



Thomas Telford School Self-Harm Support



Self-harm is difficult to talk about but it's a common problem particularly among young people.

Unfortunately, some young people use self-harm as a way of trying to deal with very difficult feelings that build up inside.

This could be a minor injury such as hair pulling or more serious, sometimes even life threatening, which may include cutting parts of the body, burning, hitting, swallowing harmful substances or overdosing on medication.

Self-harm is always a sign of something being seriously wrong.

Why do young people self-harm?

Self-harm is often a way of trying to cope with painful or confused feelings, for example:

- Feeling sad, worried or angry,
- Not feeling very good or confident about themselves,
- Being hurt by others; physically, sexually or emotionally,
- Feeling under a lot of pressure at school or at home,
- Trying to fit in with a group of friends/acceptance,
- Losing someone close, such as dying or leaving.

When difficult or stressful things happen in a person's life, it can trigger self-harm. Upsetting events that may lead to self-harm include:

- Arguments with friends and family,
- Break-up of a relationship,
- Failing or thinking you're going to fail,
- Pressure of exams,
- Bullying.

What can I do as a parent?

As a parent, it's really hard to cope with a child/young person with self-harming behaviour or who attempts suicide. It's natural to feel angry, frightened or guilty. It may also be difficult to take it seriously or know what to do for the best. Try to keep calm and caring, even if you feel cross or frightened; this will help your child/young person know you can manage their distress and they can come to you for help and support. Seek advice from the **School's Designated Safeguard Lead** and consult with your GP for professional support and guidance.

What can I do as a teacher or staff member?

If you are a teacher, it is important to encourage students to let you know if one of their friends is in trouble, upset, or shows signs of harming themselves. Friends often worry about betraying a confidence and you may need to explain that self-harm is very serious and can be life threatening. For this reason, it should never be kept secret. Teachers and staff should keep calm and professional and ensure that the young person can come to you for help and support.

Ways I can help

- Notice when the young person seems upset, withdrawn or irritable. Self-injury is often kept secret but there may be clues, such as refusing to wear short sleeves or to take off clothing for sports.
- Encourage them to talk about their worries and take them seriously. Show them you care by listening, offer sympathy and understanding, and help them to solve any problems.
- Keep medicines locked away.
- Get help if family problems or arguments keep upsetting you or the young person.
- If a young person has injured themselves, you can help practically by checking to see if injuries (cuts or burns for example) need hospital treatment and if not, by providing them with clean dressings to cover their wounds.

For advice/guidance and support in school please email or speak to:

- Mr Norman (Designated Safeguarding Lead): jnorman@ttsonline.net
- Mr Nicholls (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead): pnicholls@ttsonline.net
- Ms Nock (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead): cnock@ttsonline.net
- Miss Jones (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead): hjones@ttsonline.net

Further links/ advice

- <https://www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk/>
- [Get Help & Support With... | Campaign Against Living Miserably \(CALM\) \(thecalmzone.net\)](#)

- [Childline | Childline](#)
- [Self-harm | Signs of Self-harm And Getting Help | YoungMinds](#)