

Hertfordshire Suicide Aware Prevention and POSTVENTION Policy suggestions

This policy guidance document is for professionals within education settings, to ensure that effective suicide prevention and postvention approaches are in place.

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.

Prevention

In addition to engaging with the key areas of the Suicide Aware Prevention and Postvention Charter our school will complete the following interventions

1. Our school has a suicide awareness policy in place which is owned and understood by the whole school community and is reviewed on a regular basis

Papyrus have provided schools with a resource '[Building Suicide Safer Schools](#)' to support this.

2. Our school has engaged with '[Spot the Signs and Save a Life](#)'. This is a suicide prevention campaign run in partnership with the Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, Mind in Mid Herts and Hertfordshire Mind Network. We have also engaged with the Ollie Foundation Suicide Prevention Training Courses, and other relevant training (suicidepreventionherts.org.uk)

3. Our school has a whole school approach to building resilience and preventing mental ill health and promotes positive emotional wellbeing and mental health, positive coping skills, encourages help seeking, destigmatises mental ill health and tackles bullying

4. Supporting mental health is of paramount importance to our school community; we recognise that academic performance can be impaired by mental ill health

Intervention

5. All staff are aware of and promote The [StayAlive](#) App which is a pocket suicide prevention resource for the UK, packed full of useful information to help you stay safe. It can be used if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide. In addition to the resources, the app includes a safety plan, customisable reasons for living, and a life box

*All guidance and information within the app are reviewed and updated every 6 months to check all resources are updated and links are in working order

6. Our school ensures that Staff Wellbeing is a key priority and provides staff with access to peer support/supervision or other external support

Our whole school approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing includes staff wellbeing as one of its key elements and is reviewed regularly. We have reviewed the latest research on Staff Wellbeing in schools and provide staff with a range of regular opportunities to provide ideas as to how we make changes to support positive staff wellbeing in addition to monitoring staff wellbeing within the school. We are aware of and signpost to the following resources:

- [Ten Steps to Staff Wellbeing](#) - Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families
- [Education Support helpline and counselling](#) (A national free service)
- [Looking after each other & ourselves](#) - Anna Freud Centre
- [Mental Health at Work](#) - National agencies supporting different professionals in their roles.
- [Every Mind Matters](#)
- [Schools in Mind](#)
- [Mentally Healthy Schools](#)
- [Mental Health at Work](#)
- [Mindful Teachers](#)
- [Education Support partnership](#)
- The Education Support Partnership also provides a [staff survey services](#) for schools

Postvention support

7. We will consider how to honour and remember students at future events that involve their year group in a way that is respectful but not triggering e.g. end of year celebrations

8. We will engage with the (funded) crisis services provided by the Educational Psychology Service (ISL) [Educational Psychology Service \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](#) and Safe Space Counselling [Counselling in schools and mentoring | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

When the new suicide bereavement service starts in late 2022, we will ensure the pupils affected and the family of the deceased are aware of the service and will support them in contacting the service for support if they want it

9. We will review the schools Suicide Aware strategy and our whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing
10. In the event of a suicide or attempted suicide within our school community we will conduct a thorough review and implement changes where needed
11. We will ensure discussion of suicide is not glamorised or glorified. Accounts will be factual with appropriate information (i.e. not including method or place of suicide) in order to minimise exposure / copy-cat behaviours

We will consider the use of language 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

12. We will consider how to appropriately communicate with parents and carers following a suicide if 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
13. 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.

