

Hertfordshire Suicide Aware Prevention Intervention and POSTVENTION Charter

This document is for professionals in education settings to support their strategies around suicide prevention and bereavement. This information should be shared with all staff, ideally as part of their induction and ongoing training.

For children and young people, it is important to have a three-pronged approach through prevention, intervention and postvention support. Promotion of good mental health and wellbeing in a supportive, safe, and positive environment. Early intervention that will support early recovery, enabling self-help tools, access to effective interventions and referral processes. Postvention support is vital for children, young people, and staff to ensure that they receive bereavement support which is timely and effective to meet their needs and reduce their risk of suicide later.

In the event of a suicide or attempted suicide within our school or college community we will:

Prevention

1. Recognise that a suicide or attempted suicide within the community could potentially increase risk and commit to raising awareness of potential risk factors within the peer group/school and community
2. Seek opportunities to provide key messages around keeping well, asking for help, looking after each other
3. Recognise that language use should be carefully considered when talking about suicide and where uncertain – for adults to educate themselves about language that is helpful and supportive
4. Appropriately communicate with parents, providing support and signposting to the wider parent network to enable them to support their children
5. Engage with and ensure a whole school approach to mental health, wellbeing and resilience, including the wider school community

6. Identify additional staff champions across the school to receive further training in how to increase suicide awareness, provide ongoing support and safe spaces for colleagues and students. Our school accepts that grief after suicide is complex and a range of emotions may be experienced by parents, pupils and staff

Intervention

7. Commit to safe, open and honest dialogue about suicide and attempted suicide where relevant
8. Recognise that anyone can be affected by suicide or attempted suicide and appropriate support will be provided for anybody that needs it. (and it is clear what support is needed)
9. Suicide and attempted suicide can have a large and lasting impact on peers, whether through supporting friends or hearing about it through student gossip. Additional support / signposting should be offered to peers of those that have attempted suicide (if the individual attempting is sharing this information with their peers/friends)

Postvention

10. Recognise that grief may be immediate or delayed
11. Recognise that for a period after a loss, people are appropriately sad and may not be able to process their thoughts as clearly as usual
12. Language use should be carefully considered when talking about suicide. Staff should ensure to use language that dispels the stigma of suicide (e.g. completed instead of committed) and gently and appropriately encourage students to do the same, much like staff would challenge discriminatory language
13. Recognise that grief may last for a long time, this will vary according to the individual
14. Accept that grief after suicide is complex and a range of emotions may be experienced by parents, pupils and staff
15. Acknowledge that anger and sadness are valid responses that we should be aware of and that highly aroused emotions can lead to unwanted behaviours towards self or others in the community and would need to be supported and contained within a safe environment at home or school to allow those affected the opportunity to feel angry and explore feelings within a safe environment
16. Conduct a thorough review of the individual's engagement with school to explore possible contributors to poor emotional wellbeing and implement changes where needed
17. If speaking about suicide in general terms rather than following a suicide incident then care should be taken in resources and/or speakers used (Quality Assurance guidance for external visitors provided by Healthy Young Minds in Herts)
18. Consider how to honour and remember students, staff or other adults in future events, in a way that is respectful but not triggering e.g end of year celebrations

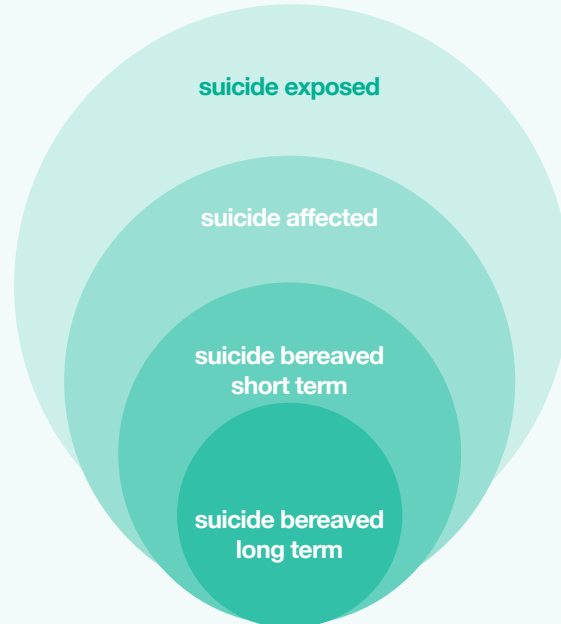
19. Engage with the (funded) crisis services provided by the Educational Psychology Service (ISL) and Safe Space Counselling
20. Discussions of suicide should not be glamorised or glorified. Accounts should be factual with appropriate information (i.e. not including method or place of suicide) in order to minimise exposure / copy-cat behaviours
21. Understand that the parents and siblings of the individual will require compassion, honesty and appropriate time to process the event. Signposting to the following resources will take place in recognition of the range of needs of parents, carers and siblings

- [Finding the words](#)
- [Help is at Hand](#)

22. Put a plan in place to develop or review the school's suicide aware strategy
23. Consideration about how to appropriately communicate with parents following a suicide is needed. Support and signposting should be offered to the wider parent network to enable them to support their children/young people and the parent of the individual will require compassion, honesty and appropriate time to process the event
24. In the event of a suicide or attempted suicide within our school community we will deliver support when needed to everyone that needs it, for as long as it is needed. Ensure that support (both formal and informal) will be available whenever it is needed and be clear what the support could be
25. Grief can affect people for a long time – there is no blueprint for recovery – people may struggle with grief many years after a loss or event particularly if there is a trigger. The key messages around ways of maintaining connection with a positive supportive network either in the school community or outside of it. Mental health should be reinforced regularly through the whole school approach
26. Support (not necessarily counselling, but kindness and connections with parents, staff and peers) should be available whenever it is needed
27. People seemingly unconnected to the person that has died may be affected by their death. Offer all staff and those associated with the school support if needed (admin staff, lunchtime staff perhaps even parents who have been triggered)
28. Suicide and attempted suicide can have a large and lasting impact on peers, whether through supporting friends or hearing about it through student gossip. Additional support / signposting should be offered to peers of those that have attempted suicide (if the individual attempting is sharing this information with their peers/friends)

The range of individuals who may be affected by suicide

- **Suicide exposed**
Local groups, communities, passers by, social groups, faith groups, acquaintances, wider peer groups including those via social/virtual media contacts (e.g. Facebook friends)
- **Suicide affected**
First responders (family, friends, members of the public, police, paramedics), those directly involved such as train drivers, neighbours and local residents, teachers, classmates, co-workers, health/social care staff
- **Suicide bereaved short term**
Friends, peers, close work colleagues, longstanding health/social care workers, teachers
- **Suicide bereaved long term**
Family, close friends



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- **CHUMS Suicide Bereavement Service**

The CHUMS Suicide Bereavement Service provides emotional and practical support to those affected by a suicide or suspected suicide death. We support adults and children, residing in Hertfordshire and West Essex. We offer individual sessions and group support as well as providing information and liaison with other professionals to help individuals and families navigate the complex issues which they may face at this difficult time. See our website for more details or contact the service via email or telephone.

01279 212170

hsbs@chums.uk.com

- [Survivors of Bereavement](#) provides a service for 18+ only which includes access to local support groups, publications and resources as well as providing email support via: email.support@uksobs.org and a helpline which is open 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday:
0300 111 5065
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- Herts EP Service [Bereavement document](#) and Video
 - [Free resources directory](#) (quality assured strategies and resources)
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