



NORTH GEELONG SECONDARY COLLEGE

SELF- INJURY POLICY

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This policy is informed by information gathered from the following sources:

- Centre for Suicide Prevention Studies, University of Queensland
- LIFEsigns injury awareness booklet, Mary Hillary, 2008
- Scartissue.net, retrieved June 2014

Purpose:

In keeping with the school's values, vision and aims, this policy aims to address the issue of self-injury and provide information on the following areas:

- How to deal with pupils who self-injure and how to offer support in the short and long-term.
- How to provide support depending upon the individual needs of the pupil.
- How to support staff members who come into contact with people who self-injure.
- How to prevent self-injury from spreading within the school.
- To provide clear guidelines for staff.
- To provide education about self-injury for pupils and staff.

What is self-injury?

Self-injury is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. It can include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing (without suicidal intent) and deliberate bone-breaking/spraining.

Risk factors associated with self-injury:

Mental health disorders including depression and eating disorders

Drug/alcohol abuse and other risk-taking behaviour

Recent trauma e.g. death of relative, parental divorce

Negative thought patterns, and low self-esteem

Bullying

Abuse – sexual, physical and emotional

Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance

Suicide:

While self-injury and suicide are separate, those who self-injure are in emotional distress, and those who end their lives are also in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chances of self-injury, and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken seriously.

Roles and responsibilities:

The principal class will:

Appoint a designated staff member (Student Wellbeing) to be responsible for self-injury matters, and liaise with them.

Ensure that the designated staff member receives appropriate training about self-injury.

Ensure that self-injury policy is followed by all members of staff.

Decide whether self-injury education should be in the school curriculum, and how it should be addressed.

Ensure that education about self-injury neither promotes nor stigmatises.

Look at provisions for people who self-injure, such as long-sleeved uniforms to cover injuries, and time out of lessons when under intense stress.

All staff and teachers are expected to:

Listen to pupils in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way.

Report the self-injury to the designated staff member (Student Wellbeing) promptly. Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected.

Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) which can't be kept.

Reassure pupils that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help.

Guide pupils towards seeking health and happiness.

Promote problem solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress.

Enable pupils to find places for help and support.

Widen their own knowledge about self-injury and mental health disorders.

Be aware of health and safety issues such as first-aid and clearing up if a self-injury incident take place at school.

Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot, duty of care.

The designated staff member (Student Wellbeing) will:

Keep accurate, factual and timely records of self-injury incidents and concerns.

Liaise with local services about help available for people who self-injure.

Keep up-to-date with information about self-injury.

Liaise with key staff members. (Year Level Coordinator, Sub School Manager, Principal Class, Student's designated key teacher)

Contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the pupil in this process. Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child which is available. Monitor the pupil's progress following an incident.

Know when people other than parents (e.g. social workers, educational psychologists) need to be informed.

Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress.

Facilitate referral to appropriate support agency (SSSO, Headspace, CAMHS, and CASA)

Pupils will be expected to:

Not to display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately.

Talk to the appropriate staff member if they are in emotional distress.

Alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow pupil of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to themselves, and know when confidentiality must be broken.

Not facilitate a fellow pupil to self-injure through providing encouragement or tools.

Parents will be expected to:

Endorse the school's approach to self-injury education and care.

Work in partnership with the school.

Support their child to access support agencies and medical care as appropriate.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on...	19 th August 2014
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Date for Review - 2017