinate this response across agencies
- x To escalate concerns to Public Health via [ts@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:ts@worcestershire.gov.uk) (Real Time Surveillance) or telephone 01905 768053 ask for the Suicide Prevention Team, Public Health.

### Membership

- |   |                                    |   |                                  |
|---|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| x | Headteacher (Chair)                | x | Educational Psychology           |
| x | School DSL(s)                      | x | CAMHS                            |
| x | Senior Mental Health Lead          | x | School Nurse                     |
| x | SENCO                              | x | WEST/Act on It Rep if applicable |
| x | WC Safeguarding lead/rep           | x | Note taker                       |
| x | School based mental health support |   |                                  |

If a possible cluster of attempted suicide or self-harm is identified as a result of using the tool in Appendix 2, contact [ts@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:ts@worcestershire.gov.uk) for advice. A Public Health rep should then be invited to join the SPAG and it may be appropriate to also invite reps from the following teams to the SPAG:

- x WC Comms
- x Primary Care rep e.g. GP

### Frequency of meetings

This will be dependent on the planned action and timescales. It is suggested there are at least two meetings, initially more frequently.

### Notes

- x Action notes will be kept and circulated after each meeting

### Accountability

- x The Headteacher is responsible for initiating the SPAG but all members are expected to respond and attend meetings.
- x The SPAG will report on action taken (maintaining confidentiality) to the Board of Governors and WCC Safeguarding lead.

Agenda

XXXX School Suicide Prevention Action Group Agenda

Date:

# Appendix6: Suicide attempt pathway

INITIAL  
RESPONSE  
(IMMEDIATE)

Assess medical risk (see immediate response page 4)

999/A&E

For a young person who is at medical risk of suicide and refusing A&E (e.g. overdose) call 999



MEDIUM TERM  
RESPONSE  
(DAYS/WEEKS)



